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FIGS AND THISTLES:

A WESTERN STORY.

BY

ALBION W. TOURGEE,

Author of "Toinette: A Tale of the South."

"As a man thinketh in his heart
—so is he."

PROVERBS.

NEW YORK:
FORDS, HOWARD, & HULBERT.

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PROLOGUE.

IT has, of late, been much commended to writers of fiction that they should preface their works with a list of the characters therein portrayed, together with an analysis of the contents, for the convenience of the critic and the enlightenment of the reader. In accordance with this suggestion, the writer submits the following

SYLLABUS PERSONARUM.

- 1—JACOB CHURR: An amiable bachelor, who improvidently marries for love, lives in a dream, and, dying, leaves a son to poverty and a grandfather. One of the "figs."
- 2—BURRILL ANDRUS: A deacon of the church in Greenfield, on the Pymatuning; the father of Hetty (wife of Jacob Churr) and the grandfather of Markham Churr, the hero. A well-to-do farmer of a thrifty habit. Something of a "thistle."
- 3—MARKHAM CHURR: Son of Jacob Churr and pretty Hetty Andrus; a poor man's orphan, blest with friends and difficulties; a young attorney; an improvised soldier; a statesman by the *vox populi*; and the one whose life and adventures are more particularly narrated. A fig-bearing "thistle."

- 4—LIZZIE HARPER: Daughter of Jeduthon Harper of Fairbank, the betrothed, and afterward wife, of Markham Churr. A character which the author has vainly endeavored to keep in the background.
- 5—CURTIS FIELD: A laborer in the employ of Deacon Andrus; afterwards a farmer and man of influence on the Pymatuning, and at all times a fast friend of Markham. A "fig."
- 6—BOAZ WOODLEY: Attorney-at-law; Colonel and Chief of Military Railway Transportation; President of the Bank of Aychitula, and of the T. C. Railway Co.; the friend, patron, and foe of Markham Churr. One of the "thistles."
- 7—THOMAS HORTON: Cashier of the Bank of Aychitula; servant and friend of Boaz Woodley.
- 8—FRANK HORTON: Son of Thomas Horton; who has many adventures which are *not* related herein. Another "thistle."
- 9—AMY LEVIS: Daughter of Anson Levis, blacksmith of the village of Aychitula. A pretty "fig."
- 10—REV. F. WORTHINGTON: A minister, whose early life is somewhat obscure. A "fig."
- 11—BASIL WOODSON: A clerk, whose latter days are somewhat clouded. Decidedly a "thistle."
- 12—ALBERT MOREY: Manufacturer, of Rexville. A rough nugget.
- 13—THE DOMINIE: Pastor of the church in Lanesville; a genuine "Christian."
- 14—FRIEND PETER WRENN: A Quaker who has notions, and lends money—on good security.
- 15—LAWYER LATHAM: One who deserved far more than he ever received.

- 16—A MERCHANT TAILOR: Who comes into the story by chance, and stays but a moment, but is, nevertheless, of some importance.
- 17—TWO DETECTIVES: Who find a clue which they do not follow.
- 18—RANSOM FISK: Who is mentioned here because he was quite forgotten in the story.
- 19—ENOCH HATCH: Who has nothing to do with the tale, but is important to the conclusion.
- 20—CORDIE HATCH: A sweet-faced, dimly-seen *umbra*, charged with a golden errand.
- 21—DR. MERRILL: Surgeon, enthusiast, politician, and friend of Markham. A singed cat.
- 22—TIGE: A dog of no particular breed, but of pronounced character and peculiar attributes.
- 23—MISCELLANEA: A bank porter, a college president, a probate judge, citizens, soldiers, and a span of bay trotters, who are quite as worthy of mention as some other characters.

TEMPUS.

From the year of Grace, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty, this story continueth until the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy-two, or thereabouts; with some episodes which extend back of the former date and some speculations which follow the latter.

LOCI.

Greenfield, on the Pymatuning; Aychitula and Rexville, on the shore of Lake Erie; and Lanesville, which is the county-seat of Beaver County, are the

points in which the action chiefly proceeds, being all in said county, which is a part of the *n*th Congressional District, and a portion of the "Western Reserve," once known as the New Connecticut, in the State of Ohio. The action extends also to Washington, Philadelphia, New York, and embraces one city not laid down upon the map, together with some others which may be difficult to find.

ACTIONES.

A queer fight, a sudden flight, a long interval, some love, a great larceny, two marches, two battles, several journeys, two caucuses, some skeleton sermons, a hint of prayer, some sickness, a few deaths, and one resurrection, make up the chief incidents of the tale—showing, altogether, a very large growth of "*thistles*," and an exceedingly scanty harvest of "*figs*."

If, from this compendium, the critic has not learned more than he ordinarily does of the books which he praises or blames, and the reader has not builded in his fancy a better story than that which follows, no blame, for lack of opportunity so to do, can be attributed to

THE AUTHOR.

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FIGS AND THISTLES.

CHAPTER I.

THE HEGIRA.

IT was midsummer on the Pymatuning. A dozen brawny-armed mowers were piling up the great swaths of timothy and herds-grass in Deacon Andrus's meadow. The regular thrill of the swinging blades and the cheery tones of the mowers were on the fresh morning air. Side by side, with steady rhythmic blows, they smote the waving verdure. The dewdrops sparkled on the swaths, and the returning blades caught the early sunshine and reflected its light along the undulating line. They had swept back and forth across the wide bottom from early dawn, and it was now well past the breakfast hour.

A sturdy boy of perhaps a dozen years had left his task of spreading the heavy swaths, and, in company with a boisterous cur, was assailing a black-snake which had climbed an elder-bush on the hunt for eggs or young in a bird's nest hidden among the branches. The clamor of the birds whose home was thus invaded had attracted the attention of the dog; his baying had in turn brought to the spot his young master, with his wooden tedding-fork. The cluster of elder-bushes, growing between the roots of a decaying stump, and

protected thereby from the annual destruction which would have been their fate in the open meadow, had shot up into a mimic forest. Twined about the upper limbs of one of these, the graceful serpent raised his crest in angry defiance both of the birds who circled above and of the boy and dog beneath. His steely, blue-black scales glistened like polished mail in the morning sunshine as he alternately avoided the direct assaults of the distracted birds or struck revengefully at them when they incautiously flew too near.

In the boy, the rage of the hunter had drowned all other thought. His face shone with the excitement which the chase always brings to a brave heart. His eyes flashed underneath the ragged brim of his straw hat, and his voice trembled, though not with fear, as he urged on the dog and with his fork drove the threatening adder from branch to branch, with a caution and deliberation that showed he was bent upon the capture, rather than the destruction, of the reptile.

"Seek him, Tige!" he shouted. "He's a splendid fellow! must be he's a king-snake. We'll catch him and put him in the barn. I heard Grandpa say the other day that he wished he had one there to kill the rats. There he goes, Tige! Head him!" as the reptile, with an indefinite, gliding motion, between leaping and clambering, slid into the outmost and tallest of the ring of elder bushes to escape his enterprising assailants.

"Now we've got him, Tige!" shouted the boy in glee, as he began to break down the neighboring bushes with his fork and his bare, brown feet, which pressed the stubborn branches aside fearless of stubs or briars.

Meantime he did not once move his eyes from the malignant form which was circled in the fork of the highest bush, its head swaying from side to side, with forked tongue playing like lightning back and forth, its eyes glaring like coals of fire as it watched the enemy's approach, and with the low, ominous, steady hiss which always marks this reptile's anger sounding out upon the morning air. Naturalists say that the sound is made with the mouth or nostrils; but those better observers, the enterprising, adventurous country boys—who know more of birds and beasts, swimming and creeping things, than any grown philosopher ever learned by playing Paul Pry in the temple of Nature—these more privileged worshipers say that it is made by the rapid vibrations of the reptile's tail. There are those who would believe the boys even if they knew them to be wrong.

Across the meadow, the mowers had finished their swaths, gathered each a handful of the softest and dampest herbage from among the latest strokes, and with it wiped the dew and leaves from his dripping blade. Then, taking from pocket or waistband the long, brown whetstone of true Quinnibog grit so highly prized in the ante-mowing-machine days, with skillful hand swept it from side to side, along the gleaming edge, from heel to point of the ringing blade. As one after another finished this operation, and, leaning upon his scythe, looked back at the long swaths they had just cut, some of them noticed the group at the elder-bush, and one remarked:

“What is that boy after, with his dog, now?”

"He has treed something in the elders, and has forgotten everything else in the world," said another.

"Treed something!" said a third. "What can it be? Nothing bigger than a chipmunk could stay in that elder-bush!"

"I'll tell you," said the first, "it is a black-snake. Look close and you will see his scales flash in the sun! You see those king-birds, too, making a deal of fuss. They had a nest there. I noticed it when I mowed around the stump this morning."

"That's so," was the answer. "I vow that boy and his dog are a team. I would like to know what they are afraid of!"

"Something that don't grow in this country," laughed another.

"I believe you," said the first. "Did you hear about his driving Russell's bull out of the old Deacon's Number Two?"

"What! not the one Russell had to kill because he was so dangerous?"

"Yes, I swow it was," was the answer; "and only a day or two after the bull had run Russell out of his own pasture, too. You see he was a fine animal, a thorough-bred Short Horn, and Russell never would have shot him if he had not come so near killing Fred Burlingame."

"But how did the little scamp yonder come to meddle with the critter?" asked the other.

"Why, the old man sent him to do it."

"The Deacon?"

"Yes, the Deacon."

"Oh! it can't be, now!" chimed in one of the hitherto silent listeners.

"Darned if he didn't," asserted the narrator. "I heard him myself. You know you can see all over the cleared part of the Number Two Section from the house, though it is nigh half a mile away. After the timber was girdled and the ground about half cleared, in the Deacon's slovenly, stingy way, a mighty pretty coat of white clover came up, and Russell's cattle jumped in there, the bull with 'em, and were making the clover suffer, when the old man see 'em, and sent the boy to drive 'em out."

"But he didn't see the bull!" said one, incredulously.

"Well, but he did," was the reply, "for I spoke about him, and told the old cuss 'twa'n't safe to send the boy on that arrant."

"And what did he say?" asked one.

"That he could attend to his own business, and he wished I'd follow his example."

"Which you did?" laughed the rest.

"Which I did, like a cowardly sneak," said the speaker, reddening. "But I couldn't keep my eyes off that ar boy. He didn't seem to care no more for the bull than he does for that ar black-snake in the bush yonder. He just whistled for that stump-tailed yaller dog, that come a rarin' an' jumpin' on to him, a barkin' round, and kinder waggin' his hind legs instead of a tail, as they went off. When he got down by the clay bank, though, I see the little fellow gettin' him a good stout club and pickin' up some stones, and concluded

that he knew something about the job he had on hand. Well, when he got to the fence, he sot on the top rail awhile, as if he was arrangin' his plan of operations. Then he got down and stole along from one dead tree to another round to the side of the herd where the bull was, keepin' that dog as cluss to his heels an' as quiet as if he had been a human bein'. Then I knew that he had made up his mind to take the bull by the horns, as you may say—that is, rush in and run the whole crowd off with a sudden scare. I was all of a tremble, though, as I watched him, while I was pretendin' to work (I was layin' fence round the calf-paster), but the old Deacon stood and looked at him as cool as if it had been a fly crawlin' towards a spider-web."

"The old cuss!" said one of the younger hands, "he wants to get the boy killed."

"Darned if I don't believe it," said the speaker, "and I told him so when it was all over."

"And how did he take that?" asked one of the elder ones.

"Just as a hypocrite always takes it when you tell him of his meanness," was the answer.

"Oh! come, now, Curt, don't lug in the church," said the grave man who had asked the question.

"Now, George, you know I don't want to hurt you, nor say anythin' agin' the church, but if the devil don't git Burrill Andrus and toast him for a murderer, he'd better quit tryin' to catch sinners, and have his old hot-bed sowed to clover and made a calf-paster of."

“Ha! ha! ha! Good for you, Curt,” laughed his auditors.

“But how about the boy and the bull?” asked the grave man who had provoked this sally.

“Well, sure enough,” responded Curt. “When the boy had stole up as nigh as he could without bein’ seen, he gathered a stone in each hand, and he and the dog made a rush on the herd. The dog barked and he hollered, and, runnin’ square up to the bull, he let him have a stone—chuck in the ribs. You ought to have seen them cattle makin’ tracks—the steers and heifers spread their tails and run like deers; but the bull wasn’t of that notion. He ran a little way as brisk as any of ’em, and then turned round, as if he had jest remembered his dignity, to see what all the fuss was about, and there he stood, a-pawin’ an’ a-bellerin’, with the young cattle watchin’ him on t’other side the fence, an’ the boy and dog before him. The boy stood a minute as if doubtful about what he should do. Then he clapped his hands to that dog, which I believe would take a lion by the throat if his master told him to. Tige started for the bull, and the bull for him, and then I see the boy runnin’ in to save his dog. You wouldn’t believe it, but the little scamp ran in and gave the bull a whack with his club that took his attention off from Tige, and gave the dog a chance to get behind a stump that stood handy by. The bull ran a little way, and then turned on the boy. I tell you, I thought the little fellow was gone; then I drew back the fence-stake I had in my hand, and I do believe that if I had seen that boy tossed up or tramped down by that mad bull

there'd been an end of Burrill Andrus right there and then."

"Oh! not so bad as that," interposed George.

"I *do* believe it, George," responded Curt. "I never had much religion, and have lost most of what I had, but I do believe I should have done something the Lord would have been glad to give me credit for if I had laid him out without troublin' the county for court and jury. However, it seemed as if a miracle was wrought right there to save that boy. He hadn't run more than ten steps afore his hat flew off, and in a second more he had tumbled over a log. As the bull couldn't see the boy, he veered off after the hat, and pawed and gored that in a manner jest terrible to see. I thought sure the boy would give up the job then and steal around till he got out of the field. But he ain't made of that kind of stuff, that boy ain't. Tell ye what, he's the best pluck you ever see in your lives. No back-out in him. By that time I'd got tired o' mindin' my own business, and couldn't stan' it no longer. So I turned round and cussed the old man, an' told him if the boy was hurt I'd see that he was hung for murder; an' then started down there as hard as I could put. An' the Déacon he come too. When we riz the brow of the knoll, about half way there, what do you suppose I see? That boy had stole round towards Russell's side of Number Two, got behind a big whitewood and took off his jacket. It was lined with red flannel, you see. So he turned it wrong side out, stepped to one side the tree, shook it, and bellered, to attract the bull's attention. No sooner did the critter see it, than on he

come, like all possessed, jest makin' the dirt fly! The boy slipped behind the tree, and, as he went by, whipped round on the other side; but the dog seemed to think his mate was in danger, and as soon as the bull started for the boy, he was after him, and about the time he passed little Mark, Tige made a jump and caught hold of the critter's tail. This seemed to kinder confuse the bull, and then to fairly frighten him. I heerd him give a skeered beller, and see him makin' straight for the fence with that yaller dog a-floppin' an' a-flyin' behind him. I know'd the boy was safe then, and, though he ain't no kin nor count to me, I dropped down on a log and cried like a baby. Pretty soon he come along, with the pieces of the old hat in his hand, and Tige close behind with about half that critter's tail in his mouth. I couldn't help gatherin' the boy in my arms, and wishin' right then that the Lord had give me just as manly a little chap as that Markham, and I wish to God he was mine now."

"So does the Deacon, I guess," said one, quizzically.

"No doubt," answered Curt. "The poor little feller was mighty cut up about the hat, but I told him I'd make it right with the Deacon. An' so I did. I told him, when we was milkin' that night, that if he didn't treat the boy better I'd make Greenfield too hot to hold him."

"He's been told that afore," said one.

"Well," said Curt, grimly, "he got the boy a new straw hat next day, that cost a shillin'. It's about worn out now, and I guess we'll have to jog his mind agin."

"Look there!" exclaimed one who had turned his

eyes toward the lad as Curt's narrative was concluded. "Look 'there! If that little scamp haint caught that black snake alive!"

Sure enough, there the boy was, swinging the writhing reptile by the tail, and with the tedding-fork in his left hand preventing both the snake's attempts to twine around his body or his arm and the endeavors of the dog to seize the snake. He was shouting with the glee of boyish triumph as he held his capture at arm's length and watched the play of the sunlight on the scales which cased its supple form.

"Yes," said the observant Curt, "an' he'll catch something else in a minnit. The old skunk!"

At the very instant Curt spoke, the form of Burrill Andrus came into sight around the bunch of elders, advancing with swift, stealthy steps, and face glowing with malignant passion, upon the unconscious lad. His upraised hand held a stick which would have been counted cruel if used as an ox-goad, which, even as a warning halloo went out from Curt's lips, fell once and again over the unprotected shoulders of the boy. The child sprang away with a scream of surprise, and then, as he saw its cause, he rushed at his assailant with a cry of rage. He had no means of defence save the writhing serpent, which he still held. The mowers saw a gleam of steely light flash round the boy's head as he hurled this unique weapon full at the face of the aggressor.

There was a moment's confusion, and then Burrill Andrus came charging down the swaths towards the mowers, making frantic clutches at his head, with eyes

almost bursting from their sockets, and shouting, in terror:

“Take him off! take him off!”

As he came nearer, they saw that the reptile, true to his prehensile instinct, had quickly coiled again and again close about the Deacon's neck, which happened to be the first portion of his body touched by the clinging projectile, and the frantic efforts that worthy had made to remove the scaly necklace had only impelled the serpent to clasp him more closely, so that when he reached the mowers, what with fright and suffocation combined, Burrill Andrus was almost as near dead as alive, and could only whisper:

“Take him off!”

Curtis Fields was the first to comprehend the situation, and, rushing forward, he seized from his employer's hand the goad, which he still held, and cried:

“Hold still! Let me kill him!” and began to strike fiercely at the blue line on the Deacon's neck. Again and again the heavy rod hissed through the air and fell upon the Deacon's neck and shoulders. Just how many blows it took to kill that snake has never been exactly recorded; but when it had been finally removed and was lying upon the green swath, dead and limp, and the Deacon had taken a strong swig of the “black-strap” which the mowers of that day always carried a-field, to preserve their strength and be at hand in case of accident, he rubbed his back and shrugged his shoulders as he said, glancing suspiciously at Curt:

“'Pears like it took a sight of larrupin' to kill that snake, anyhow.”

“Wal!” said Curt, demurely. “I ’spose when one sees a human critter in sich distress as yours was ’tain’t nateral for him to be particular how he helps him out. If I hadn’t used that ox-gad rather lively, where do you ’spose you’d ’ave been now, Deacon?”

“Sure enough,” said the Deacon, with a shudder; but it is doubtful if even then he was quite satisfied as to the motive of Curt’s activity.

Along the old State road, which stretched away to the northward like a great yellow ribbon, trailing through the green meadows and dark beech-woods toward the bright lake, plodded, all that Summer’s day, a bare-footed, bare-headed boy, with a yellow stub-tailed dog lolling at his heels.

CHAPTER II.

LCCUS.

AS our story is concerned mainly with a region which has been somewhat famous in the swift-conquering civilization of the West, let us pause for a moment and obtain some idea of “how the land lies” in which our characters are to act their respective parts.

Along the southern shore of Lake Erie stretches a verdant plateau, bounded on the northward by a jagged

line of dark shelving cliffs, which fall brokenly to wide sandy beaches, or dip sheerly down to the waters, babbling or boisterous, of this inland sea. The gentle slope which rises to the southward is cut here and there with dark, winding seams—great furrows, along which dull and sluggish streams seem unwilling to take their way down to the welcoming lake. On the slaty sides of these deeply-cut water-courses the clustering hemlocks and clambering grape-vines cling in matted density; while rich-grained maples, towering hickories, and giant sycamores, whose white arms toss above them all, crowd the low bottoms, save where the forest has been shorn away and the rich alluvium is hidden with a dense growth of serried maize or waving timothy. Near the shore, the verdant slope is barred with sandy ridges that parallel the shore-line, as if the waves which dash against the slaty rock now forming the lake brim had sometime shaped their curves. The level upland, dotted with clustering villages and checkered into regular blocks of cleanly, cultured farms, which lie cosily between wood and orchard, reaches southward along the western boundary of Pennsylvania until it passes the divide which separates the waters of the lake from those which seek the far-away Gulf through the Ohio and its tributaries; stretches westward until three millions of acres of fat pastures, rich grain-fields, and heavy wooded loams are embraced in its sweep; and then hurries back northward to the bright expanse of Sandusky Bay, as if loth to leave the blue waters to which it clings. This broad and fertile plateau is known as the "Western Reserve."

There is nothing striking or picturesque in its physical features to impress the beholder at first sight. Neither rugged mountain nor imprisoned valley, sweeping river, thundering waterfall, towering precipice, unwooded prairie, nor desert waste is to be found within its limits; yet, somehow, day by day, the fair lake wins the watcher's love, and the rich pastures, luxuriant meadows, droning streams, dense forests, and teeming orchards sink into his mind—a rare and never-to-be-forgotten picture of rich and satisfying loveliness. A region of small farms and cosy homes, where few are rich and fewer still are poor; whether clad in a mantle of green or spread with a carpet of snow, it is never without the charm of a quiet and peculiar beauty.

So, too, its people. Gathered in pretty villages, or making the regularly intersecting roads seem like village streets, with thickly-crowding farmers' houses; little given to manufacture, but each one winning from a few fat acres something more than the need of the present requires, and looking forward to see his children become something more than he has been—there is nothing striking or marvelous about their lives, which are simply plain, matter-of-fact existences, with only an undertone of earnest aspiration, unassuming sensibility, and steadfast devotion to the right, that takes them out of the commonplace. Descended from the Puritan, the thrift and vigor of the stock remains, while the spirit of the Great West has widened and deepened the ancestral nature. Planted upon soil dedicated even in its savage wildness to intelligence by the thrifty foresight of the parent colony, Connecticut—whose common

schools are the fruit of the fund its sale supplied—these people have ever been peculiarly ardent votaries of education. With an inherited habit of religious thought, and a charity bred of iconoclastic impulse towards the idols of the past, their “New Connecticut” has become the home of religious freedom. While sects abound, religious discord is unknown. Claiming each for himself the widest freedom of act and opinion, they early made the Reserve a home of personal liberty,—the Mecca of the slave escaped from bondage, and the “benighted ground” on which the hunter of human prey was sure to lose the trace of his victim.

In thought, as in action, it marks the median line between the overflowing East and the ever-welcoming West. It is not a romantic region nor a romantic people. Its soil is not rich with blood, nor are its glens peopled with legendary sprites. Save the break in the forest line which in a few places still shows where “Mad Anthony Wayne” burst through the original wilderness on his impetuous way to rescue his beleaguered brothers in arms, its soil bears no imprint of the foot of war. Except the echo of Perry’s guns, its shores never heard the tumult of strife. Neither in its summer flow nor winter fetters has the fair lake witnessed on its borders any of those savage convulsions which rend the fibers of a people’s heart and leave their scars upon generations; but the murmur of its waves has ever mingled with the breath of morning and evening prayer and the peaceful hum of daily toil.

Here is our story laid.

CHAPTER III.

THE ADVENT.

JACOB CHURR was the one unthrifty ne'er-do-well of the little village of Lanesville, which had grown up at the center of Township No. 7, Range 5, of the original survey of New Connecticut. This township either the surveyor or its early inhabitants had christened Greenfield. It was a quiet farming town upon the head-waters of the Pymatuning, a stream that meanders in lazy uncertainty through its bounds, heading at different times towards every point of the compass, as if its dark, sluggish waters had not yet concluded whether to seek the bright lake to the northward, the steaming Gulf far away to the southward, or to drone and idle forever under the clustering willows and alders of Greenfield.

How Jacob Churr ever came to leave the East or seek the West was a mystery to every one in the neighborhood. Why he stayed there would have been an equal mystery but for the law of nature which induces all matter to remain *in statu quo* until moved by some external force. Such a force never came to impel the gentle Jacob away from the banks of the pleasant stream he so much resembled. He seemed to have no wish and no capacity to acquire, except for the purpose of spending without permanent advantage. He could

do almost anything—except work—the people said. No one so deft as he in mending a gun, or a watch, or whatever was too delicate or too intricate for the arm of the smith or the wit of the carpenter. His kindly, unassuming good-nature had been a sure passport to the good-will of his neighbors. For some years he passed the summer months in hunting and fishing along the creek, a welcome presence at every sugar-camp, at every scene of youthful gayety, and at every farmer's home. In the winter he taught the village school, and anticipated the time when love, and not the rod, should be the scepter of the pedagogue. Then he became the trusted clerk of Wycke, the great merchant, who grew up at the Lanesville Corners and drew the trade of a rich region to his counters by honesty, candor, and enterprise. Jacob Churr was his employer's equal in honesty, fair dealing, and anxiety to please; and his employer prized him all the more that there was nothing to be feared from his enterprise. So he grew into the hearts of the people among whom he dwelt, loved in a quiet, half-contemptuous fashion which suited well his nature. He came to be called "Jake Churr," by old and young, in an incredibly short time; and before he was forty "old Jake," or "old Jake at Lanesville," was better known than almost any man in the country round. After Wycke's failure, Jake became postmaster, and was afterwards chosen a justice of the peace. Doing always what nobody else could do as well or would do for nothing; everybody's friend but his own; inventing machines for others to patent; laying plans for others to grow rich by; keeping up the school for

other people's children; the clerk of the church and secretary of the Masonic lodge; working always for others, with little regard for himself—he seemed like the village green, or the town pump which stood upon it—public property. He was everybody's friend and everybody's adviser, yet no one dreamed that he needed friendship or ever thought of giving him advice,—until at length he amazed every one by marrying Hetty Andrus, the one pretty daughter of Deacon Burrill Andrus, the richest, stingiest, roughest specimen of Mammon-worshiping Christian that ever lived and dug and scraped on the Pymatuning.

The Deacon had always regarded his fair daughter as so much merchandise, which should—in a Christian way, of course—be exchanged in due time for certain valuable lands which adjoined his creek farm, and become herself the property of one of his neighbor's boorish sons. So when her marriage to “old Jake Churr” was announced by the couple in person, he ordered them out of his house with most unchristian-like violence, and bade them never return.

No one was so little concerned about this reception as the gentle bachelor of forty-five and his bride of sixteen. People talked, old and young, far and near, of the amazing incident. Some blamed the Deacon and pitied old Jake; some blamed old Jake and pitied little Hetty; while still others blamed Hetty and pitied the gentle Jacob. The first were generally well-to-do parents; the second, aspiring young men; and the third, young ladies of uncertain matrimonial prospects. Jacob moved Hetty into the little box which had

formed his bachelor quarters so long—the room in the rear of the post-office, which was his shop or office according to the employment in which he was for the time engaged, and for a year this gentle January and blushing June exemplified love in a cottage so beautifully that no one dreamed that poverty caused them a moment's uneasiness or apprehension, as, indeed, we may well doubt if it did.

Then came to Hetty the trial of maternity, and her fair young life was rendered up in giving being to a sturdy son. Poor Jacob held her in his arms and saw her life ebb away in silent wonder, as it seemed, that love could not conquer death.

When she had gone, he suddenly aged. If it had not been for the boy she had put in his arms, people said, he would not have outlived her a fortnight. "Hetty's child," "Hetty's boy"—he never called him by any other name—kept him on earth awhile. He nursed and cared for the infant with all the tenderness and assiduity of a woman. He seemed to forget that he, too, must live, and that the years which had gone before had not left any store upon whose sweets he could feed in idle hours. For a time the friends whom he had served so freely and untiringly did not forget him, and never prophet was fed more miraculously or more mysteriously than old Jake and Hetty's baby. But at length the kindness of the people of Greenfield tired. "Jake Churr must not expect to be fed always, if he did have a young wife die and leave a baby. Did he think people were going to support him always just because he had been fool enough to marry, when he

was no more fit for marriage than a ten-year-old boy?" These questions the people asked, and answered for themselves by withholding further gratuity.

Then Jacob Churr awoke to the fact that he had wasted a life, and sat himself down to redeem, for the sake of "Hetty's boy," the years that he had lost. He had long had dim ideas of a certain machine whose perfection, he thought, would secure to its inventor a fortune large enough to satisfy any man's rapacity. He would complete this for Hetty's child. With the fault common to imaginative natures when driven by the sting of actual want, he looked beyond present necessity, and forgot poverty in the hope of gaining riches. From that time on he lived and wrought on his one grand idea. Sometimes he would do a little work for others, but only rarely could he be induced to leave "his craze," as the people called the machine he was modeling. The pittance that he received for his public duties, which he still discharged with unvarying punctuality, kept away absolute want, and for himself he had no other care.

When the boy was seven years old, his father took him one night into the little shop and told him that the machine was then complete—his machine—Hetty's boy's machine; told him it would some time bring him a great deal of money; told him its purpose; showed him how it worked, and finally gave him one little piece which fitted into a particular part, without which the whole was valueless. It was this which had caused him the most labor and study, and he was sure no one would ever guess its form or use, especially as he had

withheld from all others any reference to the purpose for which the quaint and intricate system of pulleys and wheels was designed. This piece he enjoined upon the boy that he should keep sacredly in his own possession should anything happen to his father, and when he was old enough to understand the machine he could put it in its place. So Jacob wrapped the piece in fine paper and put it in a locket which had belonged to the child's mother, carefully closed and brazed the jointure, and gave it into the keeping of the boy with many an importunate injunction that he should keep both it and the little model carefully, and tell no one their use or value should anything happen to his father. The son wondered, but was attent. It was a strange message to entrust to the little child, but "Hetty's boy" was older and riper to the heart of the recluse father than to any other. Fortunately for him, the child did not comprehend the strange flush upon the pallid cheek nor the unwonted fire in the tender eyes as he heard these admonitions and listened to the overwhelming tenderness of the evening prayer.

The next morning Jacob Churr had left Hetty's boy, and gone to join Hetty herself. The neighbors called it consumption; but the restful glory of eternal morning was on the wasted brow. When they buried the father, in the vehemence of long-slumbering charity, they talked about tar and feathers for Deacon Andrus unless he took to his home and cared for the orphan child of his disowned Hetty and the gentle Jacob whom he had allowed to die from want and overwork.

So Deacon Andrus yielded, and took his grandson home; but he did it purely as an act of charity, which he did not permit to be unknown for want of an historian.

CHAPTER IV.

HETTY'S BOY.

"HETTY'S BOY," as a first mark of kindly care on the part of his pious grandfather, was duly christened Markham Churr, a ceremony which Jacob had neglected, not, it is probable, from any want of reverence, but simply because he had forgotten it. Perhaps, too, it grated upon his feeling to isolate "Hetty's boy" from association with the worshiped presence which his memory kept green, by conferring upon the child any other name. The second wife of Burrill Andrus, after vainly questioning the wondering child whom chance had committed to her care, in regard to that presence whom her jealousy could not allow to rest in peace even in the grave, and finding him utterly non-committal, simply because he had nothing to tell save the every-day tenderesses of a simple and loving nature, had set her face as a flint against the little fellow. She selected, and insisted upon, the name Azariah as the most fitting and appropriate. But, for some in-

scrutable reason, the Deacon had pitched upon "Markham," and for once was utterly obdurate and unmoved both by his wife's tears and remonstrances. Perhaps if she had been allowed to gratify her little spitefulness in this insignificant matter she might have remembered charity in some greater ones.

Having been duly christened, the boy was allowed to eat at his grandfather's table abundance of plain, nutritious food, permitted to wear such clothing of the elders of the household as could not be otherwise disposed of, with the addition now and then of a jacket or wampus made for his especial benefit. When out of doors, he was a mark for the ill-temper of his grandfather. He was assigned to all sorts of tasks, proper and improper, and was rewarded alike for performance and failure with harsh words, and not unfrequently harsher blows. Within doors, there was a presence even more malign to the peace of the little Markham. Hetty's mother, who had died in the infancy of her only child, had been a sweet, penniless orphan, to whom Deacon Andrus, then a man of middle age, had, strangely enough, given more of love than those who knew him best believed his nature capable of bestowing. He had first met her during a visit to the East, undertaken in the hope of profit to arise from the death of some of his kindred. It may not be precisely correct to say that Burrill Andrus could fall in love with anything but himself and money, but the feeling which he had for Cordie Hatch was so foreign to his nature that it was always after her death a surprise even to himself. During her life she had exer-

cised a strange softening influence over him, and though it was not generally believed that her attachment for him was of that absorbing character which is usually regarded as the proper concomitant of the marriage relation, yet she had too much regard for herself and for him not to do all in her power to make her uncouth husband respectable and respected. There were soft sides to the Deacon's character, too, rough and harsh as he showed himself toward his grandson, and better parts than any one would have dreamed who had not studied his nature with the skill and forbearance which only a faithful wife can know or exercise. Unfortunately, the evil side of his nature was far more easily developed than the good, and when, after the death of Hetty's mother, there came into his household a nature strangely biased toward possible evil, he yielded to its influence even more readily than he had bowed to that of his dead wife; so that, when Rhoda Nellis became the stepmother of Hetty Andrus, her father sealed the good of his nature in the sepulcher of the past and gave the key of a faulty nature into the keeping of one still more defective than his own.

It were bootless to delineate the character of the swarthy young woman to whom had been committed the care of Hetty Andrus, and who, in mature years, was forced to assume a similar relation to Hetty's boy, farther than relates to these two facts. She was both better and worse than her antecedents seemed to justify. With few advantages, she had gained no little culture. Conscious of better things than she had achieved, she regarded with envy and hate whatever came within the

range of her life which she conceived to be better, higher or more preferred than herself. Excellence above her own was a thing to be hated rather than emulated. It was said that a trace of Indian blood—a suspicion of which her dark eyes, straight, jet hair and stealthy look might well justify—had given her the habit of sullen, intense moroseness, which could not be diverted from its object, and which hugged, as its chief enjoyment, illusion which brought the most profound grief. However this might be, such was her nature; and the one abiding object of her envious malignity was the dead Cordie who had preceded her in the affections and home of Burrill Andrus; and this envy in time ripened into a relentless hate of everything, animate or inanimate, which was in the remotest degree associated with the dead object of her undying jealousy. Clothing which she had worn, furniture she had used, flowers and pets she had nurtured, shared with Hetty and her boy the savage, revengeful hate of this woman, who was more the victim of a distorted nature than the deliberate originator of wrong. To what annoyance feminine hatred will descend, to what extremes it will push a brutal or a careless nature which is controlled by its instigations, may be better imagined than recited. For four years and more after his father's death young Markham Churr felt them in all their intensity. Yet, while they implanted somewhat of evil in his nature, they brought not a little of good in their train.

Almost every disadvantage in this life has something of compensation connected with it. Deprived of human affection, the boy was driven to his dog, the woods

and the fields, for companionship. Every form of life which inhabited them was familiar to him. Every tree and flower had a place in his mind as distinct as that given it in the *flora* of the botanist, and perhaps even more accurate. Every year there was a stormy attempt to compel his attendance at the district school, but the jealous parsimony which kept him always in the most uncouth attire so stung his proud nature, by making him the object of ridicule, that the victory was always on his side, and after a few days or weeks he was sure to substitute his dog and the woods, or a corner of the old garret, for the school-house, the unobservant teacher and the taunting juveniles. This garret was the city of refuge of the unfortunate lad during all these years. Very early during his stay at his grandfather's he discovered a loose board in the siding that enclosed the unfinished attic of the parlor wing, which was accessible from the roof of another wing. This opening he from time to time enlarged, improved and sedulously concealed. No punishment could extort from him the place of his hiding; and even the cunning of a malignant woman had not been sufficient to track him to it. Even Tige, the dog, seemed in league with his boy master, for when an attempt was made to induce him to follow the boy's trail, he stupidly refused to understand what it was intended that he should do, or ridiculously persisted in baying at the pump-stock (from the top of which, in truth, young Markham was accustomed to clamber to the roof that led to his den). Into this retreat, which was lighted through the interstices of some unnamed architectural ornament in the apex of the gable,

Markham smuggled from the garret proper, a little at a time, books and trinkets which had once belonged to his mother and which her successor's hate had consigned to oblivion. Some blankets, boards and boxes, together with his own peculiar toy-treasures, constituted the furniture of his queer snugery; to which was added, whenever his purpose served and concealment was desirable, such stock of eatables as he could purloin from the unlocked larder and ever-open cellar to enable him to hold out a sufficient time to make his absence a matter of remark in the neighborhood, and compel his enemies—for such he had come to regard them—to capitulate, upon condition that he should resume his visible habit.

This life had cultivated the virtues of self-reliance, caution, and endurance, to a remarkable degree, and had developed to a like extent certain faults of a kindred nature—stubbornness, indocility, and a kind of ugly temper. He was accounted in the neighborhood a strange child, and would have been called bad but for the general dislike of the neighbors for Burrill Andrus and his wife, and their consequent sympathy with the lad. Two fast friends he had—Curtis Field, his grandfather's farm-hand, and the stump-tailed yellow dog, Tige; both knowing by instinct the kind and affectionate nature underlying the rough surface-indications.

And now we are ready to follow the pair in their wanderings.

CHAPTER V.

“WHERE IS THY BROTHER?”

THE absence of the boy Markham after the black-snake adventure was at first attributed to one of his “sulky fits,” as the family and neighbors were accustomed to call his inclination to hide away from his persecutors. But when the days grew into weeks, and neither he nor his inseparable companion, the dog Tige, were seen about the Deacon’s premises, surprise was awakened in the neighborhood, which very soon ripened into suspicion. Calumny, like death, loves a shining mark, and the Deacon’s prominence in the little world of Greenfield made him a fitting target for the darts of slander. Added to this, was the unfortunate fact that his professions of sanctity and humility had been strongly negatived by the major part of his acts, and especially by his conduct towards Hetty and her orphan boy. The carnal heart hates hypocrisy, and no community ever had a keener instinct for its detection than the one in which the Deacon dwelt. So the murmur of the gossips soon rose to an angry roar, and to discover the whereabouts of Hetty’s boy seemed to have become the chief business of every resident of Greenfield.

No one had seen him leave the meadow; no one saw him pass along the road. This was by no means strange, since the boy, terrified at the audacity of his

act, apprehensive, indeed, of the consequences, fled upon the instant, with that instinct of concealment which characterizes the shedder of blood. Before the Deacon had reached the mowers across the field, the boy, fearing the worst, had dropped his tedding-fork, and, stooping low to avoid observation, slipped away through the luxuriant timothy, parting it before him with his hands, gliding along almost as deftly as the serpent he had hunted could have done. Arrived at the fence which bounded the "twenty-acre lot," he sought a point where a low-branching tree grew beside it, and, clambering on the topmost rail, peered through the dense screen of leaves at the group of mowers who stood around the discomfited Deacon. It was evident that the worst of his fears had not been realized. His grandfather was alive, and, from the sounds of jocular-ity which reached him, evidently not seriously injured. The boy drew a long breath as this fact became appar-ent, and, probably for the first time in his life, breathed a prayer—of gratitude that he was not a murderer. He had been thinking, ever since he began his flight, of Cain and the mark set in his forehead, and now rubbed his own brow with a sigh of relief. Then the welts which his grandfather's brutal blows had raised upon his back began to smart, and he determined never again to come within reach of the old man's arm. He jumped down from the fence, set his face to the east-ward, crossed the Pymatuning on a fallen sycamore, and pushed on across the lots and through the woods to the State road, five miles away, which was to be his avenue to safety and the world.

So his track was lost, and no inquiry in the neighborhood revealed any trace of him from that day. The populace murmured, and finally thundered. They coupled Deacon Andrus's name with the worst of words. They said he was a murderer! The old man heard it, and shrank in mortal terror. Perhaps conscience pricked him at the last, and showed him how in thought at least he had deserved the epithet. Then a day came when he was called upon to account for the absent lad.

It was an angry, sullen crowd that came to demand the boy Markham of his grandfather. It was no effervescent excitement or curiosity which moved them, neither were they prompted to any great degree by dislike of the Deacon, though that was very general. It was a stern, resolute set of men, who believed that a great wrong had been done, and they were determined to see that it did not go unpunished if it were so. This was not the first step they had taken. On the Saturday night before they had met at the office of a justice of the peace, who was now with them, and after mature deliberation had deputed certain of their number to make inquiries for the missing lad. On every road leading from the Deacon's neighborhood in any direction, for a distance of five miles at least, careful inquiries had been made at every house. The State road, being five miles to the eastward, in another township, and across the Pymatuning, was not thought of, it being naturally supposed that if the boy were going northward he would take the road he was on or a parallel one on either side. They had met that morn-

ing and heard the reports of the committees appointed to make these inquiries. The result strengthened the former suspicion. Still, no one would make the necessary affidavit and cause the arrest of the suspected party. They were a cautious but a very determined people. They gathered at the Deacon's mostly in small companies, and not in a mob. There was nothing turbulent or boisterous about their proceedings. Even the Deacon's swarthy second wife quailed when she looked at the hundred or more resolute men who sat upon the fence or lounged about the barn and stables, talking in low tones before the search began. They were men who were very heedful of others' rights, but were not to be trifled with in the performance of duty. The Deacon tried to talk with some of the first comers, for, though he knew their errand, he would not appear conscious of it, until so many arrived, and their furtive, uneasy glances and restless movements made it bootless to assume ignorance of their purpose. Then he rose from the roadside where he had been sitting, and, haggard with horror, went into the house and faced his wife—who for once was too greatly terrified either to scold or weep—in mute, questioning agony, as if he half suspected her of the crime which his neighbors attributed to him.

"What do you suppose has become of that boy, Rhoda?" he asked, after a while.

"The Lord only knows," she replied, adding a cautionary hypothesis—"if he keeps track of such a mean, sullen little scamp at all. I wish he'd never come here. I knew he'd bring trouble from the first,

and now that he's gone I hope he'll stay, and never darken our doors again—never!”

“There don't seem to be any danger of that,” said the Deacon, sternly.

“You don't mean—to—say,” said the woman, chokingly and hurriedly—“there hain't nothing happened to him, has there, Deacon?”

“That's just what we don't know,” said the Deacon, evidently relieved by his wife's manner.

“Is—a—is—it—about *him* that *they* have come?” she asked, pointing to the neighbors.

“I s'pose so,” jerked the Deacon in reply. His supposition was made a certainty even as he spoke. The justice of the peace, with the constable and one who was evidently the moral leader of the crowd, came up the steps and knocked at the door.

“Come in,” said the Deacon, huskily.

The committee—for such they were—entered, and, after a moment of embarrassed silence, the man who had entered first, to whom leadership seemed as natural as his life, addressed the couple who stood before him.

“Mornin', Deacon; mornin', Mis' Andrus,” with a short bow to each as he spoke. “Ther may as well be no misunderstandin', I s'pose. The Squire an' Fred Burlingame an' I hev been 'p'inted a committee by the neighbors to say to ye that they've come together to find out if they can what's become of the boy Markham, yer gran'child that's been living with ye some years back.”

“I s'pose ye think that I”—the Deacon began.

"Ther ain't no charge 'gin ye, Deacon, so fur as I'm aware on," interrupted the spokesman. "I think I'm right, Squire Woods?" he added, as he turned inquiringly to the justice of the peace.

"Ther ain't no charge made agin nobody up to this p'int," said that functionary, with the precision which was apparently necessary to assert his position and dignity. "The boy's missin', that's all. So, Deacon, I would advise you to say nothing in regard to the matter, unless, indeed, you know where the boy is, and can save us farther trouble by producin' him—alive, that is," he added, ominously.

Then the Deacon's manhood and his conscious innocence asserted themselves. He turned from his wife, who had instinctively grasped his arm, as if to save him from some threatened danger, and, stepping to the open door by which the committee stood, he said, loud enough for all to hear, with head erect and flashing eyes:

"I don't say it's not a heavy accusation ye bring agin me, neighbors, by the very fact of yer comin' here, but I do say if ye'll clear up the mystery about that boy's disappearance ye'll do me more good than any on ye'll ever git from it yerselves. No, I ain't afraid to talk. I don't 'low as I've allers done just right by the boy. Perhaps I'm harder and closer than I've any call to be. But I never harmed the boy—never—barrin' some correction that mout 'ave been a leetle too severe. Me nor mine hain't anything to fear from yer search, an' we'll do all in our power to help ye—that we will."

"The old man's pluck to the backbone," said one of the crowd to another, in an undertone.

Just at that time Curtis Field came up the lane from the Deacon's "Number Two" pasture, where he had been after horses. He was riding one of the span bare-back, leading the other by the halter, and held a measure in one hand in which he had carried a few oats to induce the animals to be caught. Seeing the crowd, he rode up to the house in a brisk trot, swinging his long legs to and fro on his bareback steed.

"Hullo!" he said; "what's this? One would think, now, ther was a weddin' or a funeral on hand."

"We're jest come on the search of the Deacon's gran'son," said the Squire, who had come out on the porch.

Curtis Field gave a long, contemptuous whistle.

"Ain't ye goin' to help us, Curt?" asked the magistrate.

"No," replied Field; "I hain't got no time to waste in sech foolishness, and if you'll all take my advice you'll jest go home and go ter gittin' in oats. It's good weather for that."

"So 'tis, Curt," said the one who has been spoken of as the real leader of the crowd; "but we're not going to do that till we know the boy's alive and well, or know what has 'come of him."

"Now, gentlemen," said Curt, decisively, as he jumped down from his horse and went up on the porch, "you're on a wrong scent entirely. I s'pose ther ain't one on ye but what'll allow that if that ar boy's got a friend on the ground his name's Curt Field?"

"No doubt of that," said the spokesman.

"An' I tell ye," said Field, "that boy's as safe an' sound as any of us."

"You know where he is, then?"

"No, I don't; but I know this: he left the medder that day the Deacon tuk to killin' snakes," said Curtis, with a wink towards the doorway where the Deacon stood, "an' hain't been heard of since. Wal, now, there's two things satisfies me he's come to no harm. In the first place, that boy's mightily given ter shiftin' fer himself. I've knowed him to be missin' afore, a week or more at a time—but *then the dog was here*. Now the dog's gone, too. If anything had happened to the boy the dog would 'ave been home afore now. But boy an' dog's gone together; an' they're gone to stay. I've no idea where. I've been rackin' my brain to think where he'd go, an' can't do it. But you can jest lay your life, Squire, that he's out of your jurisdiction, an' gittin' funder this very minnit, or my name ain't Curt Field. I heerd somethin' of this meetin'," continued Field, "an' I thought I'd jest let it go on, so's the Deacon could see what folks thought of the way that he'd been a-treatin' that boy. As I told you, he's a shifty boy; an' you've all heerd of his hidin' away from the folks here when things got too hot for him in the house. I know some on ye, perhaps the Deacon, thought I was helpin' him, and that maybe my little house was his hidin'-place. 'Tain't so; but I happened to find his hidin'-place once, an' as he's not likely to want it any more I'll show it to ye; only sayin' that the boy's no more

idee that I know where 'tis than you hev of its sitoaa-tion."

He stepped to the end of the porch, put his hand on a small shelf which was near the well, threw one foot to the top of the big square cucumber-pump, and climbed from that to the roof of the kitchen wing of the house.

"Give me your hand, Josh," he said, and drew up after him the leader of the crowd.

It should be explained here that the Deacon's house fronted to the westward, though the most frequently used entrance was on the north, at a small porch between the main building and the kitchen and dairy, which lay beyond. The house had been small and narrow, and inconvenient, but the Deacon's love for his first wife had induced him to build, upon the south side, a wing designed for use only as a parlor. This wing was thrown back from the front of the building so as to admit of stepping upon the porch in front of it from the side door of the "living," or "west," room, as the front room of the original house was indefinitely called. This left the gable of the new wing abutting on the slope of the roof of the kitchen wing, a sort of false roof having been laid in the angle thus formed, to prevent the water from running against the new portion. The new wing was somewhat higher than the old one, and with a steeper roof, according to the fashion of the time when it was built. Crossing to the gable with his companion, Curtis Field began to peer about the angle just above the cornice, and after a short time moved several of the clapboards of the parlor wing, so as to

make an opening sufficient for a man to squeeze in with difficulty. Through this the two men went, and, when they returned, brought with them the most important part of the heterogeneous plunder which the lad had concealed there.

"There, then!" said Curtis, as he landed down from the pump-stock. "I happened to surprise the little feller's secret one mornin' afore the Deacon was a-stirrin', and I took a fancy to him from that minnit. He used to hide there when he was afraid of a larrupin' below stairs, you know, Deacon; an' you, an' yer wife, too, took a good bit of trouble tryin' to find out where he was. You never noticed, I suppose, that he never runned away when there was snow on the ground. The very thing that he hid away from then, he's run away from now; and that's the Deacon's whip an' his wife's tongue. I'm satisfied he's safe; but, poor as I am, I'd give twenty-five dollars to know where he is. I've had thoughts of startin' off on a hunt fer him myself."

"I'll give you a hundred dollars if you'll do it, providin' you wont come back until you find him an' bring me proof he's alive."

"Deacon, it's a bargain," said Field, clapping the old man's shoulder. "Shell out the money, an' I'm off to-morrow."

To the surprise of all, the Deacon went into the house and returned with the sum named, which he paid into the young man's hand.

Then there went up a cheer from the crowd, and, with strange inconsistency, a special "cheer for Deacon Andrus." Nothing had been done towards the object

of their assemblage, but somehow the crowd were satisfied that they had wronged the old man by their suspicion, and they took this method of making amends, and then dispersed.

It was in vain. He made no acknowledgment of the apologetic cheer, but turned back into his house and shut the door. The iron had entered the soul of the hard, self-righteous man. He had been incurably degraded by the suspicion which had been fastened upon him. From that day he shunned all men. He never left his farm and never worked with any man he had employed. He ceased to attend church, and the minister, who went to inquire the cause, was met only with horrible curses. Strange tales were told of the brutality and blasphemous wickedness of his later years, and "as wicked as Deke Andrus" became afterwards a byword on the Pymatuning. But none except his own family and the cattle on whom he vented his wrath could avouch anything as to his temper, for he never spoke to one of his neighbors from that day.

CHAPTER VI.

CURTIS FIELD.

CURTIS FIELD had never known anything but poverty and hardship. His father having died in his boyhood, his mother, a poor and feeble woman, had required the proceeds of his labor until he had reached man's estate, leaving him no means of acquiring that education which in the region where he dwelt was considered the *sine qua non* of success. Upon her death, Curtis had set himself down to consider his future life, and had determined that it was too late for him to attempt to remedy the defects of his early training. To read with difficulty, write with tribulation, and perform those rudimentary operations of arithmetic which are absolutely essential to the accurate estimation of values in dollars and cents, constituted the entire stock of what he would have termed his "larnin'"; but he was a keen, shrewd fellow, who had faced the world bravely and cheerfully. Strong-limbed and active, trained to labor, inured to hardships, he was highly prized in all that region as one of the best farm-hands that could be found. Deacon Andrus, with a keen eye to the main chance, recognized his merits as a laborer; and Curtis, whose object was to take his brawn to the best market, did not hesitate at those exhibitions of penuriousness and querulous dictation which made it so

difficult for the Deacon to obtain steady labor. So it resulted that for several years Curtis had worked for the Deacon, "by the month," as he said, year in and year out, working more hours, subsisting upon worse fare and submitting to more fault-finding from his employer, than any other laborer on the Reserve would have endured. But in the meantime he had not forgotten his own interests. He had exacted higher wages than any one else could get, for he was worth it. He had bought a fifty-acre farm which lay near the Deacon's; when that was paid for he had purchased a horse and buggy; and was now regarded as a thrifty bachelor, who only required a wife to enable him to settle on his own place and prosper. During four years he had been the chief companion and only confidant of the boy Markham. During the last year he had slept most of the time at his own house, instead of remaining at the Deacon's, and had attended to a little stock which he had put on the farm in addition to his labors for his employer. It was well understood that he did not intend to "work out" after that season. Very frequently Markham had gone with him to his house at night, and usually had spent the Sabbath at "Curt's new place," as it was called. Between boy and man a very warm feeling had grown, up and the latter had a sort of Quixotic notion that whenever he should find the wife who was to complete the circle of his own being he would take Markham to his home and help him as much as he could in what he felt was likely to be a difficult life. Not a word of this, however, had he breathed to the boy. To this half-home came Field the night after he had

engaged to search for the missing lad, and sat himself down to mature his plan of action.

“The boy ain’t dead, that’s certain,” he said to himself, “but where he’s gone, or which way, I don’t see how I’m ter find out. It’s worse than huntin’ needles in a hay-stack, that I’ve heerd tell on, ’cause you can’t even say the needle’s in the stack at all. The boy’s got all out doors ter go, an’ he hain’t no notion of stoppin’ anywhere nigh Burrill Andrus nor of comin’ back neither. Let me see. He’s got big ideas, that boy has, about eddication an’ the like. His father must have been a remarkable man, though he didn’t amount to any considerable sum in the long run. But, bless my soul, the little feller could read as well as if he’d been a man grown when he first came to the Deacon’s. I do think I’ve larned more from him than I ever did afore. Now he’s gone off to make his fortin’, an’ he’ll make it, too—at least I hope he will. But what I want to know now is, *where* did he go? This money I’ve got here would do him a sight of good, if he only had it, an’ if I can find him he shall have it, too. Let me see. He’s started to go East or West. There ain’t but two ways a boy can go that cuts loose an’ goes out in the world for himself, if he’s got any spunk. An’ I’m of the notion that he’d be more likely to go East than West. Come to think of it, now, I never heerd him talk about the West, but he’s asked me a sight of questions about the East, an, I’ve told him a many a lie about it too, I s’pose. Likely’s not he’ll find out all about it afore I do, now. He’s put out for the East, I’m most ’sure; but the trouble is to know what road he’d take. He

didn't just start off and walk towards sunrise, surely. He's got sense enough to follow the beaten roads, an' if he does that he's bound to fetch up either at the lake or at Pittsburg; and it's my notion he started for the lake, 'cause he's been nigh about there on the State road when he went with me to the general muster last year, an' he's asked me no end of questions about the road, an' the boats, an' all them things, time an' agin, when I've been up to the harbor with the Deacon's cheese. He's been to Gatesville, on the State road, and never been five miles away from home in any other direction, so far as I ever knew. That's his track. He's struck the State road and gone North as far as Gatesville anyhow. I'll go there, and then begin to inquire."

The sun had not risen the next morning when Curtis Field started on his hunt for the runaway.

CHAPTER VII.

REXVILLE.

MIDWAY between two of the lake ports, which were in that day studded thick with clustering masts, was set one of those collections of white houses, half hidden by rows of sturdy maples ranged along the sidewalks and the thrifty orchards in the rear, which perch upon the ridge that stretches through the

lake townships. It is not probable that a sense of beauty had anything to do with the location of the little village; but if an artist's eye had been the arbiter, hardly could a more attractive situation have been found in all that region.

Just at the point where the somewhat monotonous outline of the inner ridge was cut by the waters of one of the northward-trending creeks of the region, whose waters are here boisterous and rapid, as if they yet chafed at the obstacle through which they had cut their way ages before, stood the town, crowning the precipitous banks of shelving slate whose gray-blue barrenness was only here and there hidden by the veil of pitying verdure. Just back of the town, a winding valley offered an outlet to the waters of a little tributary that sprang mysteriously through the black alluvium at the southern base of the ridge and then bustled noisily down to the creek, fretted with dams and wheels through all its brief journey. Across the valley came the "angling" road which tapped the artery of traffic, "the old State road," half a dozen miles away. Though in sight of the bright waters of the lake, the town had no port, and thereby both lost the advantages and was spared the evils which invariably attend the juncture of land and water traffic. It was to have been laid out with that severe attention to rectangularity which seems as instinctive with the American town-builder as tree-felling is to the beaver. Fortunately, the inequalities of the surface, united with the Yankee instinct for the easiest as well as the quickest route from one point to another, had in several

instances forced the rectilinear prejudice into a compromise, resulting in several agreeable street curves, which, though pleasant to the eye, were subjects of mortification to the inhabitants, and are so unto this day.

In the center of the town was the regulation square—just one acre, with a few rods additional for good measurement—which the founder providently reserved for public use, whether as a muster-field, for the erection of liberty-poles, the site of a town-house, the location of a town-pump or hay-scales, or as a public park, which in the remote future should offer delectation to the thousands who might be domiciled about it when the modest village should develop into metropolitan proportions, the chroniclers of that day do not inform us. Accident preserved this open space from the usual disfigurement and transformed it into a thing of beauty. It happened in this wise.

The one great institution of Rexville was its Academy. As far back as the memory of its oldest inhabitant could reach, it had been the Mount Athos of that region, to which flocked the youths of all the country round, both male and female, to learn the new things which were beyond the curriculum of the county district-school in those days, when grammar and high school were yet unknown. To this institution, rearing its white cupola on the eastern border, the public square was an essential adjunct. Here swarmed at "recreation hour" scores of young men, engaged in the healthful rivalry of athletic games, and along its custom-marked paths at evening loitered, in tender yet innocent flirtation, couples who not seldom there

arranged to walk together the path of life. The heart of Rexville was in its plain, unpretentious old Academy, whose hard benches and bare walls were hallowed with the ecstatic light of science, and whose crowded halls and narrow stairways were the right royal road to knowledge for many a happy devotee. Fortunately, too, it was the mainstay of the village prosperity. Room-rent, board, lodgings, the purchase of groceries, and the absorption of dry goods, made the Academy as dear to the thrifty burghers of Rexville as to the hungry youths who flocked to it for instruction. That they eventually killed their goose by an over-zealous desire to obtain its eggs is no new argument against the theory, but only another instance of the blindness which so often accompanies undue greed. If the denizens of Rexville did not appreciate the Academy, they did appreciate the perquisites which attended its existence; and its Commencement Day was the one great annual festival which no one was too busy, too dull, or too crabbed to attend. Whatever, therefore, threatened the prosperity of this institution stirred the town even as the preaching of Paul moved the Ephesians, and for the same selfish reasons.

So when it was proposed to build a town-hall in the center of the public square, the village rose in arms, and angry protests rang from students, professors, and grocers, alike. When town-meeting day came, a tumultuous crowd assembled to coax, wheedle, and overawe the suburban sovereigns, and it was said that some of the students who were fortunate enough to have faces which had grown familiar with the razor

did not hesitate at extension of the truth, either as to age or residence, in order to "obtain the right" to use the elective franchise in order to defeat the impending evil. This is no doubt a mistake, since some of those who were thus accused are at this very day among the staunchest and noisiest advocates of electoral purity and reform—unless, indeed, they learned by this experience the frailty of man's political nature and the impolicy of fraud.

The result of their patriotic self-sacrifice, however, was that the village green was saved, and the town-house located at its northern border, with a street between to cut off its contamination. To celebrate their triumph, the students and the villagers combined to set on foot a scheme for the permanent improvement of the green. A civil engineer from a neighboring city, assisted by a corps of enthusiastic academic neophytes, laid off the square and dotted it with stakes, which indicated with mathematical accuracy the amount of cutting and filling required to bring the surface to a perfect gradient of the requisite number of inches to the rod. He made, too, an elegantly-drawn plan, full of gracefully-curved walks, with mounds and circles at their intersections, and sprinkled the vacant places with mimic trees, which he marked alternately "Decid." and "Ev'g.," as his ideas of variety required. For this labor he charged half-price only, as he said, which the students paid by subscription. The town clerk took the plan and hung it on his office wall, and it has ever since been transferred religiously to his successors in office as one of the muniments thereof.

Then came the long vacation of midsummer, and the village boys used the stakes in their moonlight games upon the common, without regard to the injunction "cut" or "fill," so that all the landmarks disappeared. But in the autumn the townspeople made a "bee," with plows, harrows, rollers, spades, and shovels, while students and burghers joined with them in electing the man with the strongest voice to "boss the job;" and when it was completed they complacently declared that he had hit a better level with his eye than the engineer with his theodolite. Then a heavy railing was put around the green, broad paths were laid off from corner to corner and from side to side, with a mound and a flag-staff at the intersection, and the whole set thickly with serried rows of maples. Here and there a balsam (of which an enterprising nurseryman gave a dozen that had been left on his hands as unsalable) was stuck in at the angles, where it would be no loss if it died. And, finally, the whole was seeded with herd-grass and timothy.

Everything lived and grew wonderfully—herd and timothy, and maples and balsams. Time gnawed away the fence, until now the romping boy or the dreaming lover wanders unhindered under the clustering branches of the mimic forest—an emerald set in the white heart of Rexville, which drones on, year after year, unconscious of its own loveliness.

CHAPTER VIII.

“A. MOREY & CO.”

TO Rexville, Curtis Field traced the runaway boy, and entered the place by the “angling” road which crosses the little ravine behind the town. As he came to the foot of the hill, he saw, lying in the door of a large building upon his right, the dog Tige, and knew that his search was ended. The building, which was of the dark drab color since become as common as it then was rare, stood close beside a tannery, that was painted a glaring red; the two being the only bits of colored architecture in the town. The gray building bore the sign “A. Morey & Co., Morocco Factory.” An elderly man of stooping habit, who walked with the quiet air which attends ownership, was just coming out as Field reined up his horse at the door.

“Good afternoon,” said Curtis; “can you tell me where to find the owner of this establishment?”

“Well,” said the elderly man, looking up quickly through his glasses with a pair of grey eyes which twinkled keenly under his bushy, overhanging brows, “I’m what’s left of him. They call me Morey; and Co. hasn’t been seen in these parts lately. What can I do for you?”

“Wal, nothin’ worth mentionin’, Mr. Morey,” said Field, laughing at the quaint introduction the old fellow

had given himself. "I jest thought I'd ask where you got that dog?"

Morey's head was turned on one side with a comical leer as he looked up at his interrogator and answered, in true Yankee fashion :

"See here, Mister, where do you come from?"

"Why, what difference does that make?" asked Field, with the air of one who feels that he is being made game of.

"Nothing, stranger," said Morey, with the gravest of faces, "only I had a curiosity to know, as you had to learn where I got that dog. But," with the greatest suavity of tone, "if you've got any objection to lettin' it be known where you're from, I'm sure I beg your pardon."

"Pshaw!" said Field testily. "You know I've no objection to tellin', only I didn't see as't made any difference, no how. I'm from down on the Pymatuning."

"Well, now," said Morey, in a conciliatory tone, "one wouldn't naturally see the pint of my inquiry at first; but I'd 'a' sworn you were from down about Greenfield before you told me."

"Why so?"

"That's the funny part of it, Mister. It's because of your inquiry about that dog," said Morey, seriously.

"Oh!" said Field, "you think he was raised in that region?"

"Raised! What, that dog!" said Morey, indignantly. "Not a bit of it. You couldn't have shot wider if you had tried. That dog, my friend, was never outside the circle of hills you can see from here, and I

had hoped that he never would be. You see, sir," he continued, with bland importance of tone and a look of the utmost sincerity, "I've had no end of trouble about dogs. I have to keep one. What would a tannery of any kind be without a dog? More especially a genteel kind of a tannery like mine—a morocco factory, sir. No, I have to keep a dog. It would ruin my reputation to be without one. But, you see, just as soon as I get one, and he has eaten up two or three dozen hides for me, and got his own well stuffed with fat, some fellow from down your way comes along and stumps me for a trade, and, if I wont sell, just spirits my dog away. I never had a dog before this one that I could keep those Pymatuning fellows from stealin'. No offence to you, sir, but it's a fact. Now this dog I had made to order, and have had him now, let me see, thirteen years last Winter, and no one hasn't asked for him, nor even hinted that he'd like to have him, till you did just now. He's a remarkable dog, sir. Here, get up, you brute," said he, giving Tige a tremendous kick. "Get up and show your pints!"

Tige sprang up, with a yell of pain, ran across the road and stood looking at the two men in amazement.

"Do you see," said Morey, "how thin he is. If you'll notice, he don't cast no shadow only when he stands endwise to the sunshine. No amount of feedin' could make that animal fat. It's in the breed, sir—in the breed. Yet not entirely in the breed, either. It took careful raisin' to bring up a dog that, at thirteen years, should be as nigh an apparition as that. For three years, sir, we didn't feed that dog a single thing

but cornmeal, ground cob and all, and sifted through a ladder, mixed with oak-tanned sole-leather clippings, cut up fine, the whole stirred up in strong sumac-liquor and just parboiled a little."

"Wal, now," said Field, who began to appreciate the character he had met, "if you hadn't told me that, I would have sworn that I knew the dog, and that he was raised on the Pymatuning. Here, Tige!" snapping his fingers towards him.

The dog, recognizing Field's voice, came forward, with a sidling, deprecatory motion, wagging his hind legs in his utter default of tail.

"Well, I'll be darned," said Morey, in assumed surprise, "if I don't believe a shadow would follow one of you Pymatuning fellows if you should whistle to it. Get out, you miserable cuss," he added, as the dog came crouching towards him. Then he picked up a handful of stones and threw at the poor beast until he went howling round the corner of the building.

He turned to Field, in a pleading manner, and said:

"Stranger, you mustn't ever try to get that dog away from me. I've took so much pride in him! Did you notice his tail, Mister?"

"Not exactly," answered Field. "I noticed a good location for one, though."

"Just so, Mister, just so. Now, you wouldn't believe it, but ten years ago that dog had the finest tail ever seen on a dog in these streets. Fact, sir! A red fox would have been proud of such a fine brush. But, you see, the style of feed I had to give him to keep

him thin didn't give much margin for fancy fixin's; so the thing gradually shrunk away, till one morning it broke short off when he tried to welcome me to the shop with a wag of his extremity."

. Field laughed heartily at this ridiculous recital, and, getting down from his buggy, quietly tied his horse to a post near the door, fully convinced that Markham Churr was at that very instant in the factory, and that Morey was trying to put him off the scent, or at least delay him until he could give the boy warning that he was pursued.

"Mr. Morey," said he, with serious earnestness, "I want to talk with you on a matter which I don't think we shall differ much about when we come to a right understanding of each other."

"Walk right into the office, sir," said Morey—"unless it's something more about the dog. I do all my business except dog-trading in the office. That I always do in the street."

They went into the office, and Morey listened to the recital Field gave him of Markham's past life with the same gravity of demeanor which he had maintained during the badinage which had passed out of doors. When all was told, Morey said, in a tone which showed sincerity as evidently as his former one had betrayed levity:

"I am glad to hear this, Mr. Field. Your account does not differ materially from the one the boy gave himself. It confirms my judgment that he is a boy of pluck and truth. I took a fancy to him at the very first. And now what do you propose to do—take him back?"

"By no means, unless he is anxious to go."

"You need not have any fear of that. He says he will never go back, and, if he is taken, will run away again at the first opportunity. He seems bent on getting an education. Says he came here because he had heard so much of the Academy, and thought he might get a chance to work part of the time and go to school the rest. I thought it might be the froth of an ordinary runaway, and so hired him for a small sum a day and put him at the meanest and dirtiest work in the shop—taking half-cured hides from one vat and spreading them in another. There's no fun nor poetry in it, but he has worked away at the slimy, clammy mass with the steady, determined way of one that means business. I had determined, if no one came for him, to fix him up a little, let him work when he could, and think he was sending himself to school. Of course he can't half pay for his feed, let alone clothes and books, and I am by no means rich, but I like him, and my wife would dote on him if her conscience could be convinced that she was not committing larceny of some one else's darling, and—well, you know, I should only have to put a little more water in the porridge, anyhow. They say a boy is like a pet pig—his living costs nothing. I don't know. Am not blessed with any son and heir, and raised myself."

Curtis Field reached his hand across the table, and, in the hearty shake which followed, the two men came to "the right understanding" which he had predicted. He remained the guest of Mr. Morey for sev-

eral days; and, when he drove away, that shrewd observer remarked to his wife that "he had often met with persons who would lie to hide their evil deeds, and sometimes to get credit for good ones, but he didn't recollect having met one before who would lie to give another the benefit of his own kind acts." And when the good lady opened wide her eyes and asked for an explanation, he pointed to a roll of bills in his hand, and asked if she supposed old Deacon Andrus gave all that to bring back the grandson he hated.

"Why, do you think that rough, coarse fellow took part of his own hard earnings and gave to us to help this boy, to whom he is not related at all?" she asked, in surprise.

"Not a doubt about it, Mrs. Morey," he answered, with his usual gravity, but more than usual earnestness. "That rough fellow is a lump of the salt of the earth—the real article, not such as they have in the churches."

"Well, Albert," she said, with a tremulous smile upon her lips, "can't we do something in the salt business, too?"

"Hush! hush!" said he, in assumed horror. "You may do the charity and religion for the household, but, for heaven's sake, leave the joking to me. You are not cut out for that, dear."

Yet there was a queer smile on the face of this strange man, and he had much trouble to get his glasses clear enough to see through them as he walked over to his office.

Curtis Field's report on his return was a very indefinite one, but it left the impression that the errant lad had shipped upon some craft which traded up and down the lakes. The proof which he brought of having found the lost boy was sufficient to satisfy Burrill Andrus; and those who had been so anxious about the object of his search, deprived of the zest of discovering crime, were amply satisfied with Curtis Field's declaration of having seen the lad, and, being a little ashamed of what might be considered officiousness, refrained from asking any questions.

So Markham Churr was left at peace, to make himself a man, at Rexville, less than forty miles away from his birthplace. And it was not until several years later that the rumor came back to Greenfield that the young Churr who had risen to be one of the brightest students of the Rexville Academy was the barefoot hero of the black-snake fight in Deacon Andrus's meadow.

CHAPTER IX.

THE DREAMER'S LEGACY.

MARKHAM CHURR was in his sixteenth year when Curtis Field determined, as he informed the neighbors, to test the truth of this rumor, and ascertain whether or not the young student was indeed the runaway grandson of old Deacon Andrus, who,

in the meantime, had gone to his rest, with a certain questionable odor of something very unlike sanctity about his name, forgetting even in death to make any reparation for the wrong done to Hetty and her boy. For this purpose, Field declared his intention of visiting Rexville at the approaching Commencement, and personally inspecting and interviewing the young man in question. It is presumable that he did so and was quite satisfied with the result, since a few days afterwards he returned with a young man in his buggy, who was duly installed in the front upper room of Curtis Field's white story-and-a-half house, in which room were sacredly kept the somewhat heterogeneous relics taken from Markham Churr's secret den in his grandfather's garret years before. Besides this, Curtis, on his arrival, introduced the young man to his wife (for it had seemed impossible that both of the good couple should leave the dairy in the height of the milk season to go to Rexville) as "our Markham," with a certain undertone of ownership and pride which betokened that he had not lost the feeling which he had manifested toward the snake-hunting boy in Deacon Andrus's meadow when he declared that he wished he was his own son; though since that time the good fellow had received such a quiver-full of the poor man's blessings that, with his slender means, he was not likely to feel that envious desire in future.

"Dear, dear, how glad I am to see you! I've heard Mr. Field talk about you so much that you really seem like one of the family. I hope you'll find it homelike with us," was the good wife's greeting.

This kindly welcome the good woman enforced by setting before the hungry pair a supper of fresh ham and eggs, light, creamy biscuits, and fragrant coffee, with a lavish supply of milk and honey—all served by herself with a heartiness which is known only when the hostess has prepared the viands. When Curtis Field had praised the supper, both in word and deed, he reverted to the subject of which his mind was full.

“I tell ye what, Mother,” said he, “I was sorry ye didn’t go to Rexville, just to hear our Markham speak in the grove. I’d ’a’ been willin’ to ’a’ lost the cheese for a week, slick and clean, just to ’a’ had you there.”

“But then the cows would have dried up, Curt, if I had not stayed to ’tend to them,” said his wife, reproachfully.

“So they would,” he answered, laughing. “But I tell you, it was grand. To start with, it’s jest about the finest maple-grove you ever see—about half a mile from town. In one place four trees stand in a sort of a square, as if they’d been put there a-purpose, with one or two smaller ones on the south an’ west sides, put there, I cal’late, to stop what little sunshine might slip under the shaggy heads of the big ones. Right atwixt them trees they had fixed up a platform, with seats, an’ a table, an’ a silver pitcher, an’ boquets, an’ a carpet; an’ the great old gray tree-trunks was almost hid for twenty feet or so with wreaths of roses. Over the platform, too, was one big wreath of roses’ an’ pinks, an’ I don’t know what else, held by ropes all hid in flowers, an’ bigger than a wagon-wheel,

right above the middle on't. Every one had to stand under this when he said his piece to the folks that sot on the benches in front. An' there was lots of 'em; not less than a thousand, I'll bet. An' the girls read, an' the boys spoke, an' the band played, an' the Professor he sot on the platform as big as a captain on muster-day, as if he was proud on 'em all an' knowed they was proud o' him—as they oughter be. I tell ye it was grand! But Markham, he spoke last and beat 'em all."

"Now, Mr. Field!" put in the returned runaway bashfully.

"That's what everybody 'lowed, an' you mustn't go to settin' up agin' such a jedgment as that," said Field, gleefully.

A week of aimless indolence, and Markham Churr was both rested and restive. Field noticed it. One Sunday afternoon he came up into the best chamber, where the boy sat gazing moodily at the glorified West, and, entering into his thoughts, asked:

"Wal, what do ye mean to do now?"

"I don't know. Anything to get money to take me through college."

"How much'll ye need to do that?"

"The Professor says a thousand dollars will do it if a young man is prudent and works during his vacations."

"An' how long will it take?"

"Four years."

"Four years, an' a thousand dollars! It's a big job—that is a big price, boy!" said Field, seriously.

"I know it, sir," with equal seriousness.

"Will it pay?" keenly.

"Yes," decidedly.

"Then that is settled. The only question is, now, how to do it. Have you any plan?"

"Nothing but the usual one. Teach awhile to get money enough to pay for being taught another while."

"Turn an' turn about, eh? Well, that must be a hard way an' a slow road, though it may be a sure one. If I had the money you should take a shorter one."

"Oh! Mr. Field," began Markham, deprecatingly.

"Never mind," interrupted the kind-hearted man, "I havn't got it, and if I had I 'spose I'd have to lay it out on these little Fields, which will likely need a good deal of cultivation before they are of any 'count."

Then, after a moment's silence——

"Do you remember your father, Markham?"

"Yes," answered the boy, dreamily.

Field fidgeted a moment, and then asked:

"Queer man, wasn't he?"

"I suppose so," said the lad, half pettishly. "Why do you ask me?"

"Wal now, you mustn't think hard of me, but sence we fixed the room up here for you I've been a comin' up here sometimes at night after the milkin' was done and thinkin' how pleasant it would be to have you here as you are now. An' while I've been sittin' here I got to lookin' at this here sort of a machine which was found up in yer old garret-loft at Deacon Andrus's. I 'lowed it was made by yer father, it's all so neat and precise." said Field, taking the model from the corner.

"Yes it was," said Markham, interestedly. "I had almost forgotten it."

"Do you happen to know what it was meant to do?" queried Field.

Then Markham told him what his father had said the night before he died, and drew forth the little locket, which he had kept hidden in a tin-box with other boyish treasures. They loosed the many careful wrappings in which the dead hand had placed the one little piece which was necessary to complete the machine. Then Markham studied the model awhile and showed the place where it was to go. But yet they could not see its operation.

"What did you say it was to do?" asked Field, when he had again studied the model to find out the secret of its design.

"To turn axe-handles and other irregular surfaces, I remember he said," replied Markham, "and see," he added, suddenly, "this piece which he gave me is shaped like an axe-helve!"

"So it is," said Field. "Looks as if it might be one in miniature."

"That's it, that's it!" cried the boy. "It's one in miniature. It's a pattern. Here are the cutters, you see, in this little wheel that is fixed on one end of this lever which presses against the pattern and is moved along, little by little, the whole length of it by this weight!"

"That would seem to be it," said Field, following the explanation given by the boy. "I don't know nothin' about machines, but I don't see why that shouldn't

work, only I can't see how the wheels are to be made to turn."

"Let me see," said Markham, rubbing his forehead. "There's something gone, something lacking about the machine. I kept it in my garret, and used to look at it a great deal, both because of what Father said and because I had watched him work at it so long that it seemed to bring him back to me better than anything else. And I remember I used to turn all these wheels and make them hum like a top by turning something like a wheel, or a crank, or something—I don't remember what!"

The boy took the model, set it upon the stand before him and studied it intently. Field stole out and left him. He had hopes that the boy might remember or discover the secret, and that it might prove valuable to help him to a start in life.

It was nearly midnight when he came downstairs and knocked at the bed-room door of the couple who claimed him as their boy, with his dead father's legacy in his hand.

"See, Mr. Field," he exclaimed. "I have found what was the matter. There was a band to go over this long cylinder and around that wheel; then when the cylinder is turned the whole machine moves—so." He set it on the bed and showed its workings to the wondering couple, who hoped great things from it.

And their hope was not in vain. Five hundred dollars, clear of fees and expenses, was reported as its cash value by the lawyer in whose hands the model was put for patent and sale. That was all that one of the most

beautiful and useful of inventions brought the child of the inventor; but none the less was the father's legacy a fortune to the child for whom he wrought in the very hour of death. It was not much, but with kind friends and health, and the determined energy which Deacon Andrus had unwittingly transmitted to his grandson, poor Jacob Churr's dying gift went a long way towards fitting "Hetty's boy" for the struggle of life.

CHAPTER X.

SWORN AND SENT.

THE District Court, sitting at Lanesville, the county seat of Beaver County, had appointed three reputable practitioners, according to the requirements of the statute in such cases made and provided, to represent its power and dignity in the examination of applicants for license to practice law within its jurisdiction. The appointment had been made with no little appearance of solemnity, the aged judge who presided having remarked while so doing that "it was becoming year by year more necessary to raise the standard of excellence in order to preserve the traditional supremacy of the profession in learning, as well as to secure for the clientage who might employ them men who would devote to the assertion of their rights such studious

care and persevering investigation as the improved machinery of the law and the abundance and accessibility of literary aids render possible and necessary in these enlightened days." In order to secure the most rigid scrutiny of the fitness of the various applicants, the judge announced that he had selected practitioners only who had no students or relatives applying for admission. Then he called attention to the requirements of the statute, cautioning the committee that they represented the Court in the performance of this duty, and directed an adjournment until the following day.

While the crowd disperses—witnesses, parties, and jurors wondering why nothing is to be done on the first day of the term, the lawyers exchanging greetings, giving notices of motions, hinting at compromises, obtaining papers from the clerk, and preparing for the days and nights of exhaustive work which lies before them—let us examine the examiners. There were three of them.

The elder was "Lawyer" Latham, of Saxipahaw, as he was invariably called among the people, in utter disregard of the "Sidney" which had been intended to distinguish him from other members of the parent stock. He was a man of wonderfully commanding and attractive appearance. His fine, shapely head was covered with a grizzly mane which curled in rank profusion from nape to brow. His great brown eyes, rolling in liquid light, were surcharged either with the gayety of rollicking humor, the glare of withering sarcasm, or the bathos of welling tears, as his occasion might

require. A broad, full brow; a face sallow and dark, with deep lines carved about the mobile mouth, and crows'-feet gathering under the eyes; a tall, lithe figure, stooping in the shoulders, with a hand thrust habitually into the opening of the vest, completed the picture of the great criminal lawyer of the State.

Next noticed would be—though he was the first named upon the committee, and, by virtue of such precedence, was its chairman—Boaz Woodley, of Lanesville. Unlike his distinguished coadjutor, his profession had not swallowed up his personality, but, on the contrary, his personality had overridden and half hidden his profession. He was known to all in the county where he resided, and in many another county around, not as “Lawyer” Woodley, nor “Mr.” Woodley, nor by any other title than *Boaz Woodley*. He was of more than medium height, but so heavily framed that he did not seem tall until you saw him standing with other men, and noticed that he overtopped them as he glanced about him with unstooping erectness. Hair, black and close, covered a round, full head; a square brow and massive jaw made a strong face, with high cheek-bones, and a nose of obtrusive solidness; eyes cold, gray, impassive, and inexpressive save of constant and unshrinking alertness, were overshadowed and softened or deepened in expression by dark, overhanging brows. The head rested squarely on the short, columnar neck, which rose between massive shoulders and above a powerful chest. He was probably about the age of his colleague, somewhere about fifty or fifty-five, but not a hair was silvered, and the full, clean-shaven

face was smooth and ruddy except where the heavy beard gave the polished surface a steely-gray appearance. No doubt he owed much of his success to his powerful frame; for Boaz Woodley had risen—almost after middle life, it was said—from a country laborer's place to the second, and, perhaps, all things considered, the first, rank in a bar of unusual ability. He had not so full a share of what are deemed the honors of the profession as his senior colleague. He never made men weep, and seldom made them smile. He was not given to smiling himself, and no one ever thought it possible that he could weep, and he never seemed to care whether others smiled or wept. He never made great speeches. It was said he did not care to. No one doubted that he might if he would; but it was generally believed that he despised everything but the *verdict*—which he generally secured. He was credited, too, with a marked indifference to the means by which this end was to be obtained. By the profession he was regarded as sound, untiring, and dangerous. As a colleague he was highly prized in a bad case; as an opponent greatly dreaded in a good one. While Mr. Latham moulded men, Boaz Woodley moulded facts. While the former, with infinite and learned subtlety, sought a path around a legal objection, the latter, with a few terse sentences, cleft a way through it as broad as the king's highway, and so plain that no judge could fail to follow it. While everybody admired and praised Mr. Latham, every prudent client dreaded and retained Boaz Woodley. He was not counted a great orator nor a great lawyer, but he was great at carrying his

point, and no one saw his name entered in the docket for the opposite party without a feeling of doubt as to the result, which was not removed until judgment was entered up and the time for taking an appeal had expired.

While he had missed or scorned the honors, he had garnered the profits of the profession in abundance. He had always flouted the idea of "fees" in the profession as one worthy only of a dog or a pauper. To him every action was a battle which the parties fought for a disputed kingdom; the attorney was not to be considered as the sworn stipendiary of the one or the other, but rather as an independent auxiliary, whose natural and proper inquiry before engaging in the struggle was: "How much can this man pay for aid to win this kingdom?" Being once retained, however, he fought as if the battle were his own, and even if he did not win, his ally always felt that he had earned his money. Financially, therefore, he bestrode the bar like a Colossus. He had combined with his profession, too, the business of the speculator. Lands, steamboats, stocks in railway and telegraph lines had attracted his desire and given play to the wondrous activity of his mind. His fame as a capitalist, had, perhaps, outsped his reputation as a lawyer. He had husbanded his powers too, and had made his profession always subservient to his interest. He had not frittered away his energies upon causes that did not pay. "The offal is for the jackal," he would say, "the carcass for the lion." So for many years he had only engaged in causes which involved large sums or valuable interests, since none

others could afford to pay for his energies. "Lawyer" Latham, with an intense professional pride, and anxious for the reputation of a leading practice, had regarded himself as charged with a sort of a public trust by his oath of office, which required him to engage in any cause when offered a reasonable compensation for the labor involved. As a consequence, his energies were divided among many cases instead of being devoted to a few. No so Boaz Woodley. Engaging only in suits of the greatest importance, he was enabled to give to each that exhaustive thoroughness of preparation which made him the master of every detail of fact and every possible question of law which might arise in its conduct. As a result, Mr. Latham had conducted more cases, Boaz Woodley had handled better fees. The former had a greater fame with the populace, the latter a higher esteem among wealthy clients.

Boaz Woodley had departed from the usual course of the profession, also, in another respect—he had eschewed politics and parties. In the heated struggles of the fiercest campaigns he took no part and seemed to take no interest. Even his political preferences were a matter of doubt among his neighbors.

The two senior examiners were clad in the conventional suit of black. The third, Ransom Fisk, of Aychitula, was a representative of a different school. Of medium height, his brown beard and hair well-kempt, clad in an unostentatious, close-fitting cut-away coat and business suit, instead of the more formal black; quiet, alert, precise, he represented the modern office-lawyer, careful of all details, prompt and ready, but lacking

somewhat of the meditative profundity of the older school. He had no such following of those who admired or dreaded as his colleagues, yet he had already won an honorable place in his profession. He had neither the powers nor the faults of the others, but everybody liked him and prophesied good and pleasant things of him—that he would live well and die happy, at peace with man and God, as the profession rarely is.

Thus the committee appeared when the court-room had been cleared save of some stragglers, a young attorney or two, and some thirty candidates, who, in obedience to a hint from Mr. Fisk, had seated themselves on the foremost of the semi-circular benches surrounding the mystic region that they sought the right to enter. The Examining Committee seated themselves in front of the judge's desk, inside the bar, Boaz Woodley in the middle. Pretty soon he drew out his watch, glanced at it, and then ran his eye along the circle of candidates; then he turned to the right, and whispered to his elder colleague, who rolled his great brown eyes towards him, and nodded carelessly. Then he turned to his colleague on the left and spoke to him in an undertone. The young lawyer's hand went to his fob instantly; he drew forth his watch, looked at it quickly, and nodded in the affirmative. Then Woodley turned again to his elder colleague and gestured with his left hand towards the class. The great orator shook his head lazily and gestured with the same member suggestively towards his colleague. The capitalist shook his head deprecatingly, and again waved his colleague forward, but less strenuously than before.

Answered by another careless nod, he at length turned towards the row of waiting victims, *hemmed* very emphatically, rubbed his left hand across his broad, hard chin, scrutinized each applicant individually, frowned at them collectively, and began :

“Young gentlemen—Brothers Latham and Fisk, with myself, have been appointed by the Honorable Court to inquire into your fitness to be admitted to the practice of the law. I had hoped Brother Latham would have taken the initiative in this examination—a duty which he is much more capable of performing than myself. He—like the most of you, I presume—had the advantage of schools and college. The only academy I ever knew was a log schoolhouse and a hickory fire. I suppose that if as much had been required of an applicant for admission to the bar then as now, I should have been chopping cord-wood in West Beaver yet. But the law ought to be stricter now than in those days, for it gives greater opportunities. Schoolhouses are as plenty now as log-heaps were in my youth. So the statute has provided that no one shall be admitted without having studied two years in the office of a practising attorney, unless he shall be a graduate of some college, in which case the law considers one year’s study or service in an attorney’s office sufficient to permit application for license. In addition, it is required that you should be *bona fide* citizens of the State, and that you should have a certificate from some respectable practitioner of your good moral character. These are the conditions precedent to examination. I believe I have stated them correctly, Brother Latham?”

with an interrogative nod, meant to be courteous, towards his colleague.

The orator rose, and, with a tone and smile which suggested a sneer, remarked that his Brother Woodley had omitted all consideration of one class of applicants especially favored by the law, to wit, those who were not only graduates of a college, but also graduates of an established law-school, chartered by this or any other State—such persons being allowed to apply for examination on presentation of their diplomas and certificates of character alone, without having served in an attorney's office at all.

To this Woodley replied, jocosely, that he had omitted that class, whether from lapse of memory or because he had little faith in college-made lawyers he would not say. "However," he added, "having been appointed to examine such as may apply after having complied with these legal prerequisites, we will now proceed to take the names and inspect the credentials of the several applicants. Will Brother Fisk take a list of the names, and will Brother Latham examine the credentials as they are handed in and see that they are in proper form?"

Then he seated himself, and called upon the first candidate upon the right to come forward. The young man thus addressed rose and stepped inside the bar, stopping in front of Boaz Woodley, who inquired:

"What is your name?"

"Markham Churr."

"Your age?"

"This is my twenty-first birthday."

"Your residence?"

"Rexville, Beaver County."

"Ah! a son of Jacob Churr who used to live down at Greenfield, on the Pymatuning?"

"The same, sir."

"Indeed! Why, your father and I came together from the East, and chopped for old Randell the first winter afterwards. He was a good fellow, your father. Come and see me when you get through here. Your certificate of character, now."

He opened the paper the young man handed him from a bundle of others, and glanced at the signature.

"From Judge James, eh? That will do, won't it, Brother Latham?" And he handed the certificate to his colleague.

"Did you study with him?"

"No, sir."

"With whom, then?"

"I have never served in an office."

"Ah! you are one of our college-made lawyers, then! I must turn you over to Brother Latham to see if your papers will do." And his gray eyes sparkled with gratification at this retort upon the great orator.

"I am a graduate of the University and Law-School of ——," said the young man. "Here are my diplomas, sir."

"Give them to Brother Latham," said Woodley, pettishly. "I know nothing about Latin or Choctaw."

The orator winced, but took the diplomas and examined them with a show of care which took the sting from his colleague's jest.

While he was so engaged, Woodley scrutinized the young man keenly, and said, roughly:

"How does it happen that you are a college man? I had no idea your father left you anything to squander in that way."

"He left me very little," said the young man, flushing; "but what he did leave I *used* for that purpose."

"Ah! you take distinctions quickly, I see. Somehow, your countenance seems familiar. Have I ever seen you before?" asked Woodley.

"You may have done so. I used to work about Lanesville sometimes, during my vacations, while at the Academy," answered Markham, coolly.

"Indeed! For whom did you work in the town?" asked Woodley, with interest.

"I worked in your harvest-field for two seasons," was the reply.

"The dickens you did!" said Woodley, as a smile of amusement ran round the class. "Well, I hope you got your pay."

"I certainly did, sir."

"That is the way you pieced out what your father left you, I suppose?" said Woodley, thoughtfully.

"Just so."

"And perhaps the piecing amounted to more than the inheritance, eh?"

"Quite likely."

"So I thought—so I thought. And you made the trip, college and law-school both?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, well, I don't know but you were right. I

did not mean to ridicule you. I've no doubt it would have been better for me if I had done the same, though it does seem like a waste of time. However, I must stand up for the boys that have only graduated from a three-legged stool in a country office. I suppose I am about the last one at the bar who wore a butternut-colored wampus and chopped wood to make potash for a living in his young days. It would never do for me to go back on them."

Mr. Latham and Mr. Fisk having concluded the examination of his credentials, Markham was requested to resume his seat, and the next in order was called up. He exhibited no diplomas, but presented the certificate of a well-known firm of practitioners in a neighboring county that he had faithfully served in their office as an articulated clerk for three years.

"Ah!" said Woodley, good-humoredly, "you're my man. The backwoods fellows are elbowing the college gentry at the bar yet. I was half afraid the race would die out."

"No danger of that," said Latham, "if they are all as tough as you."

Woodley laughed pleasantly, and responded:

"Well, I do hold my own pretty well, Brother Latham; but I am afraid these younglings will worry us both into a decline. Suppose we report against them all, and save the trouble of examination and our practice at the same time. What do you say to that, Fisk?"

"How can we reject them without examination?" answered Fisk.

“Just report,” said Latham, “that none of them were recommended by *respectable* attorneys. That will fix it.”

So, with many a jest, after the established custom of that profession which even poverty cannot make dull or the fear of attachment for contempt restrain from trying their wits, the preliminaries proceeded, and before the serious work of the examination began an *entente cordiale* was established between the committee and the candidates which tended very greatly to lighten both the labor and the tedium of the duty.

Mr. Latham opened the examination. He began by rapidly reviewing the fundamental principles of law in the abstract, general definitions, divisions and limitations. He inquired as to the location of that indefinite, wavering boundary which separates the domain of equity from the realm of law, the causes of their separation, the relations of citizens to the sovereign, and to each other, the different classes of rights, and closed by a brilliant lecture upon a more philosophical classification of legal obligations and remedies, to be based upon *duties*—the *offices* of the civil law, instead of Rights.

As a display of his own subtle powers and fine culture, his examination was unrivalled. As a test of that logical speculativeness, the perfection of which is essential to the highest excellence at the bar, it was equally successful. It fully disclosed, too, the comparative soundness of preparation in the very elements of the law on the part of the different applicants, showing some to be well grounded in that philosophy whose roots are in the ancient Common Law; while upon

others the picturesque ruggedness of my Lord Coke and the scholarly persuasiveness of Blackstone—the St. Luke of our Common Law—had alike failed to impress the principles they enunciated.

Then Mr. Latham sat down and Mr. Woodley examined the class upon Contracts and Commercial Law. Painstaking accuracy marked every question, and the slightest deviation from the venerable saws of the profession was noted as error. Bills of Exchange, Insurance, and the Laws applicable to Common Carriers, were all passed in rapid but exhaustive review; and then, as if to show that he, too, had pursued the more recondite paths of the profession, he turned suddenly from his course to the Law of Wills, and from that to Trusts and Trustees. Though not so brilliant as that of his predecessor, Mr. Woodley's examination was marked with an accuracy of definition and conciseness of statement which gave an unmistakable key to his character as a lawyer, and revealed the secret of his wonderful success at the bar.

Then Mr. Fisk handed the record which he had been keeping to Mr. Latham, and proceeded to examine the class in a kindly, unpretentious, but self-collected and careful manner on Tenures, and afterwards on Practice. Upon the latter he was especially full and minute. Then there was a recess, and after that, Mr. Latham examined them upon Criminal Law.

Throughout the whole examination there had been the usual variety of stupidity, carelessness and capacity displayed by the various applicants, and after its conclusion there was the usual speculation as to the result

by those interested. Despite his sarcastic jesting, it was generally believed that Markham Churr was a favorite with Boaz Woodley.

The next morning, the committee of examiners, through their chairman, reported to the Court the result of the examination, by reading the names of those whose admission they recommended, very considerably stating that those applicants whose names were not thus announced were recommended to a further course of study.

When his name was called, Markham Churr went forward into the bar, his admission was ordered by the Court, the oath of office was administered to him by Mr. Fisk, and, being sworn, he was sent forth duly authorized to sign himself "Attorney and Counselor-at-Law" whenever he might choose to employ so long a title.

"Well, where now?" said Boaz Woodley, as he took Markham's hand in congratulation.

"I don't know," said Markham.

"You have no stamping-ground picked out 'wherein ye soon shall lie,' as the profane would say?"

"None."

"How long since you left school?"

"A month."

"Ah, you need rest—not that you are worn, but you need to wait and rest until you have generated a new purpose. Don't be in a hurry, and before you pitch your tent come and see me. Good-bye."

CHAPTER XI.

AD INTERIM.

PREPARATION was ended. The squire was transformed into a knight. He was armed for the conflict, and had only to seek his enemy and choose his point of attack. There was even no need of search. The enemy was before him—omnipresent, without a crevice that could be spied in his armor—the great fierce World, whom he must fight from that day forth! The conflict was at hand for which he had been all his life in training! When should he begin? On what field of vantage should he set himself in battle array against this Briarean monster—this hungering giant that waited for his life?

He seemed faint and weary already, before the battle had begun. It was as if the training had been too severe, as if he had almost broken down before the race. He had never spared himself. No toil had been too hard, no task too menial. He had succeeded—his friends thought, wonderfully; he feared, but poorly. What he had left undone seemed more important than what he had accomplished. He feared that his life of study had unfitted him for the bold activity demanded by his profession, that the training he had received in private might fail him when he stood before the footlights. The future was full of doubt and uncertainty. The time

he had longed for he dreaded, now that it was at hand.

Because he did not know whither he wished to go, or what he ought to do at the outset, he went back to Rexville, and decided to open an office there and wait till something should determine where he should take his stand and pitch his life's battle. This was well and wisely done. Rexville had been the scene of his first triumph. Here he was known and remembered with respect. Here his self-love would gather strength, ambition would revive, and inaction cure the dread he had of conflict. The human being does not burst from the chrysalid state as quickly as a butterfly. The change from boy to man, from hearer to orator, from learner to doer, cannot be made in an instant.

For the rest, Rexville was as good a place as any other for him to become familiar with his name upon a sign-board. So he rented an office, neither imposing nor capacious, hung out his shingle—a knightly shield, bearing his name in golden letters—a gallant challenge to the world, from which he had hidden away in very faint-heartedness. He knew that he was *facile princeps* here, and the knowledge did him good. He walked back and forth upon the village green, read the name upon the sign as he passed the openings between the maples, and dreamed of the days when clients should seek it anxiously, pass under it with heavy hearts and purses, and depart lightened of both.

It was a good place. Several generations of the newly-fledged younglings of the bar had stopped and rested awhile in that same office before taking their

flight to the Great West; stopped, and might have stayed, but kindly Nature had employed her final argument—hunger. They left because they must eat, and, having nothing but what they could earn, they were compelled to flee from Rexville, for it was a common saying through all the country round that no liquor-seller or lawyer could make his salt in that town. Churches and schools flourished, farmers lived, and a few merchants and mechanics, but the man of briefs and he of bumpers faded away like the men in buckram upon Gadshill. The legal gentlemen said it was because of Rexvillian stinginess, and the liquor-dealers inveighed against their straight-laced Puritanism; but the Rexvillians themselves cited the failure of both classes as proof of their own uprightness and morality.

In less than a week the cure came. Markham began to dream. An image kept taking possession of the desolate office, which drove even the dreaded future from his thoughts. Years before, when he had scarce begun to climb, when he was but a pupil in the dingy Academy yonder—whose every room was brightened in his memory by a sweet presence—he had waited, day by day, like him who sat beside the holy pool until the angel came to stir the waters of his soul. Daily across the village green he had seen her pass, and climb the stiles which guarded it on either side, with a dim sense that something godlike passed his way. His soul cried out in ecstasy, but his lips were mute. It was enough, in those first days of wakened passion, to stand afar off, worshiping the presence which was too holy to be coveted by one so low. That was all he asked—more than

he claimed—so much that he felt almost a guiltiness sometimes that he should take even that, unbidden.

As years went on, his love had grown until it hallowed all other thought. Ambition, which from boyhood had controlled his acts, became a glass, wherein he saw but the image he adored. He would be this or that, utter this thought, or that act perform, only that *her* happiness and joy might be the more complete.

Yet in all these years he had not spoken—so he said, and so believed. He would not sully with a doubt or fear the future of so dear a soul. He had loved, and held his peace. True, he had not shunned her presence. Could a moth avoid the fatal flame? He knew her, met her often, sought her society. Nay, a hundred times the words had trembled on his lips which shadowed forth the sweet delirium of his thoughts, but he had not spoken, and he had sworn that he would never speak until he could look the world square in the face, and offer equal battle with its knightliest champion.

That day had come.

He wondered now if she had read the fact and knew its full significance. He had rarely seen her since the old school-boy and school-girl days here in Rexville; had written to her not at all, and only now and then had sent her catalogues and programmes—those mile-posts which mark the different stages of the student's journey through the college and the school of his profession. Had she noted these, and did she know or care that this last ordeal was the end of preparation? He knew that other worshipers had crowded

at the shrine. He only wondered that the world did not bow in adoration to the goddess of his heart. Had she understood his silence, and kept the fragrance of her love so many years for him? That she was unmarried now was not for want of lovers. That he knew, and he would hope. If—he would not contemplate the reverse! Light and darkness may merge in twilight, but midnight and noonday cannot meet.

One day, while he was busy with such speculations as these, his office became close, dingy, hateful, as his heart beat out the story of the past once more. He could not stay within. He would go out into the sunshine—into light and air. He locked his office-door without even glancing at his brave sign above, and started towards the lake, which lay dancing and sparkling in the sunlight a mile away.

His eye caught the glint of it as he mounted the hill above the village, and an irresistible longing came into his veins to renew his intimacy with it. He had grown up, as it were, upon the shore of this noble inland sea. Its countenance was a part of the everyday life of his youth. He had been wont to foretell the weather of to-morrow by its varying phases. It had been at once his playground and playmate. He had rowed, sailed, and swam on its bright blue bosom in all weathers, and knew its every mood. From its sparkling waves, which chased each other to the eastward, with here and there a white-cap, he knew even at a distance that one of the first of the brisk summer breezes which come from some hidden Eolian cave of the Far West was dancing laughingly across its waters.

The sight and memory thrilled him. He had never known how much he loved this bright lake until his life had been removed from its shore. Day after day he had longed for the cold, clear breath of its winds, and the heave and splash of its waters. A thousand times he had yearned for the accustomed plunge amid its waves, for the swell of its billows beneath him, and the wild struggle with its forces.

He would go back to it again, like an errant boy to an ever-loving mother. He would spend the day on her bosom, and take counsel as to what he should do regarding that other loved presence of whom his heart was full.

So he said to himself—knowing that he lied, as the best of us not seldom do to ourselves when impulse and reason are at odds. The truth was, that he knew that at Fairbank, a few miles lower down, and on the very edge of the cliff which overhung the lake, dwelt his queen, and he had often proved that its kindly waters offered the most delightful of highways to her feet.

In a few moments he was at the mouth of a little creek where was a sort of rude pier, having beside it half-a-dozen small boats, kept chiefly for the pleasure of those who might come for a sail from Rexville or the back country.

He was soon seated in one of these, provided with fishing-gear, under the pretence of trolling for bass as he sailed. So he deceived the boatman as well as himself. But when he had cleared the headland below, and came upon the accustomed course, all thought of

sport was at an end. He set the little sail, grasped the tiller, and bore away before the fresh, soft breeze for Fairbank—and Lizzie Harper; for this was the name of his divinity.

CHAPTER XII.

DEA CERTA.

TO others, Lizzie Harper was little enough of a divinity. A plain farmer's daughter, with clear gray eyes of genuine depth and tenderness, a broad brow, and hair of that soft, neutral tint which takes the color of the light it reflects—golden in the sunshine, in the shadow brown. A quiet, self-contained maiden, who had developed from the earnest school-girl into the thoughtful woman. Without pride, there was still a certain queenliness in her manner which attracted while it held at bay. She had been sought by many in marriage, as it was generally believed, but none seemed to have been successful in winning her affection; nor were any piqued by her refusal—if refusal there had been. As no one seemed to be preferred, there was no sense of jealousy; and her old lovers simply swelled the train of her friendly admirers. So that at twenty she stood heart-free, it was thought among her friends; and, being little given to talk of herself, she was regarded as one who had either marked

out a future which had no place in it for a husband, or one whose ambition looked higher than she was likely to attain. She was thought by some to be romantic and ambitious, by others to be practical and self-sufficient.

While Markham Churr was speeding towards Fairbank, Lizzie Harper came out of her father's house alone, and strolled to the edge of the bluff which overlooked the lake. Half way down its sharp declivity, and almost inaccessible because of a gaping landslide above and a beetling cliff below it, was a little sheltered nook, where some drooping hemlocks, interspersed with a witch-hazel and a few white-armed birches, formed a bower quite impervious to prying eyes from the bank above or beach below. •

This was the Mecca of her pilgrimage. Arrived at the bluff, she sprang across the chasm and bounded down the narrow and untrodden way which led to her retreat with the unconscious boldness of the experienced climber, and was soon hidden in its sweet seclusion. The fresh grass was thick and uncropped upon this almost isolated bit of sward, and the later spring flowers were yet in bloom under the shadow of the clustering branches. She sank down upon the green carpet, drew from her pocket a county newspaper, and turned to the announcement of Markham Churr's admission to the bar and location in Rexville. This was the key to her life—this love, by others unsuspected.

Years before, while a gay picnic party were met upon the broad, smooth beach below, making the summer air vocal with their songs and laughter, Markham

Churr, with unwonted earnestness, had asked her to go with him and see a treasure he had found. With hasty steps, he had led her along the narrow ledge by which it was approached, and, lifting the hemlock bough with trembling hand, invited her to enter and occupy this bower. She was not deceived by his little artifice. His love thrilled his tones and spoke in his yearning gaze. She loved Markham Churr, and believed her love returned. So when she passed under his upraised arm and entered the bower he had discovered, she did not see the lake outspread at her feet, but stood, with drooping eyes and flushed cheek, waiting to hear the expected words.

Markham was too much preoccupied with his own passion and the course he had marked out for himself to notice this expectancy upon her part. He only asked her to sit down and listen to his plans—what he wished and intended to do, acquire, and achieve in the future. While she sat before him demurely plaiting grass and leaves now into crosses and then into crowns, listening to his bright dreams, she heard, or thought she heard, the wail of imprisoned love in the cadences of his story—a prayer that she would love and trust and wait till he might come again, laden with the sheaves whose harvest he was then foretelling, till he could cast the first-fruits of his triumph at her feet and ask his reward.

Whatever of love and admiration she had not bestowed before, he won that day. A love so true that it would not ask a lady's colors until it had proved in battle its worthiness to wear them; a squire who would

not seek his lady's favor until he could serve her as a belted knight, seemed to her so rare and noble that her soft eyes burned with unwonted pride, and she loved her lover better that he spoke no word of love. She saw and revered the chivalry which forgot his own present to secure her future.

Love him! If she had loved before, she thenceforward worshiped.

And when they finally rose to rejoin their companions, the sun was nearing the rippling surface of the lake, whose every dimpling wave reflected his glory, making a golden pathway from their feet to his western couch.

"See!" cried Markham, "the happy omen, a radiant pathway to the brighter glory at the end! Will you not wish me success, Lizzie?"

She glanced shyly up, and saw the eager love and sturdy purpose, which he thought was unrevealed, struggling in his changing features. His eyes were fastened on the golden path his fancy had likened to the life he desired, and his thoughts were busy with the future which should be bright enough to be worthy of her love. She took a step nearer to him, but he did not heed her movement. So resolutely had he put away his love to a more convenient season, that he was then even unconscious of her. He had forgotten in his bright dream both the question he had asked and the bright presence by his side. She bent nearer to him still. Her usually calm face was flushed to the temples now, and the gray eyes burned with a tender light. There was a quick movement, a start of surprise, and Markham Churr had

the memory of a light kiss upon his brow—while up the steep pathway Lizzie Harper fled, sending back a low ripple of mellow laughter to the nonplussed dreamer below. He started to pursue, but turned back and threw himself upon the green sward. She paused at the top of the bluff, glanced downward with cheeks aflame, and then sped onward to the house with a new lovelight dancing in her eyes.

From that hour she felt herself betrothed, dedicated with a nuptial more holy than priest and altar could bestow—the bride of one who had spoken no word of love.

This was all. The years had come and gone, and still he had not spoken. She wondered now, as she sat in this Holy of Holies of her love, if the time was fully ripe. Perhaps—she may be pardoned if she did—perhaps she wondered if her faith was vain.

There was a movement of the leafy curtain. A familiar face and form appeared.

“Markham!”

“Lizzie!”

* * * * *

“Lizzeee!—Liz——zee!”

It was the voice of her younger sister, calling her from the bank above, as the sun went down.

“Here,” was the reply as she came out of the bower, and looked up at her sister, her face radiant with delight.

“Why, what in the world are you doing down there, Lizzie?”

"Come and see," was the reply, with low laughter in her tones.

"How shall I get there?" asked the sister.

"Yonder by the chestnut-tree is a narrow crossing. Be careful!"

A moment more and the young girl stood beside her sister.

"Come in, Nellie," said Lizzie, in a tone that made her sister glance wonderingly up. She moved aside the hemlock curtain and they entered together.

"This is Markham Churr, Nellie, who will be your brother, sometime."

The courtship was over; and Markham Churr walked back to Fairbank with Lizzie upon his arm and holding Nellie's hand. The child's willing lips soon made known the secret of her sister's past.

CHAPTER XIII.

JEDUTHON HARPER.

JEDUTHON HARPER was a clear-headed, practical man, with a wide knowledge of men and affairs. He had been a successful manufacturer at the East until about middle life, when that universal crash which passed over the commercial world in 1837 swept him down, and, after a year or two of hopeless struggle, left him utterly insolvent. With a sturdy integrity which scorned the protection of the statute of bank-

ruptcy, he surrendered to his creditors all that he had, save barely enough to take himself and family to the West (which was then, as now, the land of promise to every shipwrecked adventurer upon life's tempestuous main), saying to those he owed: "Whatever may be due beyond this I will pay if you will give me time." The creditors took the business, put one of their number in charge of it, and, by a temporary turn of fortune which occurred soon after, recouped a considerable portion of their loss; so that when Jeduthon Harper called, several years afterwards, for the balance against him, it was much less than he had anticipated. This, however, he had paid to the last dollar. To do so had cost him a terrible struggle. A numerous family, not accustomed to the rigorous economy, almost privation, which faced them in their new home, constituted a heavy burthen to the debt-oppressed man. He did not, however, allow even his love for them to interfere with what he considered a sacred duty. He had managed to send each of the flock to the public school until its limited curriculum was exhausted, and had then said that he regarded his duty to them as ended until the other duty was discharged and he had, in addition, secured some competence for old age. And thereupon each one had gone out into the world, cheerfully taking up the burden of self-support which was thus thrown upon them; the elder ones, as they were prospered, contributing gladly to the support and education of the younger members of the household. A kind Providence had blessed them all with unusual health; and the impulse of a common purpose, together

with the healthy influence of a high example, had kept them very closely united. The sons had gradually drifted away into business at different points, however, and the daughters had taught and studied by turns, rising through the various grades of scholarly excellence as they progressed in pedagogic experience, until one after another dropped into matrimony. At the time of which we write, but three daughters, of whom Lizzie was the elder, remained in the old house at Fairbank, which had grown in beauty and value under the thrifty care of Jeduthon Harper, until, when Markham Churr asked him for the hand of his favorite daughter, he was going easily and peacefully down into the vale of life, happy in the memory of an upright past and in the love of a venerating offspring. This man was not one to discourage the addresses of a worthy suitor because of lack of wealth. He had known Markham Churr, at least by repute, for many years, during which some of his children had always been students at the Academy, where Markham was either grappling with poverty and ignorance at once or was remembered as a student who had overcome all difficulties and reflected credit on the institution. Jeduthon Harper regarded the manhood thus displayed as a far more secure guarantee for his daughter's happiness than the inherited fruits of another's manhood would have been, and frankly expressed his approval of her choice.

While, he said, he could give his daughter no dowry, he was proud to say that she had shown those powers of self-support which would render her a helpmeet to

any man who might join her life to his. He thought that the young couple might safely trust to their united exertions for the future. At the same time, he advised that they should not marry until Markham had fixed upon a location for the practice of his profession, and had pursued it long enough to render it probable that it would yield a moderate support. In the meantime, his daughter could continue teaching, as she had done before, and he hoped that Markham would spend as much of his time with them as possible, until his business should call him elsewhere.

With this blessing on their love, the days flew by unheeded, until Markham felt impelled, from very shame at his own remissness, to return to Rexville and his office. It was possible that a client might have come in those few Elysian days of his absence. Already the sense of lassitude and distrust which had before oppressed him was dissipated. Instead of dreading the future and shrinking from the world, he was now panting for the fray. Instead of waiting for an opportunity, he burned to make one. He was ready to fly at the throat of the world and make it his prey, with no more fear of failure than the hungry jaguar feels when he springs on an unconscious buffalo. He would search the Great West through to find the vulnerable spot. Ah! Love is a wonderful tonic. He felt so strong and eager as he started back to Rexville that he could not wait for the lazy summer breeze to waft him easily to his destination, but seized the oars and sped westward in the cool morning, with his gaze riveted upon a fair form which stood outlined against the eastern sky until

hidden by an intervening headland. The Star of Ambition as well as of Empire takes its course to the Westward, but the star of Hope is ever in the East.

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM LOVE TO LARCENY.

"**H**AVE you heard the news?" was the first word of greeting he heard as he drove his boat beside the little pier from which he had set forth.

"No," with a sort of wonder, which he had never felt before, that there could be anything new in or about the vicinage of Rexville. "What is it?"

"The Bank of Aychitula was robbed last night!"

"Indeed!" with a throb of pleasure at his heart, instead of pain and horror. Here was the World coming to his very doors. Robbed! The forceful, the unusual, was at his hand. It was like the trumpet-call to the soldier dreaming of glory, or the welcome shout, "The sea! The sea!" to the stragglers of Xenophen's dispirited host.

He could learn no particulars. Robbed! That was all. How? How much? By whom? Not a word in answer to these questions. It was nothing to him. He had no deposits there nor in any other bank, he said to himself, as he grimly wondered at the burning desire he felt to know all about the crime. Every bank in the country might be robbed of every cent in its coffers

and Markham Churr suffer no loss. Nevertheless, he could not rest until he knew all that could be learned of the occurrence. Aychitula was but five miles away. He was not in the least tired, though he had thought that he was, a moment before. If he were, the wind was rising and was easterly. Occasion joined with inclination, and in five minutes he was dashing over the rollicking waves towards Aychitula, a knight in search of his first dragon!

Aychitula was one of those small towns, common in the lake region of the Middle States, which shows by laminæ, as it were, the successive stages of its growth. A social Agassiz, regarding it attentively, might trace its development with an ease and certainty equal to that with which the naturalist declares the era of a pre-Adamite fossil.

It was called a "lake town," but, in reality, the town itself was about two miles from the shore, as the crow flies, and a good half-mile further from the harbor which bore its name. The harbor, at the mouth of the stream upon the banks of which the town was built, had been a place of considerable importance before the native wildness of the present site had been impaired. Long before Perry had made the beautiful sheet of water famous as the scene of one of the most memorable exploits of naval warfare, this little port was a trading-station and a landing-place for the hardy pioneers of the Reserve who were seeking new fortunes in the inexhaustible fields of "the 'Hios," as Ohio was then generally called.

With the influx of settlers which followed the close

of the war of 1812, Aychitula had become a place of no mean importance. So that the National Government was duly petitioned for an appropriation to build a wharf and lighthouse, and to deepen the channel on the bar. This was accordingly done, and the harbor constituted a port of entry, known and described in the return of the engineer as, "Aychitula Harbor, at the mouth of the Aychitula Creek, from Buffalo, west by south, — miles. Steady pier-light, on east side of inlet, at 26 feet elevation from low-water level in channel. Bearing from bar inlet, S.S.W. Water on bar, 7 feet 8 inches. Harbor difficult when wind is westerly or northwesterly."

The worthy citizen who undertook to build the wharf and lighthouse and deepen the bar, under direction of the engineer in charge, was so fortunate as to be upon good terms with that officer, as it becomes a contractor to be with the agent of his paymaster. In consequence whereof, he soon found himself able to erect, on his own account, a store and warehouse upon the pier, and soon thereafter his possessions were flanked by a low-browed tavern—its porch towards the landing, but its kitchen, stable, and dormitories stretched away back upon piles and piers, among which the restless waves splashed and fretted in a ceaseless turmoil. Before the channel on the bar had been deepened the two feet which his contract required for a width of three hundred feet, the contractor had become the owner of a little fleet of schooners, the first of which, with strange suggestiveness, was named after his friend, the engineer. In these days of corruption

and clamor, such an event, when coupled with the noticeable prosperity of Squire Neal, would have been heralded from Maine to California—or, if we would give the compasses the widest stretch, from Florida to Alaska. But such was not the case at that time, both because Maine and Florida were only inchoate existences, and California undreamed of by even the wildest speculators, but also because in those days honorable and high-minded men held office and discharged their duties with integrity and zeal. Nevertheless, certain shipmasters who were accustomed to take their vessels out and in at the new port of Aychitula were heard to declare that they had never been able to find the three hundred feet of channel at the bar which had been deepened to nine feet, as per contract, as the officer in charge had certified to have been done upon the vouchers by which Squire Neal drew his pay for work and labor performed. Yet, of course, the channel must have been deepened as he declared, for he was a Major of Engineers, and certainly knew his duty.

Oddly enough, the new channel manifested a strange perversity. The Aychitula hitherto had been a very staid and well-behaved stream under all circumstances. Too large to be properly called a creek, it evidently felt all the dignity of a river, and governed itself in accordance with its ambition. From its mouth to its source in the big swamp, a hundred miles away—if we follow its curves and doublings (not more than a third of that upon the surveyor's map who had run the township lines and laid them off into sections and quarter-

sections)—it did not approach the turbulence and forgetfulness of a fall. Now and then its dark, quiet surface was broken by a ripple, at the lower edge of which the bass and suckers lay in wait for any prey the dark waters might bring to them; but even this was rare. Its progress could not have been more decorous had it been the funeral march of that wonderful past attested by its rugged second bank, shelving over a hundred feet or more, and the wide bottom-meadows which had once been its bed. It took no note of time, but resolutely turned aside from all temptation to assume a swifter rate. Even the early and the later rains could not force it from its propriety. It grew turbid with wrath at the bare attempt to accelerate its current, but maintained its dignity, and simply spread itself calmly over the bottom lands and went on with added volume but an equal pace.

As was observed, this staid stream at once developed a peculiar perversity when its mouth became a port of entry, and its *fauces* were lined with wharves, and stores and taverns sprung up on its banks. The amount of *débris* which it carried down, and the persistency with which it dammed up its own outlet, were simply amazing to one who reflected on its irreproachable antecedents. It was said that its name was an Indian one, signifying "black water," and that it had, in consequence, partaken of the aboriginal spirit, and spurned the bonds and badges of civilization. Be that as it may, year after year, for many years, the Major certified, upon his official honor, that in his opinion the channel of the perverse stream needed opening and deep-

ening in the interests of the "Lake Trade" and the numerous and rapidly increasing population dependent upon this port for communication with the outer world. Strangely enough, too, all the other lake ports were afflicted with a like infirmity. And, year after year, the representatives of the people in Congress assembled appropriated greater or less sums for their relief. And, year by year, Squire Neal was the contractor; and year, by year, he prospered, and was always on good terms with the engineer.

In those days the town of Aychitula was at the port; and a busy town it was, at which centered all the trade and travel of a vast back-country of rare fertility, settled by pioneers of unprecedented thrift and industry.

But time brought a change. Along the high sandy ridges which follow the undulations of the shore of the lake, from the St. Clair to its outlet, came, after a while, the weekly stage. The lake ceased to be the sole highway of travel, and along the parallel ridges grew up rival towns at little distances from the shore. Had the steamboat come a few years earlier, the chain of lake towns in Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York would have been upon the bluffs overlooking the ports, instead of being, as now, at points where the roads from the interior to the harbors intersect the stage-route from the East. The products from the interior, as well as their supplies, were hauled over the thoroughfare known as the "State Roads," which stretched to the southward, from the various ports. This was the course of freights and merchandise, but the ganglia of trade—the centers of life, such as life was in those slow days—were where

the roads to the ports crossed the main stage-route from the Great East, the Mecca from which the elders had made hegira and to which the juniors would make pilgrimage.

At length the railroad came, upsetting all that had gone before, spurning alike the town upon the ridge, and the one at the harbor, and establishing at its depot, which was usually about midway between the two, yet a third point, to which both freight and travel flowed. Some of these once thriving towns the iron horse has utterly destroyed, as that which was at the port of Aychitula; and left others, like Rexville, petrified, as it were, by the first shriek of the locomotive. But those which stood upon the old highways to their various ports still kept their prominence and received fresh impetus from this new means of communication.

Each of these developments was peculiar to itself, and the buildings of the towns show at once the eras to which they severally belong.

As Markham Churr neared the wharf in the old harbor of Aychitula, through whose rotting piles the waves beat at will, he saw before him all that was left of the first era: vast wooden buildings, which had been massive in their day, now worn and decayed, chafed by the restless waves and still more restless winds; long stores and warehouses, whose piers had sunk away, and in which the storms had piled the sand as high as the rude teamsters from the southward had piled up the grain-sacks in the olden times. All was ruin and decay. The harbor, which might have withstood the stage-coach, had succumbed to

the railroad. Squire Neal—well, the harbor had stood by him, and he by the harbor, until, like it, he had yielded to decay.

As Markham walked towards the town, he met with the relics of the second era—that of the stage-coach. On each side of the creek there was a town. That on the west appropriated the name Aychitula, while the other was more usually known as the “East Village.” Wandering through this, Markham saw vast stables and sheds going to decay only less rapidly than the warehouses of the harbor. These were the caravanseries built to accommodate the hundreds of horses that stage travel made necessary; while the East Village itself was built to accommodate the travelers whom the stage-coach brought. Low, rambling taverns of almost limitless capacity, with one or two stores; great wooden houses, ornate with intricately-fretted cornices; and now and then a glaring-fronted, damp-walled brick, with its black metal knocker—one of the palaces of the stage-coach aristocracy. The broad streets were grass-grown and untrodden save along the sandy wagon-track.

He crossed the old wooden bridge, with its warning notice to the Jehus of the stage, which stared out in plain black letters from the weather-worn board, and came into the railroad station of Aychitula: from the past into the present. Here all was life and thrift. The paved sidewalks and busy throngs of the town contrasted strangely with the deserted harbor and the lonely streets he had just left.

In an hour he had noted, in close juxtaposition,

the three stages of development which characterized the three generations that have lived and labored upon the Western Reserve.

CHAPTER XV.

IN THE CURRENT.

THE theme of all conversation in the town was the robbery of the night before. Its incidents were few. Some one had entered the bank, opened the vault and taken out a quantity of specie and numerous deposits. The porter, an old man, who had been in the employ of the bank, for twenty years, always kept the key of the outer door, while the cashier carried those of the vault and safe. Had there been any suspicion of either, their evidently unassumed surprise and grief would at once have dissipated it. No one could make out how or by whom the bank had been entered. Every one looked and wondered, and went away without even an hypothesis. For once even the wiseacres of the little town were silent. They looked wise and listened gravely to what was said, but neither revealed the past nor foretold the future.

Markham Churr met Boaz Woodley going up the steps of the bank. He was the President of the institution, a large stockholder and depositor, and his brow was clouded with anxiety. He had just arrived, summoned by telegraph, to investigate the matter. The

habit of a life was upon him, however, and, recognizing Markham, he extended his hand and said, with a smile :

“Ah! Churr, how are you? A bad business here,” lifting his brows, and jerking thumb and head towards the bank. “Will you come in? The detectives have just arrived, they tell me, two experts from the city. I have no confidence in such cattle, but it is fashionable to have them on such occasions, like mourners at a funeral. Come in. It may amuse you. Besides, I want help to see that these rascals don't steal what is left.”

Thus invited, Markham went in. Two or three directors and the officers of the bank were already there. The detectives had begun their examination. They were fair average men in their calling, possessing, no doubt, an extensive acquaintance among the special class of knaves to which they had devoted themselves. Their inspection of the premises and examination of the cashier and porter was attended by many knowing winks and shrugs to each other, though to Markham's mind, they revealed nothing which could remotely bear upon the question involved. The fact that they seemed to gather more than he could from these sources piqued his mental pride, and he soon found himself trying to solve the mystery of the entrance, exit, and identity of the criminals, with the same intensity of thought and relish of exertion which he would have bestowed upon a difficult problem of mathematics.

The building was of one story, brick, with two rooms. The front one contained the counter, cashier's and clerks' desks. That in the rear was fitted up for

private interviews and meetings of the directors. In the wall between the two was the vault, accessible only from within the railed enclosure extending across the west side of both rooms. The back room had two windows, with iron shutters, which locked on the inside; and there was one of the same character on the left of the door in the front room. On the east side, opposite the paying teller's desk, was also a small window, some six feet from the floor, the shutters of which were fastened with inside springs. These were all found duly closed and locked on the morning after the robbery.

How did the robbers get in, or, being in, how did they get out?

The detectives examined the locks with some pretty tools. By the aid of one of those little concave mirrors with a hole in the middle, with which surgeons examine the inner coatings of the eye, and which has thus derived its name, ophthalmoscope, they were able to send a ray of light into the key-holes of the safes and vault; but no unusual abrasion of the surface of the socket and wards showed the use of force, the trial of skeleton keys, or any of the ordinary devices of the professional lock-picker.

When they had examined everything, and questioned everybody supposed to have information of value, they consulted together for a moment, and then, approaching Boaz Woodley—who sat drumming his fingers on the cashier's desk, and watching, with apparent listlessness, but actual keenness, the acts and demeanor of every one in the room—the one who seemed to be the leader said:

"We have examined the building, sir, and are confident we have found a clue. We wish to make some further observations, however, and to consult together for a little while, when we would like to see you alone, if convenient.

"Certainly," said Woodley. "You can come to my room, No. 4, at the Argo House, in an hour.

The detectives withdrew and immediately adjourned to a convenient lunch-room, where, in a curtained alcove, over glasses of their favorite beverages, they proceeded to make their observations and hold the consultation they deemed so important.

"Dry picking, ain't it, Tom?" said the leader.

"Deuced if it ain't, Bill," replied the other; "the *very* driest I ever saw."

"What shall we do?"

"Don't know."

"I'll tell you, Tom. We must lay it on the old man, Horton, the cashier. I've no idea he did it—though who the devil did I can't guess. And that's my strong point. If any one—old Woodley, for instance—should ask me: 'What reason have you, Bill Saunders, for thinking that Thomas Horton committed this robbery?' I would answer, bold as a lion: 'Who did, if he did not?' That would be a poser, I reckon."

"It won't do, Bill," replied Tom, seriously.

"Won't do! Why not?"

"Why not? Because Boaz Woodley would no more believe the tale than that he had taken the money himself. He's not the man to swallow chaff. You must give him reasons; or, if you haven't any reasons, say

so and be done with it. Don't try to fool him. It's better not. If we tell him the truth, square out, as likely as not he'll say, 'Keep on, boys,' and we'll stand a chance for a good fee in the job yet."

"Oh, let me alone for that, Tom. I'll talk to him," replied Bill, with a knowing wink.

"Yes, you're always gassing about 'clues,' and 'traces,' and 'leads,' and 'scents,' and all such damned nonsense, when you know no more about a matter than an oyster does of horse-racing," responded Tom, sulkily.

"So I am, and you'll see, mate; I'll make old Woodley think we know more about the cracking of that safe than the men as did it," answered the leader.

"We'll see you make a darn fool of yourself, and old Boaz'll find it out, too. Don't expect me to back you."

"Very well. You can take your course, and I'll take mine."

Immediately upon the detectives leaving the bank, those present, except Markham Churr, fell into a low-toned conversation upon the robbery. Feeling himself a sort of intruder at this conference, and piqued at the thought that the detectives had discovered more than he had been able to see, he began to walk back and forth, narrowly scanning everything in sight, and seeking for the clue of which they had spoken. For some time he saw nothing to reward his search, and had nearly given it over, when, happening to look down as he passed beneath the side window of the front

room, he saw in the soft poplar plank of which the floor was made, just at the edge of the strip of matting which ran between the counter and the wall, the impress of a boot-heel, evidently made with the toe of the foot turned towards the wall. Here was the clue, as he thought. The window was about seven feet from the floor, and this was just such an impression as one would make in dropping from the window-sill, with his face to the wall. Churr's satisfaction was peculiar and intense. He leaned against the counter, folded his arms, and gazed intently toward the window. He remembered, too, that a high board-fence ran along that side of the bank, and but a few feet from it, with a heavy rail near its top. It occurred to him, also, that this fence inclosed the garden of the cashier. He turned quickly, and looked at Mr. Horton. It could not be. That fussy little man, with a face full of helpless distress, who sat there twisting his fingers and knitting his brows in hopeless bewilderment, could not be the thief. But, if not, who could? Boaz Woodley noticed the look. His own mind had been running in the same channel.

"You are sure, Mr. Horton, that you had the keys all day yesterday and last night?" he asked, quietly.

"Perfectly sure," answered the cashier, rubbing his forehead absently. "You see, sir, ever since I have carried the keys I have put them under my pillow every night, and a pistol with them. My wife has either laughed or scolded about it all the time. She has always declared that I would worry myself to death over the responsibility of those keys; and, indeed,

gentlemen, they have been a terrible care to me." He touched the bald spot on the top of his head and smoothed his thin earlocks pathetically, as if they were the indisputable evidence of this anxiety.

"So they were under your pillow all last night?"

"Just so—just so," said Horton, and he pulled his small whiskers nervously. "I wish I had never seen them, nor the bank either," he added, petulantly.

"Pshaw, now," said Woodley; "don't be foolish! Was there any one at your house last night except your family?"

"No, sir; no one but my wife and myself."

One by one the others had gone out. The cashier, Woodley, and Markham Churr were alone.

"So you have no theory of the robbery, and no suggestion as to how it may be traced?"

"No theory; not even a guess—unless I did it myself," said Horton, despondently—"though I have something that may help in tracing the thief. You know I make a list of all bills of five dollars and over which we have on hand every night. It's a sight of trouble, dear knows, but somehow I've always found time to do it. These lists, with a memorandum of deposits and copies of some other important papers, I keep in a little tin trunk at my house. I keep this account of bills in a little book, and post it up every Saturday; so I know the number of every bill in the bank except special deposits."

"And you have that book now?" asked Woodley, interestedly.

"Certainly; and as quick as I learned of the rob-

bery this morning and could examine the parcels here, I made out a list of all the bills taken."

"Good!" said Woodley. "You are a trump, Horton, if you *are* much of an old maid."

"But you forget," said the cashier, whose attention could not be diverted even by raillery from the calamity which had befallen his beloved charge—"you forget, Mr. Woodley, that almost all we have lost is specie and some special deposits."

"How much specie?"

"A little better than three thousand dollars—three even, and some loose change from the drawers—perhaps a hundred or so more."

"How much in bills?"

"Five hundred and seventy, sir. Here is the list of numbers."

"That's not so much," said the President, thoughtfully.

"No," sighed Horton. "I could make that up, but I feel worse about the special deposits. I may not be able to reach them."

"Make it up! make it up! Damn it, man, who asks you to make it up?" exclaimed Woodley, roughly.

"No one has yet, but I shall do it. I could never stand it to look you and all the directors and depositors in the face, and think that they had lost by trusting to me," said Horton, deprecatingly.

"You will do no such thing, and I shall call a meeting of the directors and move your dismissal if I hear another word about it. A man who proposes to bal-

ance our profit and loss account in that way is not fit for your place," said Woodley, in assumed anger.

"Of course, I—I—" mumbled poor Horton.

"What deposits were lost?" asked his questioner.

Horton put on his spectacles, took out a pocket-book, and, laying it before him, turned methodically to a certain compartment of it and drew forth a paper, which he handed to Woodley.

"Here is a list of them. You see the parcel you left with us a week ago is among the number."

"Ah!" said Woodley, as he glanced over the list. "That is gone, is it? Well, make me out a list of all that has been lost and bring it to my room by five if you can, Mr. Horton. You had better keep the bank closed for a day or two. I will prepare a statement for the public, and we will both sign it.

"Come, Churr," he said, turning to the young man, "let's go. You have not dined nor have I. So come and take dinner with me. It's too late for that meal in Aychitula except by special grace."

CHAPTER XVI.

FOR HOW MUCH MONEY?

DINNER was over, and the old lawyer and the young one sat together in the room of the former. They had been silent for some minutes.

"Who stole that money, Churr?" asked Woodley,

suddenly, with a sharp glance at his companion and a nod towards the bank.

Markham started and colored quickly at the abrupt question.

"I—I—don't know," he stammered.

"Of course," laughed Woodley, "I know you did not do it; but who did? That's the question. You have an idea, or, rather, you think you could find out."

"Indeed, Mr. Woodley,"—began Markham.

"Stop!" said Woodley; "don't begin to offer excuses. I am frank to say it's all a mystery to me. I can't make even a guess; I know you have done that, at least, and have some ground for it. Don't ask me how I know; I could not tell you if I tried. The only thing I know is men. I know you have found a theory, and I have some confidence in your power of observation; so I ask you, Who did it? When I took hold of this bank, which I as good as own now, you may say, and wanted a cashier, I looked around for one who would always know what he had and what he did, and care more for the bank than for his own soul; and Thomas Horton is that man."

"You have great confidence, then, in Mr. Horton?"

"I have great confidence in my own judgment," replied Woodley. "I never make a mistake in a man, never, when I follow my own head. Occasionally, when I have gone by another's advice, I have. As I told you the other day at Lanesville, I never had the advantages of education, but I know men instinctively.

I have never been good at learning or doing anything myself. I have always been able to find some one to do it for me a great deal better than I could do it myself. Now, here's this affair. It gets into me pretty deep—deeper than I would care about confessing—and it's got to be ferreted out. I said that this morning when I read the telegram at Lanesville. I said to myself, too: Now, you must keep awake to find the man to do it. I knew I should find him, because I always do. I have become a fatalist—in that matter, at least. Of course I sent for the detectives—telegraphed for them; and these cotton-duffers came down. I knew it would be useless. No other man can ever pick out men to do my work for me. I can't do it myself if I once stop and try to define why I choose this man or that for a particular purpose. If I go right on and follow my bent—my feeling—instinct, if you choose—I am all right. If I stop to reason or define I am lost. These fellows, now—I had to send for them, of course. It was my place, as President of the bank, to do so. It will be published now that the matter is in the hands of competent detectives, who have a clue which they are confident will enable them to trace the perpetrators, etc. But it's all a lie. Those men are not the right material for a case like this. They are too—too—I don't know what, only too *short range* for the game I have to hunt. They will come up here now and say it was old Tommy Horton who tapped that safe—which I know is a damned lie—a damned lie, sir; *that* I know, though I can't say how I know it."

"But how do you know, Mr. Woodley, that they suspect the cashier?" asked Markham.

"How do I know it? how do I know it?" snapped Woodley. "How do I know I live? I can't say. I see it or feel it—I just know it, and that's all there is of it. But you'll see," he continued, as there came a knock at the door, "for here they are."

"Come in," he called out; and as soon as they were seated, he asked:

"Well, what do you make out?"

"Ahem!" said the spokesman of the pair, looking stiffly towards Markham; "we should prefer to consult with you alone, if agreeable to you, sir."

"And I prefer," said Woodley, casting a cool look upon the speaker, "that you should not."

But Bill Saunders was not inclined to yield either his point or his dignity.

"Very well, sir," he said, pompously; "if we cannot be allowed to conduct the case in our own way, we will withdraw from it entirely."

"As you please," said Woodley, quietly.

"We have found an important clue, a very important one, sir," said Saunders, with the tone of one bursting with knowledge.

"Indeed!" said Woodley, carelessly.

"Yes, sir," continued Saunders; "I may say that we are on a scent which we consider certain to result in the capture of the thief."

"The thief!" said Woodley, turning around sharply. "Do you suppose that one man did that job?"

"Of course," responded Saunders, apologetically, "there may have been more than one."

"May! may!" sneered Woodley.

"I was not thinking of the number, but of the principal in the robbery—the one who got the swag," said Saunders, recovering bravely.

"You have fixed him, I presume, beyond a doubt?" and Woodley's sneer grew more intense.

"Yes, sir, we have," said Saunders, confidently; "that is," he added, less positively, "Tom and me have consulted, and, after comparin' notes, we are of the notion that only one man could have been at the bottom of it."

"And that man?" still sneering.

"Is the cashier of the bank," said Saunders.

"Thomas Horton!" ironically.

"Of course, sir, you ought to know his name, and will have reason to remember it," said Saunders, smartly.

"And now, sir, perhaps you have no objection to telling me some of the reasons why you suspect Thomas Hibbard of the robbery," said Woodley.

"Reasons? Why sir, who else could it have been?" said Saunders, confidently.

"So I am to understand that you have concluded that Mr. Horton stole this money simply because you are so thick-headed that you cannot see your way to accuse any one else?" said Woodley, angrily.

"I told ye, Bill, there was no use in trying that dodge," broke in Tom. "The fact is, sir, we just don't see any way out of this mess at all; but Bill, he

thought it wouldn't do to say so, but that we'd best make a shy at the cashier and wait for time to show up something. I didn't like it at the first, sir, but Bill held out that it was best, and I give in, as I generally does, to him."

"In other words," said Woodley, "you two precious birds conspired to stigmatize an honest man because you were too stupid to find the rogue."

"It does look so," said Tom, flushing with shame, "though I did not mean it that way, nor do I think Bill did, though it was his plan. You see, Mr. Woodley, people think that because we are detectives we can find out everything, and all in a minute, like, an' if we don't, they take up at once that we don't know our business. So, when we can't find out anything at all, or scarce anything, it wouldn't do to say so, as a general rule, but we have to make believe a sight more than we knows, to satisfy them as employs us. That's the reason, you see, that Bill tried to throw this scent on the cashier."

"Well," said Woodley, "there's some sense in what you say. I've no doubt it is a good deal so. But it is as I supposed. You can do nothing for us in this case. It's something out of the ordinary range of your business."

"That it is, sir," said Tom. "Bill and me both think we've never seen such another. Don't we Bill?"

Bill, who felt the rebuff which Woodley had given very seriously, hastened to add:

"It's the only case we ever see that we couldn't find some reasonable clue to work on."

"Yes. I've no doubt you've done your best, and that best is probably as good as your profession can furnish."

The two detectives half bowed, and looked about with improved self-respect, after this dubious compliment.

"But you see, yourselves," continued Woodley, "that it is a case in which you can do no good. Now, it is my idea that the only way is just to let the scent lie, and see what time will do in the matter."

"Precisely our notion sir," said Bill.

"Well, then, here are fifty dollars for each of you for what you have tried to do, and also to keep you from trying to do anything more. You understand? I don't want you ever to think of this again, much less speak of it!"

"Of course we shall do as you wish," said Tom, "though we'd like to have a chance for another try, after a bit."

"Never think of it. I shall see that it is reported that the matter is in the hands of competent detectives, and all that, for your sakes; but if I ever hear of your lifting a finger, or making a guess again, I will make such report of this as will interfere very seriously with your professional reputation. You understand?"

The detectives bowed and withdrew.

"There," said Woodley, as they retired. "You see it is just as I told you. That is what they call the professional detective—good enough in his way, but worthless here. In the ordinary vulgar way in which locks are picked and banks robbed they would probably

be quite efficient. But this is not one of those cases. It shows only two facts to my mind. First, the money is gone; and, second, the opening—what the law calls the breaking—was made with keys that perfectly fitted the locks, both of the outer door and the vault, and left no marks to guide those fellows. They are like wild geese in a storm, in such a case.”

“I am surprised,” said Markham, “that they should not have observed more carefully.”

“Which means,” said Woodley, “that you have seen more than they did. I have no doubt of it. When I saw you coming up the steps of the bank this morning, I said to myself: There is your man; if you get him to take hold of this matter, you will see the bottom of it. So I want you to help me.”

“I—I can’t. I mean I know nothing about such matters,” stammered Churr, quite overwhelmed with the deft flattery of the old lawyer.

“Well, learn then. You can learn, can’t you?” asked Woodley. “But I am willing to take the risk of that. Have you done anything since we met?”

“Not exactly; I have opened an office in Rexville,” he replied.

“As a makeshift till something better offers, eh?”

“I suppose so.”

“Yes, and you will stay there till you are starved out.”

“Perhaps,” incredulously.

The old lawyer watched him keenly for a moment, and then said:

“See here, Churr, this thing is of vital consequence

to me—more than you can imagine. I must know who did that, and have every scrap that was taken returned. You understand," he said, excitedly, "every scrap!"

"I understand, sir, but"—Churr began:

"Stop! stop!" interrupted Woodley. "I have not done yet. I make you this offer: I will give you one hundred dollars a month and expenses to take hold of this matter and push it till you have found the thief, and can set me face to face with him, or until you are willing to look me in the eye and say 'I can't do it.'"

"But, Mr. Woodley"——

"Wait till I have finished. If you succeed and find the man, I will pay you one thousand dollars in addition. If, beyond this, you recover the special deposit which I placed in the vault last Saturday, I will double the bonus, and, more than that, I will pull down the sign that has been over my office so long and run up another with 'Woodley & Churr' on it. You shall have a fair share in a business which you know is not small, though I have been trying to reduce it for several years. I have never had a partner, and the name of Boaz Woodley on a sign is not a bad capital of itself to a young man who means business."

"Mr. Woodley, you are"——

"Never mind what I am. Do you accept my offer?"

Markham was silent.

"Think of it," said Woodley. "In a few minutes Horton will be here with the list of articles taken. I want a word with him, and I may have some writing to do then. Come back here, say at eight o'clock, and let me know your decision."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE GULF.

MARKHAM CHURR went out to think. The proposal he had received staggered him. He had an indistinct impression that the crisis of his life was upon him; that he needed more wisdom and foresight, to enable him to decide rightly, than he had ever had occasion for before. He longed to be alone. He thought of his boat, and the lake covered with white-caps by the fresh northwestern breeze. But that was more than two miles away. He remembered, then, a glen, not far from the village, known far and wide as the "Gulf"—a bit of noticeable wildness in a region singularly devoid of striking features—and turned his steps thither.

The glen itself was a deep, irregular chasm, with sharp, precipitous sides, covered, wherever a root could cling, with matted vines and stunted trees. At the bottom was a dense undergrowth, above which shot a few towering forest giants, whose dark crests showed even above the level of the adjacent uplands. A narrow road clung to the shelving bank upon one side, followed the meanderings of the chasm for a little way, and then climbed out upon the opposite side, sometimes hidden by overhanging thickets, and sometimes skirting the bare face of the crumbling cliff.

A tributary of the Aychitula, which in the primal days must have been a rushing torrent, though now dwindled to an insignificant rill, had for ages waged a wild struggle with the bed of stubborn slate to gain an outlet into the larger stream. The "Gulf" was the result—a deep cut, full of sharp angles, whose rugged buttresses of dull gray rock had turned the current from its course, and still stood, jagged and firm, in defiance of the shrunken rivulet at their base. The bottom of the glen was studded with enormous boulders, worn and fretted by the moil of the restless waters, and was cut with deep, irregular furrows which the lessening stream had worn. In one place, a seam of gneissoid rock, which stretched across the glen, had proved too tough for the fretful torrent to cut away, and now formed a sharp cliff, over which the little rill fell in foam or spray, according to its varying volume. Wherever a root could cling, the hemlocks and beeches, drooping alders, swaying birches, and clambering vines had fixed themselves, till an almost impervious thicket softened its ruggedness and dimmed the daylight admitted by the narrow space between its frowning sides.

Markham Churr made his way to the foot of the little fall, and sat down on a scarred boulder, amid the silent shadows of the glen, to decide his own fate. Why follow his thoughts? The offer he had received was attractive enough to tempt any one whose life had been like his, even without the blandishments of a love which saw in that the fulfillment of its dearest aspiration. To his mind, the offer of Boaz Woodley meant opportunity, advantage, gain. To his heart, it prom-

ised home, love—Lizzie Harper. He came to decide whether he should accept. He stayed to dream of what would flow from his acceptance, until the shadows of the glen had deepened to the gloom of night.

At the stroke of eight he knocked at Woodley's door, and, on entering, found him busily engaged in writing.

"Take a seat, Churr," he said, barely glancing up, and continuing to write. He used his pen with wonderful ease. There was no hesitation; but line after line was added to the page, and page after page to the manuscript, without pause for thought or change in what was written. The short, fatty hand, with the wonderfully white, soft fingers, which comported so oddly with the giant frame and rough exterior of the man, traced, with a rapidity and exactness which excited Markham's surprise, the minute but marvelously plain characters. It was curious, but there seemed to be some mystic exhalation from the strange individuality of the writer that affected every one who traced what he had written. Markham Churr had heard of it, for Boaz Woodley was one of those about whom most men talk much and know little.

When he had concluded his writing, he turned to the young man and said, half-inquiringly:

"Well?"

"I accept your offer, Mr. Woodley," said Markham, in response.

"Of course," said Woodley, in a tone so matter-of-fact that it jarred upon Markham's sensibilities. "I have prepared everything, so that you can proceed in

the matter at once. Here are five hundred dollars on account. If you want more, draw on me. Here is a book in which you will keep an accurate expense-account. I do not limit you in the matter of expenses. Whatever you need you will use, but everything will be entered in detail here. I would advise you to take receipts for all sums over five dollars when practicable. If you cannot do so, state why not. Here is a book of blank receipts for that purpose."

Markham's face flushed angrily, and he drew back as he said :

"If you are afraid that I will cheat you, Mr. Woodley, it is better that I should not undertake the business."

"See here, young man," said Woodley, half sternly. "When you come to my years, you will have learned that to require of any one compliance with the forms and restraints of business is no reflection on his honesty, but rather a compliment to it. What would you think if I were to put you in charge of the bank and not require you to keep books of account? You would consider me a fool, of course, as I should be. But what would you say of yourself?"

"If I should undertake such a task, I should be equally foolish."

"Foolish? Why?"

"Because I should have no means of showing the correctness of my transactions," answered Markham.

"Yes; and because, too, no honesty is proof against such temptation. Any one in the world would steal in less than six months under those circumstances.

The very fact that theft could not be traced, and that all was dependent on his honor, would so vex and annoy the man that he would be compelled to steal to keep himself out of an insane asylum."

Markham could not but smile at the idea.

"You may laugh," he continued, "and perhaps that is something of an exaggeration, but in effect it is true. The great safeguard of honesty is close accounting, and that is the great defect of our modern system of education—it either gives a very superficial knowledge, or, as is generally the case, no knowledge at all, of the great practical science of life—accounts. Many a man graduates from his college, and perhaps with high honors, who has no more knowledge of the mysteries of debit and credit than I have of Hebrew. And modern business is made to fit this defective system of education. Revised, improved and simplified systems of book-keeping, which show no more of the business they should exemplify than can possibly be avoided; systems of figures, few words and little labor—with no checks to inaccuracy of statement or calculation—such systems have taken the place of the old laborious plan of double-entry and full memoranda. And what is the result? Our business is equally loose and unreliable. Failures and defalcations are the rule. Men embark in foolish enterprises with insufficient capital, and dishonesty or failure follow,—usually both. And it all results from laxity of accounting. A business man is rarely rash or unsafe who spends time enough over his books. Well was the summing-up of accounts termed 'balancing.' It is the balance in which the business

man is weighed, and either found trustworthy or found wanting."

"But this is different from conducting a regular business," protested Markham, half-ashamed of the feeling he had shown.

"All business is the same," insisted the elder, "temporary or permanent, complete or partial, it should all be regular. It is this very distinction—this idea that it does not pay to take time to keep full accounts in this and that business—which has made all the trouble. No, young man; if I had not believed that you would succeed in this and would one day be my partner, I should have contented myself with saying that I expected a strict account, and not have provided these books for that purpose. Instead of insulting you, I meant to do you a kindness."

"I beg your pardon," said Markham; "I was no doubt hasty, and am perhaps unduly sensitive."

"Oh! no harm. It's all the fault of your false education. All that I am or have I owe to being taught to account thoroughly for what passes through my hands—and it was about all I was taught, too. Since I was eighteen I have not spent a dime that I cannot show the proper entry for—not even for a cigar. I should have cheated myself out of thousands before now, but for that. You will find it the best staff a man can lean on, and it is well for you to begin to use it, for your own sake. But now to business again. Have you fixed on any plan for pursuing this inquiry?"

"After the detectives had concluded their examination, I noticed"—Markham began.

"Stop, stop," said Woodley, "I don't want to know what you saw or what your plan is. I should be sure to spoil it with some suggestion of my own which you could not carry out nor I either. What I want to know is that you have a plan, and whether there is anything I can do to aid in its development?"

"There *are* some difficulties which I cannot see my way clear to get over," responded Churr.

"What are they?"

"I want an opportunity to make an examination of the premises without the presence of—of—any suspected parties."

"Ah, yes! you want Thomas Horton out of the way for a day or two."

"Yes, and his family."

"His family! But I don't want to ask any questions," said Woodley, "only don't violate the law, or the proprieties either, far enough to raise any suspicions against an innocent man which you may not be able to allay."

"And the porter?" asked Markham.

"The porter is entirely trustworthy. I may say to you, that he has been here in your absence. He thinks Horton must have done this or been privy to it," said Woodley.

"You think, then, I may safely conduct my examination in his presence?" pursued Churr.

"That does not follow," said Woodley. "I do not believe in partnerships in such secrets, at all. That is one reason why I do not want to know your plan of operation. I thought you might want to look over

the place alone. So I told the porter the bank would be closed for a few days, and sent Horton away, partly for a rest and partly on business. He and his wife will go to New York to-night to assist in the tracing of this matter, as he thinks. So to-morrow and the day after you will be at liberty to make any investigation you choose without interruption."

"Very well, sir; that is all for the present?"

"There are one or two facts which may be important for you to know. In the special deposit of my own which was taken, there were fifty twenty-dollar bills upon the Xenia Branch Bank. It is a new issue. I received them only last week in a settlement with the bank, and there are not, probably, more than a dozen others in circulation, perhaps not any. It is a bill of very notable appearance, and I have sent to the bank, asking them to issue no more, and to call in this issue by private notice to banks and brokers. Meantime they will send me specimens of the bills, one of which I will put in your hands. If at any time you want any help, come to me, write, or telegraph, without hesitation or delay."

"You will be here to-morrow?" asked Churr.

"I shall be here until Horton's return," was the reply.

"And will go with me to the bank in the morning?"

"If you wish."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SEARCH.

EARLY next morning, Boaz Woodley, President of the Bank of Aychitula, opened its doors to Markham Churr, and, after a short time, closed them upon him and left him to pursue his investigation.

The facts Markham observed were not many. They were:

First, the print of the boot-heel in the soft white-wood plank, of which he took an impression with a piece of wax that he had brought for the purpose.

Second, the dust upon the window-sill above, which had been recently disturbed.

Third, a piece of card-board which, after having raised the window, he found in the groove in which the sash worked. He guessed its purpose at once. The bank had been "planted" before it was robbed. This card had been placed over the socket of the bolt in the casing, and the bolt held back while the sash was lowered. Thus kept free, the sash could easily be raised from the outside; and, when again lowered, the spring would push aside the card and fly back to its usual position, giving it the undisturbed appearance which had hitherto diverted attention from the window. He observed, too, that the spring fastenings of the iron shutter might have been kept up by slipping a

card or a fold of stiff paper under them, so as to be easily opened from the outside.

Having completed his examination of the interior, he passed out of the small back door of the bank, and along the board fence which ran a few feet to the eastward. It occurred to him that the entry might have been made by setting a short ladder upon the upper railing of the fence, which was about two feet below the top of the upright boards, and inclining it against the building. On examining the upper side of this railing, he found it had occasional spots of sand on it. The fence ran along the east side of the cashier's garden, and a few feet from it was the dense row of common red currant-bushes sure to be found in every kitchen-garden of that region. Passing between these and the fence, he found, at a distance of five or six rods from the bank, the deep impress of a foot in the moist soil of the garden. After a moment's examination of this footprint, which was clear and sharp, he covered it with a piece of board which was at hand, and that afternoon took a cast of it in plaster. When he afterwards compared this with the impression of the heel in the office, he saw that they were from the same boot, corresponding exactly. On the outside a nail was missing in each, and both showed the heel to be worn down in the same manner behind.

Thus the entire machinery of the crime, he thought, was plain before him. The unused window had been prepared from within for the easily-effected entrance; the ladder had been carried along the fence to avoid foot-marks in the soft earth about the bank; and the

entrance made and exit concealed by the window. The ladder used must have been very nearly the length of one which leaned against one of the fruit-trees in the cashier's garden. He thought it probably the same. As to the opening of the vault and the safe he had learned nothing.

He wrote down all these things separately, and pondered them carefully. Then he asked himself: *Who did this?* and the words seemed to trace themselves—Thomas Horton. It could be no other. He remembered Boaz Woodley's belief, and his argument against this hypothesis, but they were not sufficient to affect his conviction. He was sure he was right.

When he went to see his employer, his manner so plainly showed his exultation that Woodley at once said:

"So you have been successful in your search?"

"Yes," he answered; "at least, more so than I really expected to be."

"Ah! I am glad of that. You will make short work of it, then?"

"I hope so," answered Markham. "When will Horton return?"

"'Still harping on my daughter?'" said Woodley, with a slight tone of irritation. "You are running down the wind on that trail, as I told you before. But perhaps it is as well. You think your trace leads to him, and, as others might think so too, it is well enough that you should follow it up and convince yourself that you are wrong. Just go on in your own way, therefore, without reference to my ideas. Hor-

ton will not be at home for a month or more. I have sent for Warner, who was the first cashier, and is an expert accountant. With him, I shall open the bank, and go over the books and vouchers myself, just to show the public that I made no mistake when I endorsed Thomas Horton as an honest man. Mark my words: you and I are both taking different roads to the same end."

Markham half smiled, but made no reply.

He wrote a strange letter to Lizzie that night, full of vague exaltation, with hints of wonderful things which had happened since he left Fairbank, of important interests which demanded his presence, and, with many terms of ardent endearment, signed himself her "briefly-absent lover," as if the promised land of matrimony were in sight. Then he packed his precious casts securely, and took the morning express for New York.

When Boaz Woodley learned of his departure, he smiled grimly, and said to himself, "The young hound must run on a false scent sometimes. If he is of the right blood, he will come back to where he was first at fault and pick up the trace again. If he does not, I am afraid I must take the trail myself. I hate to think of running a man down, too. I would rather give ten times the money I have offered. However, it must be done, and if he does not succeed I must do it."

CHAPTER XIX.

A MISFIT.

A MONTH had elapsed. Markham Churr and Lizzie Harper walked together again upon the beach at Fairbank. He had just been telling her of all that had befallen him since his last visit—of his employment by Boaz Woodley, his apparent success and actual failure.

“And so Mr. Horton’s foot did not fit the cast,” she said, with a low laugh.

“Fit the cast! I should think not. No more than my big track in the sand here would fit a cast taken from yours,” he answered, glancing back along the beach where they had walked.

“It is really too bad, but I can’t help laughing,” said Lizzie. And she sat down on the wave-worn root of an old sycamore which had been torn from its Canadian moorings and cast upon the beach in some terrific autumn norther, and gave way to merry laughter.

Markham smiled at the musical ripples at first, but at length became annoyed, and, sitting down upon a rock near her, began to kick a hole in the packed sand, in evident ill-humor, as he waited for her mirth to subside.

“I am sure, Lizzie, I don’t see what you find so funny in it all,” he said, at length.

She was serious enough in an instant, for she recognized his ill-humor, and saw at once that her mirth had caused it.

"I beg your pardon, Markham," she said, hastily, putting her hand on his. "I was wrong to laugh at what was such a disappointment to you, though I cannot but be glad that Mr. Horton's foot was too large for your measure, and amused to think that you should build such high hopes on the chance."

"You are glad that I am foiled, so that you can laugh at me," he said, sullenly.

"I am glad the character of a good man has been vindicated," she replied, earnestly.

"How do I know he is a good man?" queried her companion.

"He has borne that character for many years, and certainly this result of your attempt to connect him with crime does not impair his previous reputation. What surprises me is that you should have had such a thought at all."

"Well, I did have it, and made a fool of myself in consequence, it appears," he said.

"What are you going to do about it now?" she asked, seeking to divert his thoughts.

"Do! I shall go to Mr. Woodley and return him the balance of his money, after deducting a month's wages, and give the matter up," said he, fiercely. "I ought to have had nothing to do with the miserable affair. But, oh, Lizzie! it was such a tempting offer that he made me; and I thought of you. The two thousand dollars and more which I hoped to get was

not so much money, merely—it was a snug little house and lot to which I might take you and begin life with a pleasant home and a fair prospect. Success meant all that to me, and my heart beat faster than the engine-strokes as I hurried on to New York, not doubtful of success. I did not dream that I should come back, baffled and disappointed, to be the subject of your ridicule.” He was looking moodily down at the sand.

She was down on her knees beside him in an instant, looking up into his face with her soft eyes full of the reproachful tears of grieving love.

“Forgive me, Markham. You know I did not mean it so,” she said. “I did not think that you would give it up because you had failed in one attempt.”

“Give it up! Why, what else can I do? Don’t you see I have no clue since that hypothesis has failed?” he asked, only half conciliated.

“But the tracks, the casts?” she said.

“Yes, the casts,” he answered, smiling in spite of his disappointment. “You ought to have seen me when I came back to my room in the hotel after viewing Mr. Horton’s feet. I never felt so foolish in my life. I suppose it was a consciousness of my own folly which made me so irritable at your laughter. There I was with two elegant casts—one of a boot-heel and the other of the whole sole—looking through humanity for a foot to match. One chance in a hundred millions, perhaps, of success! I could not but laugh at it then, myself.”

“I did not laugh at that, Markham,” she said, with a sly look into his face.

"Then what did you laugh at, pray, if not at my failure nor my odd position, eh?" He took her chin and turned her blushing face towards him. "You owe me a kiss for laughing at all."

Whether it was a *bona fide* debt or not, he claimed payment and took it without opposition; then went on:

"What were you laughing at, you rogue? Tell me this instant, or I will have another!"

"You promise not to be angry?" she asked, archly.

"Pshaw! I was not angry. I couldn't be angry with you, dear. Only my disappointment was so bitter and your presence brought it up so freshly to my mind!" he answered, caressingly.

"And you promise?" she persisted.

"Yes, if you will have it, I promise; nay, I will swear and kiss the book if you wish." And he took tribute of her lips again.

"That is quite an unnecessary formality, sir," she said, with pretended displeasure.

"Then tell me why you laughed, before it is repeated."

"Oh, I laughed at your going to New York to learn the size of Mr. Horton's foot."

"Why, how else could I find out? He carried his foot with him."

"Of course he did," she answered, smiling; "but not his shoemaker."

"Sure enough," said he, ruefully. "It wasn't a very sharp trick for a detective, was it?"

"But you promised—not to be angry," she said, doubtfully.

"Of course I did, and I am not; but this convinces me all the more that I ought not to have touched this business. I will give it up at once."

"And how about the two thousand dollars, and the—the—?" she said, blushing and looking down.

"The partnership, you mean. Oh, that must go, too," he said, with a sigh. "I wish I had never thought of it, then I should not have been disappointed. But I was half afraid you would not like that part of the bargain—a partnership with Boaz Woodley."

"I did not refer to *that* partnership," she said, demurely, while the blush grew hotter.

"Indeed!" said he, laughing at her pretty embarrassment over her own jest. "You are too sharp for me to-day. Yet, is it not too bad to jest over such sweet anticipations when one knows they are all blighted?"

"Are they?" she asked, quietly.

"Are they? Really, Lizzie, you are determined to drive me to desperation to-day. Don't you know that my only chance is to find the thief who broke into the bank, and recover the package? Here it is," he added, pulling his account-book from his pocket, "written down on the first page of this, in Boaz Woodley's own handwriting, as fine and delicate as if the hand that traced it were a lady's instead of a giant's—every letter as complete and perfect as if made by machinery; not a particle of shade, effort, or ornamentation about it. Read it for yourself, and say what you think of the man."

Lizzie took the book, and read:

“*Mem.*—The following contract made this 10th July, 1860, between Markham Churr and Boaz Woodley. The said Markham Churr undertakes to serve the said Boaz Woodley by identifying and apprehending, if within his power, the person or persons who broke and robbed the vault of the Aychitula Bank on the night of the 9th of the current month, and not to abandon search for said parties until he is thoroughly satisfied that further inquiry would be vain. Said Woodley agrees to pay said Churr (1) \$100 *per mo.* while engaged in said search; (2) his reasonable expenses while thus engaged; (3) if he should succeed in apprehending said robbers, or any one of them, \$1,000 additional; (4) should he also secure a certain parcel belonging to said Woodley, taken from said vault, then \$1,000 more additional, and a partnership with said Woodley in the practice of the law, at the option of said Churr. \$500 advanced by said Woodley on account.

“BOAZ WOODLEY.

“MARKHAM CHURR.”

She half shivered as she returned the book.

“Well, what do you think of my client—or patron, rather?” asked Markham.

“*He* will find this man if you do not,” she replied.

“Why do you say so?”

“Because he never forgives an injury nor forgets it either. The man who wrote that knows but two classes of mortals—servants and enemies—those who do his pleasure and those who balk it; and he will never forget nor neglect to reward the one and to punish

the other. He cares for none, except as they are related to himself and his interests."

"But how can he find him with no more clue than I have?"

"He would find him with half that," she replied.

"You think, then, that I have given up too soon."

"You have not given up at all. You would no more go to this man of iron, who knows no such word as fail, and confess that you could not catch this thief whom you have traced thus far by signs which had escaped all others—you could not do it—any more than the prince could give up the search for Cinderella after he had found her slipper."

He sat in moody silence.

"She rose and stood before him, with her hand upon his shoulder.

"I know you will succeed, Markham, and Boaz Woodley knew it too when he wrote that contract. At the same time he knew it would require a great effort and untiring patience. That is why he added the partnership proposal. He knew that you would prize a position in your profession—an opportunity to do—above all the money he could offer. He must be a wonderful man to have read you so closely at once."

"He seems to have been mistaken this time, anyhow," said Markham, gloomily.

"Not at all," she said, caressingly. "You are tired and overstrained with disappointment. Stay here and rest a few days, and you will think differently of it."

And thus the wise little lady kept her down-hearted lover within the range of her influence till his fit of

the blues had worn away, and the sunshine was golden to his eyes once more. Meantime, she did not let the matter which he had in hand escape his attention or her own. Her earnest and devoted nature had already taken upon itself the wifely spirit, and she was unwearied in her effort to assist and encourage him.

CHAPTER XX.

HI, ON!

LIZZIE HARPER felt the full force of the compliment which Boaz Woodley's selection of her lover for this delicate and important task implied, both to that lover himself and to the woman who had linked her life with his.

It was the first endorsement which the world had given to her judgment of his capacity. He had ranked high as a scholar. His friends and his college were proud of his attainments. But she well knew that such honors were but a poor guarantee for success in life. Lizzie Harper was ambitious. Her first intuitions in regard to Markham Churr, when he was but an awkward school-boy, were, that there was in him the possibility of a more than ordinary life. Admiration of his power was an element of her love—an element which had never been absent from her dreams of their united life. Her Markham was to be a great man, and she was to aid him in attaining greatness.

Perhaps no other man's recognition of her future husband's capacity would have given her equal satisfaction with Boaz Woodley's. His experience and success, his reputation as an almost unerring judge of men, the unsympathizing selfishness with which he was credited, all tended to make his judgment of a man's ability of the very highest value. She comprehended, too, that the task for which Markham had been selected was one not only of difficulty and delicacy, but of vital importance to Boaz Woodley. She was sure there was something more than mere loss of money involved. The apparent value of the package which had been taken did not seem to justify the efforts which he put forth for its recovery. The reward was disproportionate with the loss he seemed to have sustained. He must have a greater interest at stake than he had yet revealed, to induce him to make this offer; it must have been in the expectation of great efforts and the hope of great results. Her pride in her betrothed was staked in a peculiar manner on his success in this venture.

So this woman, wise through the anxious precience of love, determined that she would second in every manner in her power Boaz Woodley's wishes. It seemed impossible to her that, with the clue he had obtained, Markham should be unable to unravel the mystery of this crime. She was sure the key was very near his hand, and, if he would but diligently analyze his *data*, now that his mind was disabused of a false hypothesis, he would soon find it. She hinted this to him, now and then dwelling upon her confidence in his success and the happy results which would

flow from it, thus gradually withdrawing his mind from new schemes that he was already revolving for the future, and redirecting it to this as the speediest method of arriving at the consummation of their hopes.

At first, such intimations were very repugnant to him, and only produced annoyance. This she would carefully soothe at the time, but was sure to return to the subject again, always making her love the excuse for her "thoughtlessness" in doing so. After a while he began to talk of it also, to laugh at her idea as absurd, and to declare that, after the hypothesis of the cashier's guilt was abandoned, there was nothing in what he had learned to sustain a theory of the guilt of any other person.

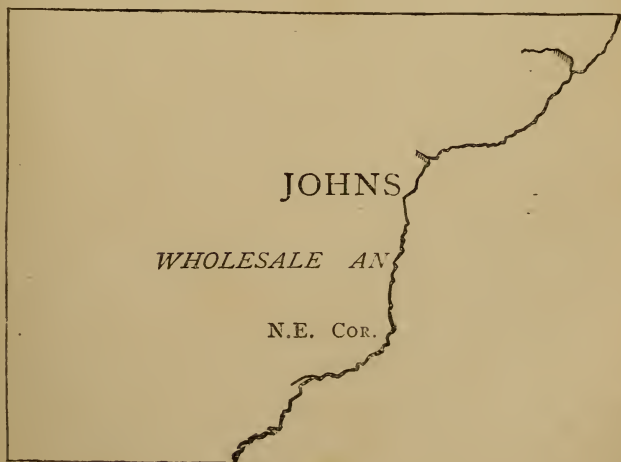
At length it came to occupy his thought almost to the exclusion of every other subject, and one day she found him in a deep study, with the plaster casts and his memoranda all spread out on the table before him. She very wisely kept away and left him much to himself after that, until he began to seek her out and talk about the matter. Her love and prudence spurred him to a further effort, which the flattering rewards of Boaz Woodley had failed to secure.

"If I could only unravel this mystery!" he said to her one day. "I know I am foolish to think of it so much, but somehow I cannot escape from it."

Then she led him on, deftly and prudently, to review again all that he had learned of the crime. Seeing her interested, he recounted to her his examination of the building and premises with great minuteness.

When he came to tell of how the window had been prepared beforehand for the contemplated crime, he showed her the card which he had found inside the frame, and explained how he had gathered, from the mark of the spring-bolt upon it, the purpose for which it had been used.

She held the card as he went on with the explanation, gazing at it absently. Her work had fallen from her lap. She read the words on the card over and over again, quite unconsciously. Rather more than one-half of it had been torn off, including the right-hand lower corner, leaving a ragged, irregular edge, extending from near the right-hand upper corner to the lower edge, further to the left. One side presented the following appearance:



The other side, with a memorandum written across

one end in a clear, rapid business hand, was as follows:

	No. 12,063
C.	\$18.00
P.	6.
V.	3.50
	<hr/>
	27.50
6/9/60.	<u>S</u>

Lizzie laid it upon her knee, pointing her needle along the printed address as she read and re-read it while listening to his words. When he ceased, she still continued the act she had been unconsciously repeating. Markham noticed it, and smiled at her absorption. Gradually the letters shaped themselves intelligently into words in her mind. They seemed to her to have some occult connection with the crime.

"Could not this card and memorandum be traced?" she asked. "It might give you a clue."

"There is little chance," he replied. "The memorandum was probably made by the thief himself."

"Still it may not have been. I would try," she persisted.

Markham gazed at the card in silence for a moment, then suddenly snatched it from her hand, ran out of the door, and down the lane to the beach, where he wandered back and forth in silent thought for more than an hour.

Lizzie glowed with satisfaction as she watched him disappear, and then went on with her sewing, uttering now and then little snatches of song and smiling softly to herself, until the sun began to shine into the western window under the low-branching cherry-trees which grew over it. Then she picked up her lover's hat, and went to seek him. They talked long and seriously of the new idea which her "chance" remark had stirred in his mind; and the next day he took the train again to seek the trail of the offender, not with such sanguine hope as before, but with a stubborn resoluteness of purpose which promised quite as well for success.

CHAPTER XXI.

WITCH-HAZEL.

AFTER Markham had gone, the thought of Lizzie Harper was still as busy in the matter upon which her absent lover was engaged as his own could

be. Again and again she went over his description of the premises, his search, and its results, in the hope that she might discover something of importance before unnoted. After a time, she became possessed with an uncontrollable desire to view the scene of the robbery. She had a general knowledge of the town, having often been there, but she wanted to gaze hour after hour upon the place where the crime, which her Markham was endeavoring to unravel, had been perpetrated. Somehow, it seemed as if she might guess at something worth knowing if she could do so. Of course, what Markham could not see, she would look for in vain unless she sought a long time, she thought. But she *would* search a long time. She had nothing else to do. Then her mind recurred to the fact that she had been very derelict in returning a certain visit made to her in the school-girl era—ages ago, it seemed. It was, in fact, but little more than a twelvemonth; but what an eternity is that in young maidenhood, when love is sole tenant of the bounding heart! Now, however, her conscience smote her, suddenly and strangely, for her neglect of friendly duty.

So she straightway opened her writing-desk, and indited an epistle to her half-forgotten crony, Amy Levis, of Aychitula, in the sloped style of penmanship known in that region as the "Spencerian," and regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of chirographic art.

In those days it was in its most brilliant glory, when the gray-bearded old humorist who claimed its origin, and who, in a sort of mock egotism, had given it his name—old "Platt R."—presided in his log acad-

emy, and went up and down the land, explaining, illustrating, and enforcing the principles and practice of the science and art of penmanship. He used to claim a sort of inspiration for it—saying that it had all come to him in a vision as he wandered on the shores of the lake, and that he first traced the characters of the new system in the moist sands. It was revealed not far from where the Mormon Bible was professedly found by Joe Smith, and proceeded from the same sort of inspiration, to wit: keen Yankee shrewdness. And, indeed, the old man's skill not a little justified the claim of inspiration. Not only the skill with which he wrote, but the ease with which he taught, entitled him to the name of the "Wizard of the Pen," in which he so delighted. His kindly, genial nature and genuine pride in the graphic art impressed him strongly upon all; and many an old-growing heart of to-day recalls, as a reminiscence of youthful days, the square-cut, gray beard and mustache, the long, sharp nose, and eyes scintillating with humor under his shaggy brows.

Perhaps no one has more characteristically impressed himself on that section of the country than he. Many a schoolboy, as he ponders the mysteries of this "system," recalls his father's story of how old "Platt R.," starting from a maudlin stupor in a bar-room, in the old stage-coach days, challenged a New Yorker who was boasting of his penmanship to write with his fingers as well as Platt could with his toes, and how, the wager being accepted, they took off his boot and stocking, and put a pen between his toes,

with which he easily vanquished the boastful "down-easter." Yes, he was inspired—with that supremely practical wisdom called "American," which coins thoughts into dollars, and divines at once the needs and genius of his fellows. He saw that the leading, governing idea of the American mind was *economy of time*, and he therefore devised a system of chirography which admits of the greatest possible speed of execution. Beauty or legibility it had not, except in his hands or that of a few masters; but it suited the American need, as being a rapid and easily-acquired system of thought-delineation.

In this characteristic hand Lizzie indited her epistle, stating the day and hour on which she would arrive at Aychitula on a visit to her friend. This sudden determination to pay a long-neglected visit may or may not be accounted for by the fact that the premises of her friend's father overlooked, to the northward, the cashier's garden and the Bank of Aychitula.

At the time appointed, Lizzie arrived, and was welcomed with that exuberance of warmth with which the young woman always seeks to revive the remembrance of her school-days. She was installed in the second story of the north wing, overlooking the premises which she especially desired to scrutinize.

"I have given you this room," said Amy, as she seated herself upon the broad, low sill of the wide window, "because it is the very coolest in the house. How horribly hot it is! Haven't you almost melted this summer?" And she herself looked hot enough to attempt the experiment as she knotted her brows and,

Tou.
lifting her mass of hair fretfully from her neck, looked at her visitor.

Lizzie, in her buff traveling-suit, with white cuffs and collar, raised her large gray eyes composedly, and replied:

“I haven’t noticed that it was warmer than usual.”

“Not noticed!” replied Amy. “Really, I believe nothing ever does disturb you; but I suppose you do not feel the heat so much on the lake shore.

“I suppose not,” assented Lizzie.

“Well,” continued the voluble hostess, “you can see the lake from here. I thought you could not be contented out of sight of white-caps; so yonder they are.” And she pointed away over the village to a bit of darker blue in the northern horizon, on which the white-crested waves were chasing each other in the sunshine.

“It does look cool, in spite of the glitter,” said her guest, languidly.

“But you will have to keep your windows closed at night—for, right yonder, you know, is the bank which was broken into a while back, and robbed so skillfully that no one can find out either how it was done or who did it.”

The gossip had struck the right key now, and had an attentive listener at once. Lizzie came and stood beside her friend at the window, while she pointed out the bank, the cashier’s house, and the fence which ran along the east side of the bank and continued until it struck the premises of Amy’s father.

“So nobody knows who did it?” said Lizzie, thought-

fully, but with an exultant voice in her heart which said all the time, "My Markham knows."

"No," replied Amy. "They had detectives, and all that, but no one could get any clue to it at all, unless Markham Churr has."

She watched Lizzie narrowly as she spoke, but the great gray eyes and placid features told no tales to reward her scrutiny.

"Markham Churr," Lizzie said, quietly, "had he anything to do with it?"

"Had he? Of course you know, Lizzie, whether he had or not," Amy rejoined, half petulantly. "But you need not be afraid of me. I saw him watching and measuring—or doing something about the grounds—just yonder at the foot of that row of cherry-trees which runs down to the fence."

Lizzie looked as she pointed to a row of trees running from the cashier's house eastward. "It was just beyond that dead currant-bush you see," Amy continued. "By the way, I don't see what made that bush die. It was not dead then, and it cannot be the slug. You see it has all its leaves on it. It has just shriveled and died without any cause, it seems to me.

"I was sitting here a day or two after the robbery, and I saw Markham go along the fence there, looking very earnestly at it. Then he seemed to be doing something, I could not make out what, among the bushes there. I thought then he was just prying about, as so many others had done, from idle curiosity, but when I heard that he had closed his office in Rexville, I concluded that he had found some clue to the rob-

bery; and so I kept still about what I had seen, lest I should hurt his prospects."

Lizzie was about to acknowledge the fact—it was the first time she had felt any temptation to disclose it to any one—of the search in which Markham was engaged, but the next words of her friend sealed her lips closer than ever.

"I am sure," Amy continued. "I hope he will find out all about it. Do you know, Mother has broken off my correspondence with Frank Horton on account of this thing. You know there was some intimacy between us," she added, with burning cheeks. "We grew up here together and have always kept up a sort of flirtation until this happened. I really think Mother believes old Mr. Horton stole the money. No, not quite so bad as that, either," she added, with a little uneasy laugh, "but you know people will talk, and Mother thinks the whole family are under a cloud, and declares that I shall not write to Frank again until this matter is cleared up. It does look bad, I know, and I hope Markham will find out all about it. I am sure it will come out all right, for it is just absurd to think of Mr. Horton's having anything to do with it."

Lizzie put her arm caressingly about her friend's neck as she stood beside her, but said nothing, and Amy continued:

"Frank has been pretty wild, I know, but I think this has sobered him. He has gone back to college now and is working hard. This is his last year, you know—and—and we hoped to have been married next fall," continued Amy, as her blushes and tears con-

tended for the mastery. "Poor fellow! You don't know him, Lizzie. I am sure you would like him. He is not such a staid, earnest fellow as Markham Churr, but the best, bravest, noblest fellow in the world—the very best."

For two days, Lizzie Harper spent every moment she could steal, of night or day, in gazing upon the scene of the crime. She recalled for the thousandth time all she had heard about it, and sought to add some item to what was already known, which would advance the search; but it was not so easy as she had imagined. She tried in vain to wring from the scene before her the secret she wished to learn. Her fondness for solitude and her chamber surprised her friend, and Amy's father jocularly accused her of being affected by the sudden disappearance of a young lawyer in a neighboring town. But it was of no use to try to banter her. She was as gay as ever when with others, and evidently happy and contented.

On the third night she came to her room earlier than usual, and sat down for a long time in the open window, gazing upon the premises adjoining, her whole soul absorbed in reverie. The village was as still as the grave, and the moon was just setting when she sought her couch. The summer night was dark, and the wind blew chill from the distant lake when she awoke—to find herself, not in the bed, but standing, with straining eyes and creeping flesh, gazing into the grounds she had so often surveyed. Despite the darkness, she seemed to see every bush and twig with the utmost distinctness. The cool night-breeze made her

shiver. She put on a thick wrapper and belted it close about her. She shivered still. Her teeth chattered as with an ague. She walked about to calm herself. It was useless. Her whole being was shaken with excitement. Again and again she came back to the window and peered intently in the direction of the bank. She told herself that her excitement was foolish. She lay down upon the bed, but in a moment was at the window again. Then she opened her door and listened. All was silent. She groped in the closet until she found a pair of India-rubber over-shoes she had noticed there, put them on without shoes or stockings, and stole silently and quickly along the hall, down the stairs and into the dining-room.

Amy's father and mother slept in a room opening off from this. She paused a moment and listened to their regular breathing, then passed swiftly across, turned the key softly, threw open the door and stepped out upon the porch. Passing down the steps she turned northward along the path, now somewhat neglected, which led to a little gate between the premises she was on and those of the cashier. Half-way to the boundary she paused, turned back and went around the house to the wood-shed door, opened it, went in, and felt for a spade she had seen hanging beside one of the posts; found it, came out and ran back to the gate. She passed through this and walked straight along the garden-path, as if it had been at noon instead of midnight, until she came to the row of cherry-trees. Here she stopped for a moment and pressed her hand upon her heart, as if in terror, and looked

hastily about, then, turning to the right, walked directly to the currant-bush whose sudden death had been a matter of so great surprise to her friend. She hesitated a moment, and then, reaching out her hand, seized some of the long scraggy branches and gave a strong, steady pull. The whole bush yielded and was drawn slowly towards her. She uttered a low cry, and fell upon the ground. She lay for a few moments in a strange limp heap, and then raised her head in a dull, surprised way and looked around. She had fainted from excitement. After a short time she rose hastily, grasped the bush with both hands, and pulled it, with the turf and earth attached, from its place. It had evidently been carefully cut out and replaced. Taking the spade, she began digging where it had stood. It was no new implement to her hands, as her own little parterre of flowers at Fairbank could abundantly testify, and she used it handily and effectively. At length she felt it strike something metallic. She redoubled her efforts and soon found that she could trace its form with the spade. Then she knelt down on the edge of the little pit she had dug and, groping in the loose earth, found a handle, and, with some exertion, drew forth a small tin-box. She rose and turned as if about to leave, stopped a moment, and then, setting down the box, replaced the earth she had taken out and set the bush firmly in its original position, leveling the earth and settling it in its place with her foot, as a gardener does when planting trees.

Then she snatched up the box and fled, like an affrighted thing, along the path to the little gate, ran

around to the wood-shed door, just thrust the spade inside, not waiting to hang it up, entered, and closed the dining-room door, flew noiselessly to her own room and thrust the box inside her great Saratoga trunk, without regard for its previous contents, shut down the lid and locked it, took out the key, and, with it clasped tightly in her hand, sprung into her bed, moaning and trembling in uncontrollable excitement. The secret she had vainly sought awake had come to her in sleep!

The sun was shining brightly—the early chimes of the village bells were coming in at the window, and at the foot of the stairs Amy was calling, “Lizzie!” when she awoke that Sabbath morning.

CHAPTER XXII.

FOR SWEET LOVE'S SAKE.

LIZZIE sat up and looked about in amazement. How she came to be encased in that dark wrapper, wearing those soiled rubbers, and lying upon the outside of the bed, she could not, for a moment, understand. There was a dull, heavy pain in her head, and there seemed to be a dim memory of something very awful hanging about her.

“Lizzie!” called again the shrill voice at the stair-foot. “I declare, Ma,” said Amy, “she must be ‘sleeping by the job,’ as Father says.”

“She will be up here in a minute more,” thought

Lizzie; and the wrapper was cast aside and rubbers thrown behind the trunk in a twinkling. It was none too soon, for Amy was already clattering at the door. Lizzie opened it, and confronted her friend, clad in her white night-dress, and yawning innocently as she said :

“I have overslept, it seems.”

“I should think so!” replied Amy, laughingly. “Breakfast is ready. Can I help you?”

“No, thank you. I will be down in a moment.”

“Well, hurry,” said the sprightly friend, “or we shall be late for church.” And she closed the door, and ran down with a whirr and a bound, as she had come.

Lizzie dressed hastily, but thoughtfully. She remembered now all that had occurred during the night. She knew that there in her trunk was locked the box which, she doubted not, contained a large part of the booty which her Markham was even then seeking to recover. She must have time to examine it and consider her course. So she determined that her headache and the dark circles about her eyes, the result of her night’s adventure, should constitute a convenient subterfuge by means of which she might remain in her chamber and be safe from interruption during most of the day. She knew the Puritanic habits of the people; they were her own. No light thing was allowed to detain any one from the Sabbath exercises.

In a few moments she was ready for breakfast. Her plea of headache and general ill-feeling, backed as it was by her swollen eyes and pallid countenance,

was readily allowed. All concurred in her view that she ought not to go to church. Amy offered to stay with her, but Lizzie would not hear of it. She was going to "sleep it off," she said.

She wandered about listlessly after breakfast, and, happening to pass the woodshed door, she saw Amy's father standing with the spade she had used the night before in his hand, gazing at it wonderingly. She stepped away around the corner, and heard him call: "Susan! Susan!"

"Well, what?" answered his wife, as she appeared in the kitchen doorway, busily engaged in wiping the breakfast-knives, which Amy was washing at the sink.

"Have you had this spade?"

"Is that what you are waking the neighborhood about, of a Sunday?" she rejoined, half-sharply, half-jocularly.

"But see here," said he; "you know this always hangs on that post."

"Of course," said the dame, as she stepped into the woodshed, with the knives still in her hand.

"Well, I found it here, lying on the ground, just inside the door, covered with dirt, fresh and damp. I haven't had it since Friday—or Thursday, was it?—putting out those plants of yours; and then, I remember, I wiped it off and hung it up."

Anything out of place or in bad condition was a nine days' wonder about the premises of Anson Levis. The orderly habits of a busy lifetime were exaggerated by advancing age both in himself and his wife Susan, and all their surroundings were almost painfully neat

and precise. Meantime, Amy, her sleeves rolled up, displaying her plump arms, came to the door, and joined in the colloquy. In that happy region where servants are almost unknown, these three constituted the family, unless, as now, some friend was staying with them for a short time. The matter of the spade was of so unusual a nature, that Lizzie was forgotten while speculation proceeded as to the phenomenon. Various theories were offered and abandoned.

“Whoever has had it has been digging down to the hard pan,” said Anson Levis, as he scraped the stiff bluish clay from its edge with a chip.

Amy laughed merrily.

“Probably some one has borrowed it to dig his grave with,” she said.

It was a fortunate remark, so far as the true solution of the mystery was concerned. It set Mrs. Levis going on one of her hobbies. Twenty years or more before, a grave had been opened in the little village churchyard, two hundred yards away, and the body taken, for dissection, it was said. This event, or this surmise—for whether it were fact or fiction was hard to decide—had made a most vivid impression on this good lady’s mind, and “body-snatchers” had ever since been one of the pet horrors of her very vivid imagination.

“I’ll tell you what it is, Father,” she now said, earnestly; “some of those resurrectionists have been and taken up Laura Herman. She was only buried Thursday, you know.”

The worthy man saw what was coming, and dreaded

it. He was not at all imaginative—just plain, matter-of-fact, too honest to distrust what he could see, or to believe more than that. He knew that his wife's busy fancy would make a doleful tragedy out of the circumstances which had simply puzzled him. He saw that spade growing, little by little, into a tradition whose horror would make the juveniles of Aychitula quake with terror in the long winter nights of the future.

“Pshaw!” said he, “don't be run away with by that idea, Susan. People who steal dead bodies would not be particular to return spades. I dare say I have used it for something or other which I have forgotten now. I do forget lately,” he added, with a sigh. He dreaded to think that he was growing old.

The women—mother and daughter—both knew this dread of age which he had, and both, in their different ways, loved him tenderly. So the spade and its mystery were put out of mind as both sought to drive away the gloomy feeling from the father's heart.

Lizzie strolled to her own room, and when Amy came in already dressed to bestow her final regrets and a kiss before going to church, she was lying on her bed and apparently sound asleep. When she heard the front door close behind her hosts, she stepped lightly from the bed and watched them through the closed blinds as they walked down the path and through the gate into the street, already thronged with brightly-dressed, happy-faced church-goers.

Then she flew to her door, locked it, and was on her knees before her trunk in an instant. Her illness had

vanished. With flushed face and sparkling eyes, she unlocked and opened the trunk, and looked upon the result of her last night's adventure—a tin-box, perhaps a foot long by eight inches in width and five or six in depth. It was battered and bruised with long usage, and stood, earthy and grimy, upon the pile of snowy garments which constitute the summer wardrobe of young ladyhood. She did not mind the soiled muslins and laces, the crushed frills and flutings, which at any other time would very nearly have driven her to distraction. She took the box out, removed the earth which had adhered to it, and examined its exterior very carefully. It was fastened with a small padlock and hasp.

On the narrow lid, at the right of the hasp, was a place where the brown japanning had been marked with some letters, which had been afterwards carefully erased. Attached to the handle was a piece of card, on which something had been written, but it had become so blurred by the dampness in which it had lain that she could make nothing of it.

She was not one to rest in doubt. Whether this was the property of Boaz Woodley or not, she was fully satisfied that it was in some way connected with the robbery of the bank, and she was determined that her lover should have the benefit of that discovery, whatever it might be. She had no scruples therefore in regard to opening the box. The only question was, How? She suddenly remembered that Anson Levis in his younger days had been a blacksmith, and that in the tidy shop on the corner of his lot there was still quite

an array of tools pertaining to that craft. She first tried all of her keys, to see if they would open the little brass padlock which held the hasp; but they would not.. Then she ran down into the shop to find something with which she might break or cut the hasp. She had little idea of what was best adapted for such purpose, but, after taking out of the rack above the bench one after another of the tools, which had been roughly polished by long wear, she finally fixed upon a file as the most suitable implement. Regarding it as a great undertaking which was before her, she choose the largest file, little dreaming that the small triangular one which stood beside it in the rack would be far more effective and convenient. Returning to her room, she placed the box on its edge against her trunk, and began the work of filing through the hasp. It was a very slight thing for a man to do, and almost any unskilled boy could have done it in a minute or two. But it proved a terrible task to Lizzie Harper. The file slipped and the sharp edges of the box wounded her fingers; it squeaked and clattered loudly enough to disturb the worshipers at the church, a quarter of a mile away, she thought; sometimes it ran over the stubborn link like polished glass, and then again she had not strength enough to push it. But finally it was done, the hasp separated, and the lock removed.

When, with bruised hands and flushed face, she looked at the casket, now open for her inspection, for the first time a doubt as to the propriety of her conduct in thus forcing it open seemed to flash upon her mind. Her cheek paled a little and her hand trembled

as she laid the box down and raised the lid. The first thing that met her eye was a paper on which was written the name of Boaz Woodley in his own unmistakable handwriting.

She had not completed her examination of the contents of the box when she heard the voices of Amy and her parents, returning from church. She had but a moment to return it to her trunk and remove the evidences of her occupation, when she heard their footsteps on the porch. She hastily washed her hands, and hastened down to meet Amy at the foot of the stairs and answer their anxious inquiries as to her health.

Lizzie Harper was not an adept in falsifying, but she had a woman's instinctive skill in evading inquiry. So she answered Amy without difficulty, but her self-control almost broke down when Anson Levis, looking at her flushed face and recognizing unconsciously the signs of labor, said, laughingly:

"You look as if you had been blacksmithing."

For a moment she wondered if anything had betrayed her, and her cheek half paled. Then she said, saucily, going up to the old man and looking him roguishly in the face:

"Perhaps I have. Wouldn't you like me for an apprentice?"

He pinched her cheek as he laughed and said:

"Not if there was any work in the shop, Puss!"

What to do with the discovery she had made, was a serious question for Lizzie to decide. She knew her lover's sensitive nature, and properly appreciated his pride in himself. She feared that if he should know

that she had forestalled him in the discovery of this deposit it might vex and annoy him. She did not take any credit to herself for the discovery. It seemed a mere accident that she should find the box which Boaz Woodley had lost, hidden under the currant-bush whose mysterious decay had been noticed by her friend. Had not Markham's subtle observations traced the robber from the bank to the very spot where the plunder was hidden? That he should not have found it was but natural, for the then unwithered shrub had given him no hint. Yet she feared he would feel chagrined at a success he might achieve through her interposition. Besides, this offered but little clue as to the personality of the criminal, and to disclose the discovery could not aid him in the search for the offender. Indeed, it might lead him to relax his efforts, and result in failure. So she wisely determined that she would await the result of his search and look for some opportunity to transmit the packet to his hands in a way that should prevent his knowing what connection she had had with its discovery.

CHAPTER XXIII.

ON THE TRAIL.

WHEN Markham set forth upon his second quest for the robber of the Bank of Aychitula, it was without any definite hypothesis as to his identity, but

with a settled determination to follow wherever he might be led by the clue he already had; and he further determined that no one, not even Lizzie, should hear from him so much as a single word until he had accomplished his purpose or was ready to acknowledge his defeat.

He had, it is true, an indefinite notion that the trail he was following would lead to Frank Horton, the only son of the cashier, and accordingly directed his steps first to one of the interior cities of New York, where the young man was attending college. Upon his arrival there, he began at once his search for a clothing or furnishing establishment from which the card in his possession might have come. After the closest examination, he could find none. His inquiries as to the life of the cashier's son revealed the fact that he had come back, after the summer vacation, apparently weaned of some former wildness, and devoted himself to his studies with peculiar steadiness and determination. He had been excused to visit a sick classmate once since that time, and had been away four or five days, but otherwise had not been absent from any required exercise.

This failure was attended with no little satisfaction to Markham. From the first he had, somewhat dreaded lest the cashier should be involved in the crime. There was that about Thomas Horton which made every one wish him well. Perhaps not every one would rejoice as earnestly as Lizzie in the justification of a good man's name, but all would be glad to know that Thomas Horton was unscathed by crime or freed from an un-

just suspicion. Besides this, Frank Horton had been, for a brief period, a schoolmate of Markham's, and he had a certain liking for the bold young fellow, who had been a ringleader in mischief among the younger students at Rexville when he himself had been one of the "grave and reverend seniors" about to leave that institution for the halls of college. He did not like to hunt this schoolmate down for crime. He would much rather pursue a stranger—one with whom he had no personal relations. So it was with a certain feeling of satisfaction that he turned back upon his steps to Buffalo. Now that he was dispossessed of any theory which colored his reasoning on the subject, and had the world before him, instead of feeling at all discouraged, he settled down at once to systematic action.

Buffalo, as the first important city to the eastward of the scene of the robbery, might give the clue for which he sought, and should first be searched. If that failed, he would go to New York. That was the heart of the continent; sooner or later, the robber himself and the marked bills which he had taken would be drawn into that great maelstrom of trade and crime.

A week in Buffalo revealed nothing. He went to New York. From there he wrote to Boaz Woodley: "If you desire to communicate with me at any time, address P.O. Box 6049, New York City." That was all.

"I like that," said Woodley to himself. "The young dog is settling to his work. I was afraid he had given it up. He will succeed." So he directed all bankers whom he had notified of the marked bills

to send intelligence of any that came to their knowledge to the address given him.

In his New York lodgings, Markham became a student of directories. He had three things by which he might discover the offender: the marked bills, the casts of the foot-tracks, and the torn card. To the latter he gave very close attention, as he had a dim hope that it might lead to his result quicker than the others. He had already decided that the card was probably that of a wholesale and retail clothier, whose place of business was upon the corner of some streets, in an unknown city. This conclusion he had arrived at from both sides of the card. He admitted to himself that the deduction was not irrefragable. "C.," "P.," and "V." might not stand for "coat," "pants," and "vest," but, taken in connection with the prices, he thought it more than probable that they did. Then, too, admitting this inference to be correct, it did not follow that the card was that of a clothing-house. Yet, again, he thought that the probabilities were largely in favor of that hypothesis.

To find a man or a firm whose name began with "JOINS," whose place of business was on a *Corner*, and who was presumably a *wholesale and retail* clothier, was, therefore, his first task. There were two lines of travel most intimately connected with the locality in which the crime was committed—one directly east, reaching through Central New York to the city by two routes, along each of which was a chain of interior cities, and extending on to the cities of New England; the other, directly westward to Chicago, also studded

with the ganglia of trade and travel, connecting with Cincinnati, St. Louis, and the Southwest. A third, of much less importance, was by Pittsburgh to Philadelphia and the cities connected therewith.

In this order he determined that his search should proceed. He could do nothing to hasten the acquisition of any clue by means of the marked bills. That must come—if it came at all—by the natural ebb and flow of commerce, by which sooner or later some of this marked money would be cast into the hands of some watchful observer of the current, and then it might, perhaps, be traced back from hand to hand to the guilty party who had first uttered it. This was, of course, on the hypothesis that the thief should put the money in circulation. Even this was by no means certain. There was evidently a close knowledge of the ways of the bank, on the part of the robber, and a strange power of self-restraint or cautious discrimination, in that, of the many thousands of dollars which were under his hands, he had only taken the deposit of Boaz Woodley and a small portion of the general deposits. Whenever his mind recurred to these facts, he would find himself insensibly turning his suspicion again upon the cashier, and the fact that several months had elapsed and none of this money seemed to have entered the usual channels of trade powerfully confirmed this suspicion. However, he would not yield to it, but cast it off, determined only to pursue the clues in his hands, uninfluenced by any outside ratiocination of his own. Week after week, and month after month, he pursued his search.

Boaz Woodley had given up all feeling of doubt as to the result. When Markham's brief epistle, giving his address, had come, he had replied as follows: "All right. Go on until you have exhausted your last resource. Leave no stone unturned. Time is nothing; success is everything. The crime was evidently committed by an enemy of mine, by a servant of the bank, or by some confidant of a servant. The motive of the act was not robbery—mere greed of money. Of that I am sure. It was the act of a revengeful or needy man, I can give you no aid as to either. Horton is innocent. I am still confident of that. Yet you might inquire if he has been speculating in New York. His son was absent, and had not been at home for months. Warner and I found the books straight and accurate to a cent. The mystery only increases my anxiety."

He heard nothing from Markham except once or twice when there had come checks for expenses, with clear, detailed statements of the use made of former amounts. By studying these, he found that the young man had passed by his old home twice, yet he had not heard that he had stopped. To make sure, he wrote to Lizzie, professing ignorance as to the whereabouts of Markham, and desiring information; for the knowledge of her engagement had become general, and Woodley reasoned that she would have knowledge of his address and would have seen him if he had returned. He received only a brief line in reply, in which Lizzie stated that she had not heard from Mr. Churr in more than two months, but that he had then directed her to address, "P. O. Box, 6049, New York City." It

was the same address Woodley had himself received, and he felt satisfied that Markham was hard at work.

Thus Boaz Woodley waited in confident hope, and Markham Churr plodded on in dogged silence. City after city he scrutinized for some clue to the piece of crumpled card which he carried. He found "Johnsons" and "Johnstons" and "Johnstones," with every imaginable copartnership, "& Bro.," "& Co.," and linked with almost every possible name, on all sorts of corners and in every kind of *wholesale and retail* business. But he found none who could decipher the mystery of this card. In these months, inquiry in regard to this had grown almost to be a mania with him. He had had the original carefully reproduced by photography, and sometimes sent inquiries by mail in regard to it. This he had done to many of the interior towns which he could not visit. Yet he gained no information.

The winter had passed, and the spring had come, when he was returning from following up a false scent at the West, and stopped at Philadelphia, intending to proceed to New York by the next train. As he wandered along the street, his eye caught the sign, "Johnson & Bro., Wholesale and Retail Clothiers." It was upon a corner, too, of Arch and Sixth streets. Instinctively he entered, and asked to see one of their cards. It was shown to him; but it did not correspond with the one he had—in size or style of type.

"Did you ever have one like that," he asked, showing the well-worn scrap, now carefully framed in glass. The clerk could not answer, but showed the way to the

counting-room, where Churr repeated the inquiry, with an abruptness which had long since become habitual to him, to the kind-faced, busy man who was pointed out to him as Mr. Johnson:

“Is that one of your cards, sir?”

“Well,” said he, smiling as he examined it. “I should say it is what is left of one?”

“Can you tell me anything about this memorandum?” asked Markham, pointing out the figures on the back.

“Let me see,” said the proprietor—“‘S.,’ that was probably meant for J. W. S., a clerk in the custom department. Here, Charley,” said he to a messenger. “Ask Mr. Sharp to step this way for a moment.”

When the clerk came, he handed him the piece of card, saying:

“Mr. Sharp, here is a memorandum of yours. Can you tell this gentleman what it means?”

Mr. Sharp took the card, adjusted his spectacles, and gave it a careful inspection.

“Yes sir,” said he, “this is the card we always put on a custom-made suit when it is finished, for the instruction of the shipping-clerk. You see,” he added, turning to Markham, “we do a great deal of work for customers at a distance. People leave their measures, or send them to us, and when they want clothing, we send them samples and prices; they select the cloth, and we cut and make, and forward to them by express. I am book-keeper of the custom-making department. When a suit is ordered, it is entered upon our book by a number, as, in this case, 12,063, and when it is

made, it is given to the shipping-clerk, who sends it to the person whose order has that number, with a bill corresponding with the card.

"Can you tell me to whom this was sent?" asked Markham.

"Certainly," answered the proprietor. "Mr. Sharp, ask Mr. Bailey to look up No. 12,063, find when and to whom it was sent, and what was the express return. You see, sir," he said, with pardonable pride, "we do a very large business in custom-goods, being the first house that ever undertook to furnish custom-work at a distance and guarantee satisfaction. Of course it requires a very careful system. Will you not leave your measure, sir?" he asked, with an eye to his own advantage. "It can be taken while the clerk is looking up his entries. It may be convenient for you to order, some time, when you cannot satisfy yourself nearer home. We guarantee satisfaction, sir."

Markham was pleased with the appearance of the proprietor, and his readiness to turn every incident to the advancement of his trade. Besides, it was the first actual glimpse of success which he had obtained, and it suddenly occurred to him that he did need a new suit. The dealer's eye had already detected that fact. So he readily assented, and, before the clerk had obtained the information required, had not only been measured, but had ordered a suit of clothes, and directed them to be sent to his New York lodgings. This fact brought him at once into unusual favor with the proprietor, to whom every patron was a friend, but a New York patron one to be especially cherished.

Then the clerk brought his book, and, pointing to the entry, read :

“Number 12,063. Summer flannel suit—pants, vest, and Chesterfield coat; twenty-seven dollars and fifty cents. Ordered June 9, and sent, C O.D , July 3, 1860, to Mr. Frank Horton, at Titusville, Penna.”

Markham sank into a chair as the clerk finished reading, overwhelmed with surprise.

“That is the entry. Nothing wrong, I hope, sir,” said the clerk, briskly.

“No, sir, nothing wrong,” he answered. “You will allow me to copy this entry?”

“Oh, certainly,” said the proprietor.

He was about to depart, after having done so and thanked the proprietor, when, recollecting the purchase he had made, he turned and said :

“I may as well pay you for the clothing now.”

“Just as may be convenient for you,” said the proprietor.

“I will pay you now,” said Markham, handing him a bill, which the merchant at once gave to a boy to have changed, saying, with a smile, “It will save you a dollar collection charges.”

The boy returned and handed Markham some bills, at which he glanced, and was about to put them in his pocket when his gaze became fixed upon one of them, and his voice trembled as he asked, anxiously :

“Can you tell me where you got that bill?”

“Well, really,” said the merchant, laughingly, “you seem determined to know all about our business, sir.” He glanced keenly, but not unpleasantly, at Markham

as he spoke, and the latter saw that it would not only be safe, but almost necessary, to meet Mr. Johnson's politeness with an avowal of the purpose of his inquiries. After he had informed him briefly of this, and the relation of the bill he held in his hand to the robbery, Mr. Johnson said:

"Certainly, sir, we will do all we can to aid you in such a matter."

After a short conversation with his cashier, he informed Markham that both the cashier and one of his salesmen were confident that they had received the bill from an old and very eccentric customer, Mr Peter Wrenn, a Quaker, who lived but a few blocks distant, and added:

"As I might be able to get more out of the old man than you could do alone, I will go with you to see him."

Markham thanked him for his politeness.

"Not at all," said Johnson. "In fact, I do not offer to do this altogether from kindness to you. I am afraid you may lose us a customer if I do not go along to mollify the old man's wrath, which is sure to arise as soon as he sees that bill and hears your inquiries."

They found Mr. Wrenn in a little, dingy room, with a coal grate whose emptiness made one shiver.

"Well," said he, when Mr Johnson had stated, in a general way, the occasion of the visit, "it's a good bill, isn't it?"

"Perfectly good," said Markham; "but I wish to know if you can recollect from whom you received it."

“If thee knew Peter Wrenn, thee would know he could never recollect. Recollect! I recollect nothing—not a thing, young man, not a thing!” said the old Quaker, with considerable show of anger.

“Well, that is all,” said Markham; “only I must beg your pardon for troubling you. I hoped you could remember, in order that I might trace it back.”

“No, I never remember—never!”

Markham rose and took his hat to go, but Johnson nodded to him to remain.

“Perhaps,” he said, quietly, “Mr. Wrenn has some memorandum that might help you.”

“Do you mean books?” asked the old man, sharply.

“Certainly.”

“Why don’t thee say so, then? This idea of calling books memorandums, putting them on a footing with pencil-jottings on cards and bits of wrapping-paper, is unworthy of a merchant. If I thought thee practiced as loosely as thee talks, I would never enter thy shop again—never! Yes, I *keep books*—books which show my business instead of concealing it; books which show what I do, how I do it, whom I do it with, and whether I gain or lose by any particular operation. If there is anything in those books that will aid thy friend, he is welcome to see them.”

“If there is an entry of the person from you received this bill, it *will* aid me, greatly,” said Markham.

“*If* I ever received it, young man, there is assuredly an entry showing from whence it came. Let me see thy note.”

The old man examined the bill, and then turned

over his books for a few moments, rose, took a key from his pocket, and, opening a safe set in the wall of the room, took out a bundle of papers, and, selecting one, handed it, after careful inspection, to Markham, saying :

“I received that bill in payment of a note identical with this in all respects, except that it was payable three months after date instead of six. It was paid on the day it fell due.”

The paper he handed Markham was a note for three thousand dollars, and purported to have been signed by Frank Horton, Thomas Horton, and Boaz Woodley.

The signatures were so well executed that even Markham for a moment hardly thought of doubting their genuineness.

He examined the paper carefully, and noticed that it purported to have been executed at a town in the western part of Pennsylvania and was past due.

“This is over-due, I see, Mr. Wrenn.”

“Yes, but the young man was so prompt in the payment of the first that I thought I would not push him on this. Besides, I hold a very good security and have no fear of loss by his failure to pay.”

“May I ask what that security is?”

“Young man, Peter Wrenn is not in the habit of publishing his business to every one who has the curiosity to inquire about it, and I don't think thee had better ask any more questions. I am almost sorry I told thee as much as I have. I have had considerable dealing with the young man who gave me that

note and have always found him correct. I have no doubt he will pay this, and I am not sure I had any right to mention it to another." He reached his hand for the note, and Markham, seeing that he could learn no more, signified his intention to depart.

"I hope young Horton can tell thee where he got the money, and that thou wilt catch the thief; but I hope thee will say nothing about our business. That does not concern thee. If—if—it should happen, that all those names were not written by the men they belong to, don't run the young man down on that account. He'll pay the note, I have no doubt, and I've got plenty of security—security that can't fail, real estate—land—and abundance of it. So don't hunt him down for that."

"I shall only do my plain duty to my employer," answered Markham. "I have no desire to injure Mr. Horton."

"That's right—that's right," said the old man, shaking hands with more cordiality than he had before shown. "Punish crime as severely as possible, when it injures others, but when no one is hurt, don't be too hard on mere unlawful acts. We cannot always know a man's temptations nor how he's deceived himself. An honest man may do very strange things sometimes and hardly know it afterwards. There's lots of names borrowed for a few days, without their owner's knowledge, in every great city, and nobody hurt by it."

Leaving the old Quaker and his queer morality, Markham bade farewell to Mr. Johnson and went to his hotel,

That night two letters were sent from Philadelphia. One was to Boaz Woodley, and read as follows :

“SIR: Nothing recovered, but the proof is plenary as to Frank Horton’s connection with the robbery. I leave to-night for R., where he is, so as to have him in sight. Telegraph me there whether I shall cause his arrest or not. I shall be in R. when you receive this. Respectfully,

“MARKHAM CHURR.”

The other was from Peter Wrenn to Frank Horton, and read :

“FRIEND: Thou art aware that thy note for \$3,000 is over-due by some four months. I wish thee would arrange to pay it now. I feel bound to tell thee that a young man named Markham Churr came to see me to-day, and asked some close questions about our business. He had traced back to me one of the bills I received from thee. Thou wilt know if he can do thee any harm. Thy friend,

“PETER WRENN.”

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DELUGE.

IT was on a Saturday morning that Markham reached the city of R., and found this despatch awaiting him :

“No. Learn all you can, and come here.

“B. WOODLEY.”

He spent the day, therefore, in making inquiries in regard to Frank Horton, and learned several facts which tended very strongly to confirm the testimony he had otherwise obtained. Among others, was the statement by his boarding-house keeper that he had left the city just before the robbery, and returned the day but one afterwards. A shoemaker, after carefully measuring the long-neglected casts, declared that they would fit Mr. Frank Horton's foot, and he thought they were taken from impressions made by a pair of boots he had made for that young gentleman, and repaired a short time after the date of the robbery. Inquiries at the various banks of the city disclosed nothing but that young Horton had made no deposits in them except on one occasion, for a few days.

That Markham Churr should have felt relieved by the approaching end of his long search, and also somewhat exhilarated by his success, was but natural. He was, however, heartily glad that the duty of causing the arrest of his old schoolmate was not imposed upon him, and he determined that, after reporting to his employer, he would leave the further prosecution of the matter entirely in his hands.

After a busy day, he retired at night to dream of Lizzie Harper and the enjoyment of his first triumph in real life.

The next day being the Sabbath, Markham Churr rose late. It was a bright morning in April. When he

came down to breakfast, he found the usual boarders gathered in the little parlor of the house, but unusually silent, preoccupied, and solemn. There was a look of incredulous surprise on every face, and one who stood in the middle of the throng held a slip of paper with a few lines printed on it. It was an extra, struck off by one of the city dailies before dawn that morning.

"What is the matter?" asked Markham.

The one who held the paper handed it to him without reply, and he read:

"FORT SUMTER FIRED ON!

"The following telegram was received too late for our regular edition yesterday:

New York, April 13. — The rebels opened fire on Major Anderson and his little force in Fort Sumter at daybreak on the 12th. The bombardment was still going on at noon Saturday."

He read the brief announcement at a glance; then read it again, and again, in dumb amazement. He could not realize the fact. It seemed impossible. The rumor had been about him for months. The threat of rebellion and war had grown old, and yet it did not seem possible that these should have come.

"War? war?" he murmured; but no one answered him. Men were not prone to conversation that morning. Perhaps, too, it was only an utterance of the vague surprise which filled every breast, and, in that moment of wrapt unconsciousness, each listener may have thought it but the echo of his own voice.

The breakfast-bell was wont to summon a cheerful company to the table at Dame Foster's. Undergraduates, and post-graduates, and young professional men

of all styles, found her terms reasonable and her fare relishable. So the three tables which cut the small basement dining-room across were thronged with intelligent, aspiring young men. There could scarcely be a pleasanter assemblage. There was that unity in essentials and variety in non-essentials which the ancient father considered the prime ingredients of the millennial society. With this, too, there was a fair show of the charity which he deemed the other essential element of that beatific state. But this morning there were no jests. There was some little questioning, the one with the other, as to the fate of the beleaguered band; none as to the result of the conflict thus begun. Some saw the end afar off, and over a "bloody chasm." Others thought it close at hand. All felt that the aggressor must fall. One face was pallid with horror, another set into rigid lines by the perception of painful duty. On each was written in unmistakable signs the horror which the thought of war alone can bring.

When the meal was over, Markham went out into the streets of the city. The first breath of the swift-coming spring was on his cheek, but he knew not its balminess. The birds and the bright sunshine were unheeded. The streets were full of people, but they were hushed, bewildered. A few were knotted here and there in earnest discourse. All seemed smitten with an ague of surprise and horror.

At the telegraph office was a wondering throng. One came out who had a relative among the little band in that lone fortress in the harbor of Charleston. He had been trying to learn more; but there was no more

to be learned. The ruthless wires, having ticked out their message of woe, relapsed into relentless silence. Bred to arms, this man thought first of his friend and kinsman, not of the general horror of war. Markham wondered that he could thus put away the thought which oppressed every other heart. Of him, Markham heard some one, whose tones revealed how keenly he dreaded to hear his fears confirmed, inquire :

“Have you heard anything more, Professor?”

The person addressed gathered his half-military cloak about him, and answered, in quick, nervous tones :

“I was only trying to see if I could learn anything of Colonel G.”

“Was he there?” solemnly.

“Yes,” moving away.

“And you think, Professor, that there will be war, do you?” hesitatingly, as he intercepts his departing listener.

“Of course,” with nervous, half-angry impatience, “what else should there be?”

“Sure enough, what else?” thinks every dazed listener, dully, to himself “What else?” and goes on with this misery sitting yet more heavily upon his heart.

The streets fill with aimless wanderers—going—going—anywhere—everywhere—alone, or in couples—rarely speaking—scarcely thinking, possessed—benumbed with restless horror

The windows too, are full of blanched faces looking out upon the straggling crowds with wondering pity—matron, wife, and child, full of the grim dread which

has come into the common life, and each praying that the cup may pass from *her*, forgetful of the others whose lips may be seared by its seething bitterness. For love is thoughtful only of its own when swift calamity impends, and quite forgets that none have special claims to be exempted from the pestilential breath or earthquake shock.

The Sabbath bells proclaim the hour of worship. With mute, unreasoning hope, the wandering crowds converge towards the shrines of prayer—seeking for something which shall lighten, but the least, their nameless burden. Within the sanctuary crowd the hushed and pallid throngs. Country—blood—war, are mingled strangely with the thought of God. Sinai's thunders and the booming guns of Moultrie. He that "brought a sword," with them that drew it forth.

The instinct of religion moves each heart. All turn to God—with trust or hope, as faith and habit will permit; but all alike feel that His hand directs the storm.

In the solemn gloom, the white faces take a more ghastly gray. The organ-notes are full of wailing. The clanging chimes thrill through the trembling crowd, as if they heralded the call of doom. It is not fear, but horror; not affright, but overwhelming dread, that fills every heart. That which all had learned to think *could never be*—had *come!* That form, which all other shapes of fear subordinates, confronts them. They wait expectant.

At the church which Markham chanced to enter, a hymn was sung, and prayer was offered, in quivering,

dubious tones, by him who ministered to that people; but as he arose, with pallid face and trembling hands, to approach again the sacred desk, there stalked along the aisle a form that fixed upon itself at once the attention of all in that vast throng. He was, perhaps, the best-known man in the city—the President of the University which was its pride and boast. Of towering frame, and with the mien of one accustomed to be heeded when he spoke, he passed, with nervous, graceless stride, along the aisle and up the pulpit steps—looking neither to the right nor left, and heeding not the gaze of the assembled throng. His face was pale, but his white lips were firm set, and his keen, gray eyes burned under the rugged arch of his overhanging brows with an unwonted fire.

Waving the pastor—once his pupil—to the seat with a whispered word, he stepped to the desk, and opening the Bible which lay upon it, turned its leaves for a moment with the air of one who seeks for a passage which he has not exactly noted; and then read, with a voice full of suppressed intensity, the words of God to Joshua after the death of Moses. He closes the book, and, resting his folded arms upon it, offers a short prayer, which seems more like a personal appeal for aid than an invocation offered on behalf of the congregation. At its conclusion, he looks for a moment into the eyes of his audience, and then repeats, in tones which thrill through every heart like the blast of a trumpet:

*“As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee. . . .
Only—be thou strong, and very courageous.”*

He sketched, in a few terse and vigorous sentences, the scene, the time, the man, to whom the words were addressed, and the leader who had just died. How God had been with Moses, and through what perils He had led His people. How, forty years before, He had brought them to the banks of the same Jordan, and found that they had not courage to cross over, even with the oft-approved prophet at their head. How He had turned them back into the wilderness, and raised up a new generation whose manhood was to be tested on the morrow; and at this crisis in their history, the injunction of the Divine counselor was: "Be thou strong, and very courageous."

Then the speaker took up the dealings of the Almighty with the American nation; how it had been planted in doubt and difficulty, had grown under disadvantages till it ripened into separate existence, and then on

"Through five and eighty years
Of growth and peace since men went forth
To plant the seed with tears."

He showed in all these years the guiding hand of God, as clearly to be seen as in the wanderings of Israel, and, in closing, applied the same inspiring promise, the same thrilling injunction, with an intensity and force that made it seem the very word of God spoken among men.

There was no ranting, no anger, no maudlin sentimentality, no mourning for lost opportunities, nor regrets for what had or had not been done. Just a strong, manly survey of impending evil, an injunction to meet and vanquish it with confidence in strong

arms and brave hearts, and an unwavering faith that God is ever with the Right, as He was with Moses.

When he had closed, the strains of "America" arose from the lips of the congregation, as if in answer to his words, and rolled through the church in exultant echoes.

Already the *fact* of war had sunk into insignificance in comparison with its cause and its consequences.

CHAPTER XXV.

PRO PATRIA.

NEXT day came the call to arms. It was needless. Permission to serve was all that was required. A thousand offered where ten were asked. The lethargy of the first shock was over. All was life and action. The streets were filled with a restless crowd, which flowed hither and thither, seeking an outlet for its excitement. There were no bowed heads or foreboding hearts now. All were enthused, confident, buoyant. The dread of war had passed, or the determination to conquer had swallowed it up. Flags and placards were to be seen in every street. The recruiting-station of the regular army was besieged by hundreds, until the staid and decorous officer in charge, to whom the requirements of red tape were more sacred than holy writ, and who had been wont, with great

labor and exhaustion of spirit, to muster one or two per week before that time, was nearly crazed with the pressure on his hands, and fearful either to accept or refuse without further orders. One regiment of volunteers was full almost before the lists were opened. Men wept because there was no chance for them to go with the very first. The surgeon's examination was looked forward to with dread by those who were enrolled, lest they should even yet be rejected.

Before night the lists were opened for a second regiment to go, if there should be another call. If! How little we knew of what that dark future held of woe and suffering!

There were impromptu meetings on the street-corners, in the armories, and before the Court-House. Speeches of rare eloquence flashed from men who under ordinary circumstances were dumb or prosy. The whole people were lifted to a higher plane than they had ever trod before. Wealth, position, talent—all were nothing: None seemed to think of himself. None sought for rank or place. The level of the soldier was a pinnacle of glory. The rank of private was good enough for the best. To save the country in any place was enviable. He that could distinguish "Shoulder arms" from a "Present" was fortunate. If any one had but imperfectly passed through the manual of the soldier, he was fit for a lieutenantcy; if that of the company, for a captaincy; and if, perchance, he had a smattering of the mysteries by which battalions are mustered, and could transform a line into a column, at rest and in motion, talk of squares and echelons, and of advancing

and retreating by either flank, there was scarce any height of military power to which he might not aspire. Oak-leaves, spread-eagles, and numberless stars were in the visible horizon of such a one!

The drill-sergeant was the hero of the hour. Judges, lawyers, professors, authors, editors—all were trash beside him. Brains, influence, riches, integrity—all were nothing to a trick of fence or power to mar the carcass of an imaginary foe with scientific lunge and thrust of bayonet. He who could aim and fire in the manner prescribed in the manual of arms was to be envied; he who could load in the times, in the positions, and with the motions ordained, was a marvel; while he who could make four muskets stand together without extraneous support was fit for the table of the gods!

Markham Churr was not usually impulsive, but he had forgotten all of his past which lay beyond the reading of the yesterday morning's extra. He had never made two lines jingle in his life before; but there is something so suggestive of marshaled numbers in marshaling men, that something akin to the divine afflatus seized him then, and he wrote some crude lines upon a scrap of paper, on the steps of the Court-House, while an unknown orator was haranguing the unwearied crowd. When this latter individual had yelled himself into indistinguishable hoarseness, and ceased speaking from necessity, Markham sprang up and shrieked out his lines to the shouting mass. Despite its crudeness, his verse was a success. Jingle, patriotism, unspeakable devotion, and unflinching boastfulness suited the strange mood of these staid citizens of two days before. Gray-

haired men of sense and taste cheered the halting verses. Again and again he was called upon to repeat them. A frantic editor offered fifty, a hundred dollars, for them, and, having succeeded in obtaining them, proudly announced that this wonderful poem would appear in his paper the next day. No wonder Markham thought himself a poet. Thousands of clods became heroes, that day, in very truth. It was an exaltation which can come but once in a lifetime. If his head was among the stars, it was not from mean or selfish aspirations, but because he was lifted out of his own individuality by an unselfish and noble devotion. The day was drawing to a close as he stood and looked at that frenzied crowd. Could it be that he was one of them a moment before?

He stole away to his quiet boarding-house and locked himself into his little room. It seemed an age since the dawn of yesterday. He had scarcely eaten or slept since then. He threw himself upon his bed and tried to think what he had done—and what had happened since—since—he had lost himself. He knew that he had forgotten Boaz Woodley and the task to which he had given so many months, Frank Horton and—the thought gave him a pang of remorse—Lizzie Harper, and the love of his life. He could not remember when a day had passed without thought of her, before. Not for years, he was sure. And now, just as he was on the eve of going to her, crowned with success in the first effort of his manhood, she had slipped from his memory and he had loitered all day away from her! He was to have started at midnight

of the night before. If he had done so, he might have been with her now. How much had he lost! And yet it was not exactly with regret that he thought of it. It was rarely one had a chance to die for his country. He had embraced such a chance. He was one of those to whom his country looked for succor. On the table there was a blue cap with a marvelous tilt and a stiff, straight visor. He had paid a fabulous price for it that day. It was the badge of his devotion. He was a soldier—"Private Markham Churr, of Co. E, *nth* Regt. N. Y. Vols." That was his euphonious appellation now. He was not one of those favored few who were of the first call, but of those whom the chief magistrate of the State had seen fit to allow to be enrolled, in the belief that more might be needed. He was one of the minute-men, who were to be ever ready when freedom should demand their aid.

Now that he came to consider his position coolly, he was not sure that he had not acted with too much precipitation. Was he quite free to dispose of himself, before he had reported to Boaz Woodley and been discharged from the trust he had undertaken; or of his future, without consultation with Lizzie Harper, whose future was linked with his? But he felt she would approve, and he was by no means disposed to regret his act or avoid its consequences. Yet, as it might be some time before his regiment would be actually called to the tented field, he determined that he would obtain a leave of absence to return home and arrange his personal affairs, that they might not conflict with his duties to his country.

So this unmustered soldier went gravely to his un-commissioned captain and obtained an unwritten furlough for two weeks; and when the night-express for the West swept out of the sleeping city, Markham Churr sat, with beating heart, in one of the carriages, anticipating the joys to which he sped.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“NO LIMITATION AGAINST THE SOVEREIGN.”

BOAZ WOODLEY was not at his hotel at Aychitula when Markham Churr made inquiry for him, but they said that he would be there on the second day thereafter. Markham had passed Fairbank on his way thither because of his sense of duty to his employer. That duty discharged, he was at liberty to gratify his inclination. There was no train eastward, stopping at Fairbank, until the next afternoon. It was less than a score of miles, with as fine a road as hoof ever pressed. He went to a livery-stable, and surprised the owner by ordering a powerful young roan to be saddled for his use.

It was most unusual for any one in that region to make a journey on horseback, and Markham Churr would not have dreamed of doing so a week before. Then, he would have ordered a buggy and have driven soberly to his destination. But the times had changed. He had changed. And he wished to change his method

of locomotion. The tumult which had begun in the nation had awakened its counterpart in his breast, and he was anxious for something which partook of the spirit of war. He would renew the old struggle of man with Nature even as he went upon the errand of love. So he vaulted upon his horse as the sun went down behind a threatening cloud, and started for Fairbank.

How exultingly he rode! Between love and patriotism and the buoyancy of youth, his heart was almost bursting. He rode at a fitful and uneven pace, now in a swinging gallop, and then in a restive walk. His haste consumed the distance, and he longed to fly. The cloud which had threatened at sunset came up from the northwest with vivid lightnings and heavy thunder. The coming storm suited him. He bared his brow to its cool breath and still pressed on.

The road-side was studded with pleasant country homes. They were friendly homes, too. He knew every one of them, and knew that they would welcome him as gladly as one of their accustomed inmates. But he had no thought of entering any of them. It was not so much the dread of delay as the delight of encountering the storm that induced him to continue his course. The darkness became more intense. He rejoiced because it hid his manifestation of pleasure from observing eyes. The horse seemed to enjoy it no less than his rider. Strong and high-spirited, the reverbrating thunder and vivid lightning filled him with a savage impatience. He tore along the strip of white sand which marked the road-way, its softness

half-muffling his foot-falls, at a pace which suited well the fiery mood of his rider. An hour, and half his journey had been accomplished; another, and they turned sheer to the north and crossed to a road which ran along the high bluff that bordered the lake. He could hear the water moaning and thundering as the wind hurled it against the bank, and by the flashes of lightning could see that its broad bosom was covered thick with white-crested waves, chasing each other swiftly towards the shore. It had not rained yet, but the elemental warfare had grown so fierce that it could not long be delayed. Markham Churr looked with defiant eyes, ever and anon, towards the gathering storm, and wondered if the strange joy he felt was akin to the rage which the warrior feels in battle.

At length he sees a light glimmering through the trees at Fairbank. He comes nearer, and sees a white-robed figure kneeling by the open window. Her hands are clasped on the low casement, and the breath of the spring storm blows her brown hair in unconfined luxuriance about her shoulders. Her eyes are raised, and Markham Churr feels that Lizzie is praying for him.

His had been too busy a life, as he thought, for prayer. He had been so absorbed in his earthly occupations and prospects that, having had no religious training in childhood to form his habits, he had simply forgotten the life beyond. He had, however, the religious instincts which his Puritan ancestors could not fail to transmit, and it was with the keenest pleasure that he saw her, with whom he hoped to pass his life, in this act of devotion. He came to the gate beneath her

window, but would not disturb her. He closed his eyes, and bowed his head upon his horse's mane, bedewing it with tears of happiness. When he raised his eyes, the light was gone. He put his horse at the low gate, and was in the yard in a moment. The great drops were beginning to fall, and the lightning showed him the watcher above.

"Who is it?" she called.

"I. Markham." He had no need to have uttered the last word. At the very first accent of his voice, there had gone up a little half-laugh, half-scream of joy, and then a voice yet tremulous with delight had said:

"Take your horse to the stable, and come into the porch. I will be there in a moment."

He cared for his horse, and came back to the porch. The door was opened, and the arms of Lizzie Harper were flung about his neck, just as the storm burst, in long-suppressed fury, over the house.

It was late, but sleep was not to be thought of by those joyous hearts until the tale of the past months had been told. A supper was soon prepared, and while Markham ate, and looked his love, Lizzie chatted, blushed, and chided the impetuosity which brought him, at such an hour and through such a storm, to her side. So, while the elements warred without, there was peace and joy within.

The next day Markham spent in Paradise. He sat beside his betrothed, as she wrought upon some deft finery, and told her of the war that impended, or walked

with her upon the beach, noting the effect of last night's storm, and detailing the various steps by which he had at length found a foot to fit his casts. What wonder they were proud and happy, and that the shadow impending over the country rested very lightly on their young hearts? They talked of the future, of course, for at that age we live only in what lies before us; but it was of *their* future, and not that of the nation, in which they were most concerned.

"So you will go no farther with Mr. Woodley's matter?" said Lizzie, thoughtfully.

"No," answered Markham. "I have found the man, and demonstrated the correctness of my hypothesis in regard to the crime; and now that I have done so, I feel almost grateful for the national convulsion which relieves me from further prosecution of the matter, or the man."

"What will Mr. Woodley say about it?" she asked.

"I do not see that he will have any further use for my services," he replied.

"But the box—the special deposit he was so anxious about?" she persisted.

"I suppose Frank will reveal its whereabouts, if he has not already squandered it."

"You do not expect to obtain the entire amount he offered you, then?" she suggested.

"I shall report to him what I have learned, and take whatever he chooses to allow me, with the understanding that I am to pursue the subject no further," he answered, with decision.

"And when will you do this?"

"To-morrow."

During the remainder of the day, Markham frequently complained of the preoccupation of his affianced. He would have called it dullness in another. He little dreamed the cause of her absent-mindedness, or imagined, when he retired to sleep, that in an adjoining room Lizzie sat upon the floor with Boaz Woodley's special deposit spread out before her. She sat, leaning upon a chair, her brow wrinkled with thought, for a long time. All at once her countenance brightened. She took a slip of paper from her writing-desk, counted the various packages of bills, and made upon it a memorandum of their numbers and value. Then she opened the other papers, and took a careful minute of each. Then she replaced them all—as she thought—in the tin box, put it back in her trunk, and, kissing her hand towards the room where her lover slept, with her face wreathed in archest smiles and illuminated with blushes, sought her couch.

The next morning Markham mounted his horse to return to Aychitula. He rode leisurely, for his meditations were of the sweetest; and the westward-bound express was just crossing the bridge, a rifle-shot below, as he cantered across the bottom towards the old bridge which spanned the stream betwixt the two villages. As it sped along, from one of the windows a gloved hand waved a handkerchief towards the young soldier, who bent to his saddle-bow in recognition of the salute, and then spurred on across the bridge, heedless of the warning legend which it bore in quaint black letters, from which the brown wood had been washed away

until they stood out with peculiar prominence from their leaden background: "Five dollars fine for riding or driving this bridge faster than a walk."

It was the first conflict of military power with civil authority. What did he care for fines and penalties? He was a soldier, and this was an act of "military necessity." He wondered what old friend had recognized and saluted him. He little dreamed that, as the train sped on, it bore Lizzie Harper, laughing quietly at the bewilderment that she knew her lover must feel.

Boaz Woodley listened to the report of his agent in silence. So absolute was his confidence in Thomas Horton, that he could not conceal his incredulity in regard to the guilt of the son. However, as Markham recounted all that he had learned, he saw that the chain of evidence was perfectly infrangible. Every link was perfect, and there could no longer be any doubt that Frank Horton had committed the crime.

The conduct of Boaz Woodley, when this conclusion became irresistible to his mind, was a great surprise to Markham. Instead of displaying any of the relentlessness which had been considered an element of his nature, the capitalist seemed at once to be seized with pity for the young man who had despoiled him.

"Poor fellow!" he said, with a sigh; "what could have induced him to commit such an act of folly? He came precious near getting off scot-free, though. I don't know of any one else who would have followed that trail as keenly and resolutely as you have done, Churr. Indeed, I don't think any one else would have

found it at first. But what made him do it? He must have been very hard-up to sacrifice his father's good name in that manner. Does he gamble?"

"I learned that he used to play some about that time, but never, so far as I could hear, beyond his ability to pay," answered Markham.

"Aye, that is it," said Woodley, bitterly. "Do you play?" he asked, suddenly, turning upon Markham.

"I am almost ashamed to say that I do not know one card from another," answered the young man.

"Ashamed, eh?" said Woodley. "That's the very root of the evil. A young man is not considered fit for society, unless he knows enough to rob or has a taste which may lead him to steal. Don't be ashamed, sir," he added, with strange vehemence, "but thank God for your ignorance. Many a heavy heart would be light to-day if others had been as ignorant as you. Many a crime would not have been committed, many a life would never have been blasted, but for this accursed temptation, which nobody condemns until it bears bitter fruit."

Seeing Markham's look of surprise, Woodley checked himself, wiping the sweat from his brow and settling his face into its wonted impassive lines. After a moment, he said:

"You are surprised at what I have said, but you know me well enough to be quite sure that I would not speak thus without sufficient reason. Remember it if you are ever asked to play. But now," he continued, "about this boy, Frank, I *can't* prosecute him; no, I *can't*. Boaz Woodley does not often shrink from

any task, but I *can't* do this. Don't ask me why. If he will return what he has not used, it must be hushed up. His father can, perhaps, make the bank whole. So far as I am concerned, I will not be hard. But we must have the special deposit. I can't lose those papers. I'd give half my fortune rather than lose them. You must go and see him and arrange that. You can start to-night. No, there is no need of such haste. I do not suppose he suspects anything."

"I saw him on Saturday, and he showed no sign of suspicion," said Markham.

"Saturday!" said Woodley. "That was before this infernal war-news came?"

"Yes."

"By the way," said the elder man, suddenly, "why shouldn't Frank go into the army?"

"I don't know," answered Markham, wonderingly.

"Of course you don't," said the other, exultingly. "It's the very thing. He can just turn over what he has left, his father can secure the rest, nothing more need be said about it, and he will have an equal chance to make himself a good name or get killed, either of which would be a very good thing for his family." He walked up and down the room once or twice, in evident satisfaction at the plan which he had devised.

"Yes," said he, finally, "that's the very thing. Let me have your journal and accounts, and be ready to start off again soon. I will look over what you have done. We must have a settlement, and I will prepare some instructions for you.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MORE THAN WAS BARGAINED FOR.

WHEN, an hour later, Markham Churr went to post a letter to Lizzie Harper, stating the result of his interview with Woodley, the old postmaster peered over his spectacles at him curiously, and, after inquiring his name, handed him a bulky enclosure directed to him, and marked "personal and important." He opened the envelope with a listless curiosity, but a glance at its contents drove the color from his face, and sent him, trembling with excitement, to his room, where, having locked the door, he read the following :

"R——, N. Y., April 16, 1861.

"MARKHAM CHURR: I have just learned that you have been engaged in working up the robbery of the Aychitula Bank, and also, that you have been making inquiries in regard to myself in this city, and have left for Aychitula.

"It seems hard that an old school-mate should have been upon my trail for months, trying to prove that I am a thief. Yet I do not blame you. I know it was not from any ill-feeling towards me, and I doubt if at first I was even suspected. I am assured, however, that you have done your work well, and have unmistakable proof of my guilt. Strangely enough, you

are the only man I have seen since the robbery, who ever lived near Aychitula, that I have not suspected as following me. Yet you have been entirely fair. You have not presumed on our old acquaintance, nor sought to obtain evidence against me through the confidence of personal friendship. Of course, I had no right to be treated with such delicacy, but you may not be unwilling to receive the thanks even of a thief for such consideration. It is the knowledge that you have been thus considerate which has induced me to address you this letter.

“I committed the robbery without the aid, counsel or knowledge of any other person whatever. So far as I am aware, no one ever knew or suspected that I had any connection with it until you traced it to me through the money I paid to Peter Wrenn. In regard to the manner of its accomplishment, I doubt not you have already unraveled whatever of mystery there may have been about it.

“Some weeks before the robbery, I had secretly provided myself with impressions of all the keys which were in my father’s possession, and had prepared the window so that it could be raised from the outside. To do this was not difficult. My relations to the cashier made me familiar with the business of the bank. Ever since I was twelve years old, I have been a sort of supernumerary clerk in it, so that I was not likely to be watched or suspected. Despite my father’s anxiety in regard to the keys, he is a very sound sleeper, as also is my mother. Of course I was well aware of this, and had for years taken advantage of it to go

in and out of the house without their knowledge. I took the keys from under his pillow while he slept, made impressions of them, put them back, and when I returned here had duplicates made, one at a time and at different places, so as to avoid suspicion.

“On the night the robbery was committed, I jumped off the Western express at the water-tank, and walked into town. The clock struck twelve just after I entered my father’s grounds. I took the short ladder in his garden, carried it along the fence to the bank, climbed up and opened the window, swung off the sill to the floor, struck a light, and went to work. I took specie, and bills under five dollars. I had intended to take three thousand dollars. For a reason you will understand hereafter I concluded to try for double that amount. I dared not take large bills, and had to risk some special deposits, as being less likely to be recorded. I had no time to examine them, and had to guess at their value. A cash-box, with Woodley’s name attached, attracted my attention. After leaving the bank, with the spade used in our garden I took up the second currant-bush from the east end of the row running down from the house, and buried the box under it. I have not seen it since. If you dig there you will find it. As there has been no special outcry made about it, I conclude it was of little value. It probably contained papers which may be of some value to Woodley, if not to others. Of the money which I took, I have spent, in the manner I shall hereafter state, all except the amount of a check which I have drawn to your order upon the Shoe & Leather

Bank, of New York City, which I shall forward, with other papers, by express. Besides this, I have retained one hundred dollars for my present needs.

“I went back to the depot, and got on the 3:20 train going east, without having been seen by any one at the station or meeting any one I knew on the train. I paid my fare to the conductor as far as Erie. There I waited for another train, went on to Dunkirk and took the Erie Road to New York and Philadelphia.

“This is the true story of the crime. I would not have told it so specifically but for the fear that others might be thought to be concerned in it with me.

“Strange as it may seem, I never intended permanently to convert the money. I merely wanted to use it for a time. The intention to return it is not the result of detection. I never had any other purpose. I am not begging for mercy. I am making no appeal for myself. I am not trying to evade punishment for my offence. I am not a condemned criminal, and never expect to be. I am not in the power of those I have injured, and have no intention of putting myself there. Why you did not arrest me I cannot guess; but I shall take care that you never have another opportunity to do so. I shall repay what I took, even if it requires a lifetime to do it; but I will not give myself up to be made a spectacle of.

“It is now nearly four years since I came here to attend college. You may know, though my parents never suspected it, that, even before that time, I was what is known, among strait-laced people, as a ‘wild

chap.' I drank some, played a little, and liked to sprce much better than to study. Whether it was the reaction from restraints at home, or the natural results of total depravity, I cannot say. On coming here, I soon fell among a class of young fellows who were of the same stamp, only most of them were rather worse than I was at that time, though I have no idea any one of them has fallen as low as I now have. They did not *tempt* me, but we encouraged each other in a great deal of questionable conduct. My father, though in comfortable circumstances, was by no means rich. It was with difficulty that he could spare enough, year by year, to meet my term-bills and board, and give me a very moderate allowance for incidentals. Of course this allowance was quite insufficient to enable me to hold my place in my 'set.' Besides, I could not resist the temptation to play, which I did at first for the excitement of the game, and afterwards with the gambler's hope of profit or the recoupment of loss. Towards the close of my second year, luck seemed to turn against me. I struggled hard, pawned everything I had, and finally took the money my father had sent to meet my bills since the beginning of the term—and lost that also. Of course I was desperate, and stricken with remorse when it was too late. I thought of a thousand expedients to avoid the shame of exposure—of striking out for the West, of shipping on a whaler, of everything rather than of going home for my vacation. I thought I could never meet my father after he knew of my course. I think it would have ended in my taking a header over the Falls here—as I almost

wish now that it had—if my mother had not sent me a hundred dollars just before Commencement, and written me that I might go and spend a month with my cousins in Massachusetts. This helped me out of one trouble, but into a worse.

“Oil had been discovered, a little while before, near Titusville, Pa. I was familiar with the country, having often hunted and fished through that region. I heard that men were crowding in there, and that speculation was rife. By selling a few articles, I could raise money enough to go there, and have the hundred dollars my mother had sent, for operating capital after my arrival. Of course I did not go to Massachusetts; I did not even wait to deliberate. Forestalling the long vacation by a fortnight, I was off for the ‘oil regions,’ to try my luck in whatever might turn up: work, speculation—anything by which I might make money enough to repay what I had misapplied. That was all I desired, and more than I really expected.

“Well, I was fortunate—or I was counted so. I did not have to gamble to make money—at least, not with cards. I bought oil territory, paying my little capital down, as a margin, and having a few days to make up the rest. Before they elapsed, I sold at an advance; and so I kept on. It had all the excitement of gaming. Long before the vacation was over I had paid my debt; but I did not stop speculating. I could not. On one occasion there came a chance to buy a piece of property which I was certain I could sell at a considerable advance in a short time. A party had spoken to me a fortnight before, but I

could not raise the money to make the first payment. I tried every possible means to do so. I begged for just twenty-four hours' indulgence. I could not get it, but was given until after the mail should arrive the next day. I rode over to the nearest post-office, and mailed a letter to myself. It contained a thirty-days' draft, purporting to have been accepted by my father. It was received without question. I made the purchase, and in less than a week sold at a good profit, and took up the draft. Fatal success! I did this several times when I could not promptly raise as much money as I needed, but was always able to pay the paper off before it was due, and avoid detection. I went back to college in September. I suppose I ought to have felt very badly over what I had done, but I did not. I wrote to my mother where I had been; and that I was able to pay my own term-bills for the next year. Of course I did not tell her the whole truth. I did not gamble after my return. My oil speculations afforded the same character of excitement, and a great deal more of it. I was ambitious, too, to acquire money for greater speculations. I seemed to have become a man all at once. Every now and then, during the year, I would run down to the oil region, and kept my hand in some speculation all the time. All of these turned out well. My luck became proverbial. Sometimes I bought or sold at a profit when, if I had waited an hour, it would have been ruin. You would be surprised to know how much I was really 'worth' at times during that winter.

“At length a tract of land was offered—the Mc-

Cormick land—in the development of which I had great confidence. I had studied the matter of oil-production very carefully, and with better light of geological science than most speculators care to secure. I was very anxious to buy this tract, being confident that there was a fortune in it—as there is. I went to see my father, and tried to persuade him to join me in raising the money. He refused; but I could not give the matter up. By day and by night it was present to my mind—the absolute conviction that almost unbounded wealth was within my reach. I could not throw it off, though I tried my best. Such a thing as doubt never entered my mind, and has not yet. After a month of chaffering, I finally bought the tract, making an arrangement with Peter Wrenn, who had been watching my course, and believed in my luck, that he should advance the money, and take my notes for six thousand dollars—the balance over what I could pay—with my father and Boaz Woodley as security. As you are aware, I gave such notes. As a further security, I gave him, also, a mortgage on the property which I bought.

“No sooner had I made this trade than fortune turned against me. It seemed as if all demand for this new product of the earth had ceased. Oil became a drug. From many wells it was allowed to run into the Creek and float away, the owners not deeming it worth storing. Any one would give a barrel of oil for a cask to put another forty gallons in. Of course, what had been the best of territory became temporarily worthless. I had relied on selling part of my tract to

meet my notes at three and six months. I could hardly have given it away. I could not make a loan. I could not risk the protest of the notes. So I 'borrowed' the money of the Aychitula Bank to meet them; that is, I committed robbery to hide forgery. I paid one of the notes, and hoped for better times before the other came due. They did not come. Still I waited. Then you discovered both robbery and forgery.

"I can't complain. I had hoped, before it could be traced to me, to sell my oil property, and anonymously return every cent, on condition that all search for the robber should be abandoned. The bank would have been willing. Success makes a vast difference. I lost, however, and must take the consequences. It is right. I have deserved the heaviest punishment. I was not tempted, nor overpersuaded, nor misled by others. I fell through my own weakness and desire to accomplish great things. I have no one to blame, and blame no one, but myself.

"Now I have only this to say: All but three thousand dollars is paid on that land. In a few years it will be worth a hundred times that amount. I have studied the matter, and know of what I write. I have conveyed my interest in it to my father. Of course he is not bound to repay to the bank what I have taken. In consideration of his doing so, however, will they not consent to say nothing about my connection with the affair until they shall have me in their power? Of course I do not mean to be arrested. I am sure I shall not be. The land will sometime make my father

whole, and only three or four need ever know his shame on account of my crime. That is the chief object of this letter.

“For me, I know I have been a fool and a scoundrel. I do not see that whining and protestations of sorrow would change that. At the same time, I believe that there is yet manhood enough in me to make a fair average in the world, and that the war now upon us will give me the opportunity to redeem myself. I shall try it, at all events; I do not know in what capacity, nor on which side. I do not mean to defy those whom I have wronged, but I will not surrender myself to be crushed by punishment or damned by commiserating forgiveness. If I can redeem the past, I will. If not, I can at least avoid public humiliation.

“Tell my father I cannot write to him now. I know he will forgive me, but I have done him too great an injury to be able to endure his kindness. Please give him the papers I send you, after making such an examination of them as you desire.

“You are a friend of Amy Levis. I was to have been something more. Tell her as much or as little as you please of what is in this letter. I know I have no right to be considered. I have forfeited all that. Yet I would ask—if you deem it proper—should the bank consent to screen my father’s good name upon the terms I have indicated, that she may be told only that I have entered the army. Her mother has forbidden our correspondence, so she will not expect to hear from me. I would like to have her know where to pray for me, at least. It seems as if I should stand a better

chance with the future if she did. I leave it to your kindness and discretion, however. I understand that you go into the *nth* N. Y. Volunteers. Should the fortunes of war be favorable to my hopes of honorable advancement, and we ever be thrown together, I may make myself known. If not, this is the last time I shall intrude upon your attention.

“FRANK W. HORTON.”

When Markham had finished the perusal of this letter, he took it to his employer.

“Confound his impudence,” said Woodley, after having read it. “I can’t help liking him. He is certainly sensible and plucky, and I’ll bet on his coming out right in the end. I’m glad he’s going into the army. The very idea I suggested, you remember. I do hope he won’t go with the South, though. Of course we’ll let his father do as he proposes. It would be cruel to disgrace him for nothing. So far as I can see, you, he and myself are all who need know anything of the matter. Of course you won’t tell the girl?”

“Certainly not, if you consent that it shall not be generally known,” answered Markham.

“Then we may as well have Horton in and make the arrangements at once,” said Woodley.

“But the papers have not come yet,” suggested Markham.

“That’s so, and we have not got hold of my cash-box, either,” said Woodley. “The scamp thought there was not much in it because I did not make a blow about it, eh? Besides that \$10,000 package, there was a paper there which I would not lose for half my estate

—not for half my estate, Mr. Churr," he continued, emphatically. "As for the money, I'm half sorry he did not take it and lift that ugly note of Wrenn's. That is a nasty thing—that forgery. I wish he had taken the money and then settled with me for it. I heard about his speculations on the Creek, too, and know the McCormick-land which he bought. I had some notion of making the purchase myself, and would have done so if I had been as sure of the business as I am now. I declare I am sorry the fellow has gone. Especially as I am afraid he will go over to the other side on account of this, and it is a pity for the country to lose such good material at this time."

It was finally agreed that Woodley and Markham should go and dig up the box, by stealth, that night, to save the cashier's name from the suspicion that would arise if it were done by daylight.

It is unnecessary to record the disappointment which resulted from their search.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

APPROVED AND CONFIRMED.

THE next morning Boaz Woodley sent for Markham, and said to him:

"I have examined your report, expense-account, and journal, and you will allow me to say that I am much pleased with your conduct in this matter. You

have been watchful, prudent and persevering. I know I am counted a hard man, but I am always willing to give any one credit for doing well. I have drawn up a statement of account on the basis of one hundred dollars a month, and one thousand dollars for the apprehension of the criminal. It shows a balance in your favor of \$1,547.23, for which amount I have drawn a check to your order. Is that correct?" he asked, handing Markham the statement of account and the check.

"But I have not apprehended the criminal," said Markham, hesitatingly.

"Very true," said Woodley, "but you would have done so if I had not restrained your action, which I am heartily sorry for having done, after what we learned last night. I think you are fairly entitled to that amount, as you would have been to the thousand dollars additional if we had found the box. Take it," he added, pushing the check towards him.

Markham Churr had never had that amount of money at one time in his life, and was profuse in his thanks, when Woodley checked him somewhat abruptly with—"No thanks, no thanks, young man. Thanks are for favors conferred, and not for the simple payment for service rendered. I have had your work and you have my money. They are equivalents. So there is no room for gratitude." There may be mutual esteem resulting from our relations. I hope there is; but no thanks."

Markham folded the check and put it in his pocket, and then said:

"May I ask what will be your future course toward Horton?"

"I was about to speak of that. I have not determined on any definite plan of action, and, if I had, might not feel inclined to disclose it. He is evidently on his guard as to you, so you could not help me any more."

"If I could, I should prefer not to do so," interrupted Markham.

"I inferred as much," said Woodley. "Of course after that wild-goose chase of last night, I do not believe a word in his letter, except that he is, as he says, a thief and a scoundrel."

"I forgot to say," said Markham, "that I received the papers he referred to, by express, this morning. I will get them."

He went to his room, and returned with a large bundle of papers, neatly folded, and endorsed in the handwriting of Horton. Woodley ran them over quickly, taking out one or two.

"Have you examined them?" he asked.

"Only hastily," answered Markham.

"Look them over thoroughly, make a careful list of them, and then return them to me," said Woodley, handing them back to him, adding:

"Though I have not decided upon any course as to Frank, I will say that I have concluded not to do anything to disturb his father."

"You will let him make good the loss, then, and say nothing about Frank's guilt?"

"Yes, for the present—unless I find that his father was an accomplice," replied Woodley.

"I thought nothing could make you believe ill of him," said Markham, smiling.

"Last night's experience has made me suspicious of everybody, I think," answered Woodley. "If the fool had told the truth in his letter, I would have been glad to let the past go, and would even have helped him in the future. Do you suppose he came on here with his letter and lifted that box?"

"I hardly think so. The earth did not seem to have been recently moved," said Markham, "and it would be entirely inconsistent with his idea of its value or his expressed intentions."

"I don't know about that. Suppose he had decided to go into the rebel army, he might have thought this would give him something to start with in Dixie, and concluded that he might as well 'die for a sheep as a lamb.' Well, I shall have to wait, and let time develop my plans. Meantime, I suppose we need not talk about any further relation in business, though such a thing was mentioned at the outset. They tell me you have determined to go into the army."

"I have enlisted," said Markham. "I have only a few days' leave, which I obtained to close up your business."

"And see your sweetheart?" said Woodley, smiling.

"Well, yes, I thought of that," answered Markham.

"What position do you expect to hold in your regiment?"

"What position?"

"Yes, what position, I asked," said Woodley, testily.

"A private, of course," replied Markham, in surprise.

"*Of course!*" exclaimed Woodley, angrily; "there's no 'of course' about it. You have been occupying your whole time heretofore in preparing yourself for life, and now you go, in a moment of boyish enthusiasm, and level yourself with the dullest plow-boy or lowest rowdy in the land! What are schools and colleges made for, if men leave them worth no more than when they entered?"

"But schools and colleges do not teach the art of war, or have not heretofore," answered Markham; "and the man with a bachelor's degree cannot charge a musket or handle a bayonet any better than one who has not learned the alphabet."

"You speak as if war were nothing but fighting," said Woodley. "You ought to know that the art of war embraces all other arts. In our day, fighting is the least part of it. It is not so much physical power which is required as brain power; not courage alone, but capacity. War, a great war, in this age, calls for men who know everything; and a man who knows anything thoroughly, and can do it well, is adapted to fill a niche, and should be put into it. You would not contend that those beefy fellows who first took hold of the matter you have had in hand could have followed it as neatly, deftly, and certainly as you have done, although they are professional 'detectives,' and you were not. Yet I have no doubt that your captain is as dull a piece as that drayman yonder; and, perhaps, your colonel a drunken braggart or played-out politician."

"But it will be only for a short time, you know,"

said Markham; "and I am too grateful at being allowed to serve my country at all to cavil about the place I am to stand in."

"Just so," said Woodley, "I cannot help honoring you for the sentiment, but must say it is the most foolish notion that ever got into a brain as sound as yours usually is in its deductions. If a man owes it to his country to carry a musket in her defense, he is equally bound to render her any better service of which he is capable. A man who can mould cannon, or build ships, or command armies, would be doing the country poor service at this time should he take his place in the ranks. Besides, this is going to be no holiday war. Men talk about finishing it before breakfast, and troops are called out for ninety days, and Mr. Seward even prophesies that this rebellion will be crushed in less than that time. You will be an old campaigner before the end comes, if you live to see it. And one of the things that will chiefly serve to prolong the war is, that our forces will be officered at the outset by incompetent men. Not that we shall not have good general officers in command, but the subordinates will be inefficient. The men who command regiments and companies will not be those in whom the rank and file will have confidence—not men who are capable of leadership. The consequence will be that the first battles will go against us. Of course, all this is rank heresy now, but mark my words, young man. we shall see defeat often enough before we know victory."

"You do not think the rebellion will be successful?" asked Markham.

“On the contrary, I am sure it will not,” was the reply, “but I have always been a sharp observer of men, and if I have achieved any advantage in the struggle of life it is due to the fact that I have judged men more correctly than others have done.”

“But will not the same deficiency exist among the rebels, and so in a great measure neutralize the result you anticipate?” asked Markham.

“No,” answered Woodley. “Their subordinate officers will be exceptionally good. They will be from the slave-holding aristocracy, which has always ruled that section, accustomed to command from infancy, and, from their position in society, calculated to act as leaders of those lower classes who will constitute their soldiery. Every captain and lieutenant, even, will be a man of some mark in his own neighborhood, every colonel a notable in his county, and the whole corps of officers will be from a class which the soldiers have always been accustomed to follow and, in a sense, obey. Our army will be full of men, like you, who have let their patriotism run away with their discretion, but who are, in fact, far better fitted to command than their immediate superiors. Such men will never become insubordinate; but no army can ever count for its full worth until every soldier has confidence in the skill, courage, and capacity of all of his superiors. If a regiment becomes satisfied that its line or field officers are either cowards or fools, they will not fight under them. And this will soon be the condition of most of ours. We must be content to wait for victories until war has weeded out our officers.”

"You have a poor opinion of our prospects and our armies, I am afraid," said Markham seriously, "but you would not advise me not to go?"

"No. I commend you for it; and I am glad you went without waiting to consider your own advantage. At the same time I am sorry I did not know your intention. I am going myself," said the elder.

"What! you going into the army?" asked Markham, in surprise.

"Yes."

"In what capacity?"

"Ha! ha!" laughed Woodley. "So you are going to put me through my own catechism. Frankly, then, I do not know. I offered my services three days ago, and this telegram informs me that they are accepted, and that I am assigned to staff-duty, with the rank of Colonel."

If a bombshell had exploded at the feet of the young man, he could hardly have been more amazed than he was by this announcement. The last man whom he would have expected to engage in the struggle was Boaz Woodley; yet here he was, with the words of foreboding on his lips which would have subjected him to the jeers and ridicule of nearly every man in the country, among the first to step forward and endeavor to avert disaster. This portly, hard-faced, well-fed lawyer looked as little like the material required in war as any he had just described; yet his whole individuality was written over with lines of power. Wherever he might be, he would render effective service of some sort. There was no doubt of that. Yet it was

strange that he should have taken this course. A hard, selfish man, and a millionaire! What could be his motive? Markham gazed at him, in a vain attempt to solve the question. The elder man at length raised his eyes from the floor, where they had rested musingly, and read the question in the mind of his companion at a glance.

“I have more at stake than you,” he said. “Besides, you know,” he added, softly, “I have neither kith nor kin, chick nor child, now.” This was the only reference he had ever made to the death of his wife, or any domestic relation, in Markham’s presence. There was a moment’s silence, for the young man felt embarrassed, almost awed, by what he had heard. Before he could think of anything to say, there came a knock at the door, and a servant of the hotel entered.

“An expressman, with a parcel for you, Mr. Churr,” he announced.

“Have it taken to my room,” said Markham, as he rose to go thither himself.

“As I shall leave on the two o’clock train, I will bid you good-bye, Colonel Woodley,” he said.

Woodley smiled at the ease with which Markham adapted himself to the new fact in his life, and held out his hand, as he said, heartily:

“Good-bye, and good luck to you. I know you will do your duty; but let me give you one word of advice. Make war your *business*, until—until—it is over. Perfect yourself in every department of your army duty by study and observation, and look to no future beyond the camp. I much doubt whether you have not done

your last act in civil life. Good-bye. If I can serve you at any time, command me."

CHAPTER XXIX.

SPADES ARE TRUMPS.

AS Markham Churr left the room of Boaz Woodley, Thomas Horton entered it. There was a look upon his face as if some new trouble had occurred. He came close to Woodley and said, in a hurried manner:

"I feel it my duty, sir, to let you know of a very strange occurrence. When I came out from my house this morning I found a new spade in my garden, and a hole dug to the depth of some four feet—and I did not know but it might have some connection with—the unpleasant occurrence of last summer." The little man mopped his forehead with his handkerchief as he looked at the great man who sat calmly before him.

"It was quite unnecessary, Horton, I knew all about it," said Woodley.

"All about the hole in my garden?" queried Horton, in surprise.

"Yes," said Woodley. "In fact, I helped dig it," and he looked keenly at the cashier. Since the failure of last night, he had become suspicious, even of Thomas Horton. He thought that he might not be entirely ignorant of his son's acts, and that the con-

fession of the latter might be intended more to divert suspicion from the father than for any other purpose. If he expected Mr. Horton to manifest any signs of guilty apprehension at this information, he was disappointed. The dapper little cashier seemed all at once to have received a new accession of manly dignity. He sat with a hand on each knee, leaning forward, and gazing intently into the face of his chief. At length he said, in a quiet, even tone:

“What did you expect to find there?”

“The cash-box which I deposited in Aychitula Bank the day but one before it was robbed,” said Woodley, glancing under his shaggy eyebrows for any signs of guilt which might flit across the face of his companion. Horton’s face settled into a cold, stony expression, as he said, with an undisguised sneer:

“I hope you found it.”

“I am sorry to say I did not,” said Woodley, quietly.

“You had better search my house next,” said Horton, bitterly.

“It would be quite useless,” was Woodley’s reply.

Thomas Horton sat a moment longer, looking steadily at his imperturbable companion. His face was pale, but unmoved. At length he heaved a long sigh, which was almost a groan, rose, and drawing a bunch of keys from his pocket, laid them on the table before Woodley, and, not trusting himself to speak, turned towards the door. Before he could reach it, however, the burly form of Boaz Woodley interposed, and, holding the keys towards his faithful clerk, he said:

"Take them, Horton." But the cashier drew back, and shook his head.

"If you can suspect me, after twenty years of service, it is time we parted, Mr. Woodley."

"Sit down, Horton, and let me tell you why we went into your garden to look for that box," said Woodley, commiseratingly. "Before we begin, take some of this brandy," and he pushed towards him a small tray, on which stood a slender-necked bottle, a little goblet, with a silver sugar-bowl and spoon. Horton shook his head, but Woodley poured out a glass and pushed it toward him.

"Drink it, man," said he, harshly, "you will need it before we are through, if you do not now."

When he had seated himself and drank the thimbleful of fiery liquid which Woodley had pushed towards him, the latter began his narrative with the employment of Markham Churr to ferret out the robbery, ending with a statement that a letter had been received from the person who committed the deed, which, he said, Horton might read for himself, handing him, as he spoke, the letter of his son.

Boaz Woodley watched him for a moment, keenly, but the agony upon the poor man's face soon became too deep for doubt, and he turned to the window to avoid the sight.

Hardly had the cashier finished the perusal of this letter, when Markham Churr burst into the room, in evident excitement, and exclaimed:

"Mr. Woodley, will you come to my room a moment?" Then, turning to the cashier, who sat gazing

vacantly at him, with the fatal letter still in his hand, he added:

“You must come, too, Mr. Horton. You have an interest in this matter, also.”

He turned and walked hurriedly along the corridor to his own room. Boaz Woodley followed deliberately, and wonderingly. Mr. Horton rose and put on his hat methodically, but absently, and followed also, with a dull, vacant look in his eyes, still holding his son's letter.

Arrived at the door of Markham's room, Woodley stopped at the threshold, and gazed with wonder at the scene within.

Beside a table in the middle of the room, stood Markham Churr, pointing to a tin-box which stood open upon it, having just been released from numerous wrappings of coarse paper, which lay around.

Boaz Woodley recognized at once the cash-box he had lost, and, starting forward, pulled out package after package of bank-bills, and threw them on the floor as if they had been rags, in evident search for something which he did not find.

“It is gone—gone!” he said, with a moan; then, looking at Markham with glaring eyes, he seemed, for the first time, to have become possessed with suspicion of him, also.

“It is gone!” he shouted, hoarsely, springing towards him. “It is gone, and you have stolen it! I see it all now! You thought you would get the reward, and keep a hold over me at the same time. You have conspired with that damned rascal, Frank Horton.

You are a pretty pair, and have played a very pretty game! I see it all; but you have missed once! Give it to me this instant, or you shall not leave this room alive!"

He sprang upon Markham, and caught him by the throat, as he spoke. The attack was so sudden and unexpected that Markham had no opportunity to make a movement in his own defense until the hand of Woodley was on his throat. If Boaz Woodley expected, however, to destroy his self-possession and overpower him by this sudden onset, he was quite mistaken in his man. Although of powerful build, he was no match in a personal encounter for the youngster he had taken by the throat. Markham Churr was a practiced athlete, of the utmost coolness and courage, fruitful in expedient, and of unconquerable resolution. Though considerably lighter than his assailant, such was his compactness of build that there was less difference even in weight than the casual observer would have supposed; and his thorough training and unusual powers of endurance gave him such advantage that he might have discounted his assailant the years by which he was his senior without fear of the result. The look of indignant surprise which had come into his face as he heard Woodley's sudden accusations changed to one of blank amazement as his employer advanced upon him. No sooner, however, did he realize the attack, than an expression of dogged determination settled upon his features, and the fingers of Woodley had hardly touched his throat, when that worthy received a stunning blow, followed by a kick, which caused him to release his

hold. Then the two men clinched. They were so evenly matched that for a time the result seemed doubtful. Horton, having recovered from the amazement caused by all that had come to his knowledge since morning, rubbed his bald head in perplexity, and importuned first one and then the other to desist. Neither heeded him. They clasped each other, with straining muscles, and watched each other's movements like two wild beasts struggling for their lives. The floor sprang beneath their tread, and the whole house trembled with their efforts, till, finally, they fell hurtling to the floor, panting, struggling, Markham uppermost. Blinded with rage, Woodley still struggled to free himself. It was in vain, yet he did not cease his efforts.

At length Markham said, jerking out his words in broken phrases, as the struggle would permit:

"Mr. Woodley—I have no desire—to do you—any harm—and cannot understand your attack upon me."

"Hypocrite!" hissed Woodley, between his teeth.

"You may say what you choose; I shall do you no personal injury except in self-defense," said Markham; and he kept his position with obstinate wariness, which left no hope to the man underneath. Finally, either Woodley's rage exhausted itself, or he saw how ridiculous and ineffectual it had been to accomplish his purpose, and he ceased to struggle. Thereupon Markham released his hold, and both rose to their feet. After regarding each other a moment, Woodley sat down in the nearest chair, and Markham turned away to remove the traces of the struggle from his person and clothing.

Horton, having vainly endeavored to prevent the continuance of the fray, now that it was ended looked in embarrassed silence from one to the other of the contestants, and then, from mere force of habit, began to inspect the box and count the money upon the table. To hide his embarrassment, he began to talk of the subject of his thoughts.

“Yes, sure enough, Mr. Woodley, this is the same box you left with me. And here are ten thousand dollars. That’s what you told me the deposit was worth at the time, I remember. And, among the bills, one thousand in those new twenties of the Xenia Branch Bank; we’d only had a few of those. Yes, here is the very card I put on it that day. It’s stained and blurred—almost illegible—but I can read my own writing yet: B. Woodley, June ———.’ The date is gone entirely, but it was the Friday before the bank was opened. I declare I’m glad Frank didn’t know all this money was in the box. I’m afraid he might have done worse if he had. It’s been buried, as he said, too. Don’t you see the clay on the sides of it here? Stiff and hard, just like that in my garden. Oh, Frank told the truth, Mr. Woodley; I am sure he did. He’s too brave a boy to lie. You see he ain’t afraid even of you, Mr. Woodley.”

The old man had been talking more to himself than to the man he from time to time addressed, his tears falling almost as fast as his words. Woodley regarded him stolidly. Horton kept on, so full of his trouble that he had almost forgotten the presence of the two men in the room with him. He started, therefore, in some surprise when Woodley came forward, exam-

ined the box carefully, and scrutinized the direction to Markham on the wrapper. When he had finished his scrutiny, he started toward the door. Before he had reached it, Markham barred his passage.

"Mr. Woodley," he said, in a firm, but respectful tone, "you have accused me of purloining something from that box, and have made an attack upon me on account of your suspicion. I acknowledge that the circumstances attending its possession at this time are very mysterious, as I cannot at all account for it; and I do not wonder that you should be surprised—I am myself. That, however, does not justify your suspicion, and you must be more explicit in regard to your loss, that I may take steps to free myself from your imputation. I therefore, demand that you describe, in Mr. Horton's presence, what you claim to have lost, in such a manner that it may be identified."

"Oh, it was of no value," said Woodley, hastily, and with some confusion.

"I owe you an apology for my conduct," and he half extended his hand. Markham waved it aside, and locking the door, stood firmly before it as he said:

"No, Mr. Woodley, this cannot be passed over thus lightly. If I were inclined to do so, you have taught me that it would be dangerous. It has already resulted in an unseemly struggle which has given me the right to demand a full statement of the extent and character of your loss. To have forfeited your good opinion, even, is no light matter to me; but, beyond that, I have the right, which every brave and honorable man always accords to his enemy, to know why I am struck."

Woodley walked up and down the room for a short time, evidently in troubled thought. His countenance was pale, and the sweat stood upon his brow. His limbs trembled as he sat down upon a chair, and asked Horton, who was gazing at his agitation in speechless wonder, to go to his room and bring him some brandy. Markham unlocked the door, and Horton did as requested. Woodley poured himself out a glass and drank it at a gulp. After a time he seemed to conquer his agitation, and said:

“Thomas Horton, I desire you to witness what I say. My attack on Mr. Churr was unjustifiable and foolish. I have no ground for the imputation I made against him. I was maddened by the loss of a parcel, which I confidently expected to find in that box. A paper which had no appreciable value, although I held it almost beyond price. I cannot tell you what that paper was. It is not here. Some one else may have it, but every word and act of Markham Churr, as well as every circumstance of the return of the box, shows that he has not. And now, Churr,” said he, turning towards Markham, “is that enough? I can say no more.”

“It is not necessary that you should,” said Markham, offering his hand, heartily, “I am sorry for your loss and hope you may soon recover what you prize so highly.”

“Yes,” said Woodley, with a tinge of bitterness in his tone—“so highly that I could make a fool of myself over its loss.”

“And now,” said Markham, “I wish you would give me a receipt for this box and its contents?”

"Certainly," said Woodley, "and I also owe you the remainder of the reward offered when you took this matter in hand. Count out a thousand dollars, Horton, and take Mr. Churr's receipt for it."

Horton pushed a bundle of bills toward Markham, and began to write a receipt.

"Mr. Woodley," said Markham, "I do not think I am entitled to this money. I cannot see that I have contributed in any way to the recovery of the box, beyond being the mere passive instrument of another's will. It was sent to me. I did not find it."

"Don't stop to split hairs," said Woodley. "Take the money, you have earned it; and I shall feel less humiliated by my conduct, if you will."

"Thank you, it is precisely because I have not earned it that I cannot take it," said Markham.

"So you refuse it entirely?"

"Yes."

"Well, if you regret your squeamishness at any time, draw on me. I am your banker for that amount," said Woodley.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE OLD STORY.

MARKHAM CHURR returned to Fairbank that evening, wearied, puzzled, and depressed, and gave Lizzie Harper a full account of all that had occurred at Aychitula.

When he concluded, he took the check he had received for his services, and gave it to her. It was endorsed: "Pay to the order of Lizzie Harper. Markham Churr."

"My first present, darling," he said, as she spread it out upon her knees and looked at it thoughtfully.

"You do not mean to give me all of this?" she said, inquiringly.

"I have already done so," he answered.

"But for yourself? What have you for your own wants?"

"A private soldier has no wants beyond what his pay will supply."

"But I cannot take it. I have no use for so much," she protested.

"Ever since I have known you," he replied, "it has been my brightest anticipation that I might sometime be the source from which you would receive the good things of this life. I have no joy in any possession which is not transferable to you. I wish to acquire, only that you may enjoy. I would give my life for your pleasure; my heart, that it might cushion one footstep in your path. The essence of my love is a burning desire to endow you with whatever of good I may be able to gather in life. It is more joy to see you holding that bit of paper and know that I gave it to you than any wealth could give if it were mine alone."

The tears were falling from her eyes upon the paper, which she pressed to her bosom, and his arms were around her before his impetuous outburst was ended.

"But you might die," she sobbed convulsively, as she lay upon his breast.- "Oh, this sad war!" and now the tears she shed were briny.

"I have thought of that," he said; "and that is another reason why I desire you should have this money, and should enjoy and control, keep or spend, use or throw away, as you choose, just as if it had always been your own, and had never been mine."

"But," she still urged, "what shall I do with it?"

"Just what you would if you were my wife," he answered, with a kiss.

"Oh, I could never feel as free to use it as if that were so," she answered, blushing.

"I had hoped," he said, regretfully, "to have obtained the other reward, also, which would have justified us in marrying immediately; but I could not feel satisfied to take my place in the army—a private soldier's place, remember, with only a private soldier's pay—at the beginning of a war which may be very long and full of casualties, and leave you my wife, with only this slender provision to face the chances of early widowhood. Should I fall, I should feel that I was bequeathing you a life of hardship, rather than the one of comfort of which I have always dreamed. I must not take you from your father's house till I have a home for you."

There was silence for a few moments, and then the fair girl clung closer to her lover, and buried her face from his sight as she said, in a low, weak whisper, but with a touch of her natural archness:

“Fifteen hundred dollars would go a great way, dear.”

Markham started, and pressed her closer to his heart. A new rapture drove away the dejection which had settled on his countenance as he said, tenderly:

“Is it so indeed, my darling? Do you really wish to be my wife before I go to face danger? Would you rather I should fall your husband than your lover?”

She raised her head, and looked him full in the face, while hot blushes chased each other over her own, as she said:

“It is my dearest wish, Markham. I cannot think of your going into danger without first being *mine*—mine to come to and nurse should you be wounded, mine to mourn for freely and without constraint should you die, and mine to welcome home should you live till victory comes, as I know you will; mine to pray for, wait for, and glory in—my very own—my husband.”

The tears were rolling down the faces of both as he strained her again to his breast, kissed her lips, and said, with a tender, glad solemnity:

“Be it so, my darling.”

The tall old clock in the hall ticked out its approval through the silence that followed, and told the hour of twelve with unusual rattle and noise as the lovers stood upon the stair and, for the last time, with clinging kisses, said “Good-night.”

* * * * *

There was an impromptu wedding next day at Fairbank, a week of quiet bliss afterward, and, at its close,

a tearful farewell, as the soldier-bridegroom hurried to the field of strife.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE ACCOLADE.

THROUGH the long days of early summer, the life of the nation centered in the beleaguered capital—not with foreboding, but anxiously and confidently expecting victory, and dreading only the strife that must precede it. Daily the young wife dreamed of her absent hero—her soldier yet innocent of blood or strife. Daily she read the newspaper which was thrown from the train at the railroad-crossing, near by, and the frequent letters from the camp, and lovingly and happily mused of the time when her soldier should return. Of course there would be a battle, perhaps many, but none had occurred yet, and, perhaps *he* might not be engaged when it did. And yet she would not have him absent. She was very anxious for the good name and fame of her Markham, and very ambitious for his future. She would not for the world have had him miss the honor of being one of those who first offered themselves to their country. She would not have him miss the first great conflict—the death-struggle, it was hoped—with the rebellion; no, not for his life. She would far rather be a hero's widow, she thought, than the wife of one who could quietly pursue the daily routine of or-

dinary life while the grandest of history was being enacted at his door.

She felt, too, a wonderful interest in the nation's weal. Not an item of the daily happenings escaped her ken. Her Markham was in the struggle, he was part of the host whose every movement she noted. She joined with other women whose hearts were in the strife, who had sent forth their loved ones with words of cheer, while they hid hearts of foreboding, and prepared clothing for the soldiers—lint and bandages for the surgeons, dainties for the sick and wounded; and gathered books and newspapers for them all, the heroes who were to fight the country's battles, endure privations and wounds, and achieve final victory; each one thinking, as she wrought, that *her* idol, *her* hero, might be the one to wear the clothing, need the bandage, or taste the delicacies she prepared.

It occurred to her dreaming mind that in the long, happy, indefinite future which was to come when this cruel war was over, and she should sit by her hero's side and share his laurels, that it might be a matter of use or pleasure to Markham if she should keep a full record of all that took place while he was in the field. So she commenced putting in a scrap-book everything that came under her notice respecting the war, while, in her own little journal, her woman's thoughts on the passing events were quaintly mingled with the pretty tenderness of hopeful young love.

And so her days slipped on, in a strange, mazy way, not unhappily, heedful of her new treasure, and hopeful for her country—let us not say how much the more

because his future and her joy were bound up in its safety. Still she hoped and trusted, bowing ever at morning and evening, with that simple faith which constituted her religion, in trustful prayer for both.

The cherries and the apples blossomed, and poured their fragrance into the marriage-chamber, where she waited for her lord; and yet he came not. The cherries ripened on the old trees which stretched their interlacing arms across the yard. The annual gathering came, and fair faces smiled among the clustering leaves, white hands plucked the Dukes and Ox-Hearts; there was laughter and merry jesting, and Love found still happy pairs under the leafy arbors in the garden.

The "ninety days" of prophecy had expired, and yet the war was not over—nay, had scarcely commenced. Instead of boldly attacking the embattled enemy, the nation hesitatingly waited to be itself attacked. The time began to grow heavy. It seemed as if the end would never be—nor even the beginning. Suspense grew into weariness.

All at once the air was full of shadow. It seemed as if an unseen messenger had brought to every heart a premonition of great events impending. The hot July sun looked down upon a doubly expectant nation. There was little known to excite apprehension. Only this was told: The army about Washington had started towards Richmond. It had been heralded as a mere holiday trip, but loving hearts were truer prophets than the braggarts of the pen.

One more day passed, and Lizzie's watching eyes were startled by every form that passed along the dusty

road. Her fair cheeks flushed and paled, and her quick hand pressed her heaving bosom, at every sudden foot-step. The setting sun brought a letter—a little one—from the absent loved one, dated at Washington:

“MY DARLING WIFE: I write upon my knapsack, as we wait for orders to move out from the camp we have occupied so long. The mails are stopped, but a friend has promised to drop this in the office at Baltimore as he passes through. We go out to battle. You, no doubt, know where and how as well as I. I only know that we go to fight. I am very despondent. They talk of victory. I look only for defeat. Whatever comes, you may know that I shall do my duty; if for no other reason, because I know you could not love me should I fail to do so.

“God bless you, my darling. In life or in death, in victory or in defeat, I shall think of you ever and last.
Your husband, MARKHAM.”

How many times she read it, why think of noting? Until every letter was graven into her memory as with a burning stylus; until its characters swam before her eyes when she read her Bible that night, and danced through her brain like quivering flame as she knelt in prayer, until her petition became only a blind and wailing cry for help and hope.

The next day there was silence; and the next—the holy Sabbath—was burdened with woe and horror.

First came the brief message: “Fighting;” then the exultant cry: “The enemy falling back.” Then silence

fell upon the throbbing wires. The electric pulse which was wont to thrill along their fibers seemed to have been hushed, palsied, with the woe it was called upon to bear. At length it came, dragging feebly and slowly, while the operators spelled it out dully and wonderingly to hushed and stricken thousands: "*Our army in full retreat on Washington!*"

The young wife was standing in the moonlight—the full, bright, summer moonlight, under the cherry-trees, by the gate over which she had leaned, in another July moonlight, when she first heard the tremor of love in Markham's voice—when this last message was told her by a group of men who were passing, and of whom she had asked tidings. They told it to her in strangely tender tones for them to use, for the unspeakable anguish of a loving woman's despair spoke to them out of the staring eyes and blanched cheeks turned toward them in the moonlight. She did not weep, nor cry out, nor faint, as these tidings of a general grief struck her with the horror of a personal woe. She only moaned, and shook as with an ague, while they led her to the house.

Tenderly those within received her, and put her, shivering and moaning still, into her lone bridal-bed. To their comforting words she made no reply. Her agony was too sharp to be put in words, but the instinct of prayer did not forsake her, and her spirit went up to the throne of the Merciful, who "giveth his beloved sleep."

Two more days, and then came reports of those who were wounded and dead. They thought to keep the

newspapers away from her, but she would see them. She found it there, his name, among the list of *killed*. What great black letters the small type in which the names were printed seemed to her! She had not expected otherwise—so she said to herself—since she had heard of the rout of our army. Yet it seemed so horrible to see that name printed there for the great gaping world to read. It blinded her eyes and crushed her heart, and when they took the paper away, in very pity for her agony, she still saw those horrid letters on the tinted wall-paper, on the snowy coverlid, aye, even on the patch of azure sky through the windows, above the tops of the cherry-trees. Everywhere was printed:

“KILLED—MARKHAM CHURR, SERGT. CO. E,
21th N. Y. Vols.”

She lay in a dull stupor, day after day, reading ever these fatal inscriptions, which were stamped on everything about her. Somehow, she had lost all interest in the nation, and the struggle which was going on for its life, now that her own dearer life had been rendered up in its defense. Soon there came letters from the comrades of her fallen love, telling how he had fought, and when and where he had been stricken. They all spoke kindly, regretfully, of him. She was grateful to them, and treasured the bits of eulogy upon her dead with tender care. They tried to rouse her from the stupor into which she had fallen, but they could not.

And so the days grew into a week, and then into another, of her widowhood—when suddenly the veil was lifted. She awoke one morning to see that the world was bright, despite her sorrow. She caught herself

humming a tune before she was dressed. She was shocked that she could be anything but miserable, yet she could not be sad. The family noticed her changed demeanor, and at first rejoiced in it, for they had feared she might never recover from the shock; but through the day there was a suppressed gladness in her voice and manner which alarmed them only less than her previous lethargic grief.

The following morning she still more surprised those who had watched her in her trial with such anxiety, by declaring her belief that her husband was yet alive.

"I saw him last night," she said; "he was in a crowded city, lying in one of the rooms of a great house. There were watchers by the bed, and he was pale and weak, but was alive, and spoke my name."

"But you must remember," they said to her, "that several of his comrades say they saw him when—when he was killed, and you must not flatter your heart, dear child, that they were all mistaken, and that he would remain unheard of for so long a time."

"But they *were* mistaken," she still insisted. "They mistook a serious for a fatal wound. Oh! he has been very low. I cannot tell you how pale and thin he was; but he is alive, and will come back to me."

She was so happy in her delusion, that they would not dispel it, and left her to its enjoyment, now fully convinced that her mind had been impaired by the sudden bereavement.

And so the days went on, and, in spite of her friends, in spite of reason and of herself, even, Lizzie

Churr was happy. Her belief in her husband's escape seemed so unreasonable that it had settled into one of those notions which the keenest sufferers sometimes get, and cling to with the most unwavering confidence, yet which do not actually expect fulfillment—a fancy which the heart receives, although the brain denies its verity. So, while she thought and spoke of him as alive, somehow she did not fill the future with his words and acts as she had done before the battle-scath had marred her marriage-dreams.

One day there was a visitor announced who asked for her. She went down to the parlor, wondering who could have called, since he had given no name, but had merely said to her sister: "I wish to see Mrs. Churr privately for a few minutes."

In the hall she saw a military cap, and her heart beat faster and her limbs grew weak as she thought of Markham, and realized her widowhood. She entered the parlor, and a tall, strongly-framed man, clothed in a half-military suit, begrimed with dust, came forward, and, gazing searchingly and anxiously into her eyes, bowed slightly and inquiringly, as he said:

"Mrs. Churr, I presume?"

She bowed assent, and he continued:

"You must allow me to introduce myself. My name is Boaz Woodley."

Lizzie extended her hand with evident pleasure. It was a tribute to her Markham that this strong, busy man should feel it a duty to come and proffer condolence to his widow. She was very jealous of her dead husband's honor.

"I see," he said, smiling, "that you have heard the name before. Well, then, there is no further need of parley. I am, as you may be aware, on the staff of the Governor of the State, and engaged in organizing troops at this time. Knowing the qualities of your husband as well as I do, and learning of the very conspicuous gallantry which he displayed in the late battle, I have recommended the Governor to offer him a commission in one of our regiments. He has, therefore, appointed him a captain in the *n*th Ohio Infantry. Knowing he would appreciate the honor more highly if it came through you, I have brought you the commission, which I now deliver."

He concluded with a low bow to the pallid, trembling creature, who sat, she knew not how, listening to this harangue, which she was powerless to interrupt, and handed her the bit of parchment which he held in his hand. Could not the great brute see how she was suffering? He was watching her closely enough, and did not seem anxious to wound her feelings. At length she found breath to stammer forth:

"But he—is—is, that is—"

"Ah! yes—I know. He was reported dead, but we do not believe it. I do not—not a word of it, Madam," said Woodley.

"But have you heard?"—she asked, eagerly.

"Oh, no!" not waiting for her to complete her question, "of course we have not heard from him. But there are so many mistakes made in Washington now, that there is no reliance to be put in these reports—not a word. Why, he may be in one of the hospitals, or in

some private house, and his name not properly reported, and his comrades think he must be dead because they do not know where he is. He may be sick and delirious. There are a thousand chances, and all in his favor."

"Do you think so," she gasped, eagerly.

"Think? Why, I *know*," returned Woodley, confidently. "We thought you might have heard from him. But no matter; you will presently. I am sure of that. And you can keep that bit of paper till he gets back. He may need something to freshen him up a bit."

"I hope"—said Lizzie, tremblingly.

"Oh, don't *hope*," interrupted Woodley, cheerfully, "don't hope. Just be sure. You have never thought him dead."

"I—I—have tried not to," said the poor young wife, and, for the first time since the terrible news had come to her, she burst into tears.

"There! there!" said Woodley, tenderly, as she caught one of his hands and sobbed and wept upon it, while he stroked her brown hair with the other. Don't be disturbed. Take my word for it, you will have Markham home here before you know it, and make him as good as new again, if he has been hurt."

After some further rude attempts at consolation, he said, rather abruptly, being unused to melting moods and perplexed as to what to do next:

"You must excuse me, Madam, I am in haste. When Markham comes, give him this paper, and, believe me, it will help him to get up again." He took his leave, and Lizzie looked after him, as he went down the

walk under the cherry-trees towards the gate, with something like remorse in her tearful eye.

The next day there came a letter from a gentleman residing in Washington, saying that Markham Churr had been lying wounded at his house since the day after the great battle; had been insensible much of the time, and, after that, too weak to dictate a letter. The writer stated that he was a stranger to his sick guest, having taken him from an ambulance to his house simply because he wore the badge of a college society to which the writer had belonged. He had not known his rank or residence until that day, and was greatly shocked, upon going to the camp of his regiment, which was but a few squares distant, to learn that he had been reported dead. He feared much, suffering had been caused by this report, and hastened to correct it. Sergeant Churr had been severely wounded, but was now greatly improved, and would probably be able to start for home in a few days.

Strangely enough, this letter, while dated "Washington," was post-marked "*Aychitula!*"

CHAPTER XXXII.

"AND IT WAS LIGHT!"

HARDLY had Lizzie recovered from the glad amazement which this letter brought, when there came a new surprise. She was sitting by the window, sewing

on some dainty trifle, and wondering dreamily how her hero was faring, when she saw a little cavalcade coming down the road, a quarter of a mile away in the direction of the village. First came a carriage belonging to one of the hotels. She knew that by the color of the horses, even at that distance. Behind it was Dr. Merrill's buggy and two or three other vehicles, all filled with men who seemed very much excited, swinging their arms and sometimes their hats, driving very fast, yet stopping often and apparently in no great haste to reach their destination. At every house they seemed to make some announcement which drew all its inmates to the roadside. Lizzie called her sister.

"What can it be?" said Jenny, as she leaned over her sister's chair and joined in her wonder. "See, there is father," and she pointed to Jeduthon Harper, who, mounted on his staid, gray mare, and wearing his high hat, had started to the village for the evening's mail, and was just now turning the corner which the cavalcade was approaching. He halted as he came near, and an excited individual, who rode with the Doctor, sprang out and went forward, hat in hand, to meet the grave, gray-bearded man, who dismounted and went towards the carriage, at first slowly, then excitedly.

"Why, it must be somebody father knows," said Jenny, "and do look there," she continued, in surprise.

It was no wonder she was amazed. Jeduthon Harper, after clambering into the carriage, had suddenly turned, leaped down, ran to his venerable horse, sprung into the saddle, turned her head towards home, losing

his high hat in the movement, and, by fierce application of the whip, had roused the wondering beast into something like a trot. As he turned the corner homeward, this evidently became too slow a method of locomotion for his excited feeling, and, leaping down, he ran beside the old mare, still holding the bridle and lashing her at every step.

"He must be crazy," said Jenny, and both sisters laughed, till they almost cried, at their father's queer antics.

It was, indeed, a strange spectacle which came along the road towards the two laughing watchers. Just in front, ran the gray-haired old man, urging his horse forward, and running at its side, bare-headed, gesticulating wildly and evidently shouting incessantly. Next came the carriage, they could not see with how many passengers, but evidently loaded to its full capacity, and, just beside that, the Doctor's buggy, he whipping sharply on, as if to pass both the others, while the excitable man in the buggy with him kept standing up and then sitting down, as if uncertain in which position he preferred to ride; then two or three vehicles, crowded with people, all excited and gesticulating; and alongside of these a hurrying crowd of pedestrians, all waving their hats and evidently shouting.

As they reached the top of the little hill, just beyond the ravine which ran across the road east of Fairbank, Mr. Hamilton, who lived there, came out to his gate. The man in the buggy shouted something and gesticulated towards the carriage. Mr. Hamilton waved his hat in response, sprang over the fence and

ran towards the carriage. As he did so, there was a gleam of blue from the other side of the coach.

"Markham! Markham!" exclaimed Lizzie, as she sprang up, dropping the snowy linen on which she had been engaged, and thrusting aside her wondering sister. She flew out of the door, down the path, and along the dusty road, in the hot August sunshine, to the brow of the little hill up which the carriage, with its motley convoy, was toiling through the burning sand. Her father did not seem to see her, as she stood on the green bank, just above the road, nor did she heed him. Her heart had told her what the carriage contained, and, with heaving breast, she but waited for her eyes to confirm its fond augury. The excitable man who rode with the Doctor was the first to spy her.

"Captain Churr!" he cried, waving his hat towards the panting figure by the roadside. "Three cheers for Captain Churr!"

His face was red, and he was hoarse from shouting already, but he led the cheer. The kind, stubbly-faced Doctor shouted, while the wrinkles chased each other over his visage, his gray eyes sparkling with joy, as he alternately shook his whip at Lizzie and lashed his filly, which was rearing and plunging at his unwonted vigor. The carriage-driver shook his whip and hurrahed. The men in the carriage waved their hats and shouted, and the neighbors who ran behind strained their throats to add to the din. All seemed possessed with delirium.

Lizzie saw none of this. A pale face, surmounted with a blue cap, had caught her eye. She knew not

how, but in an instant she had clambered over the wheel, wrenched open the carriage-door—or some friendly hand had done it for her—and she was borne on to the house kneeling on the carriage-floor, clasping her Markham to her breast, while the gentleman who sat in front had put one arm around her waist to prevent her falling backward, and with the other held his hat before his face to hide his tears. Outside, all was clamor and joy—within there was the hush of tenderer emotion. Eyes unused to such display were full of tears, sweet with the holiest savor—the joy of witnessing another's supremest happiness.

As they drove up to the house, the whole family came out, but half comprehending the scene, hardly knowing whether to laugh or cry, and doing both at irregular intervals. The neighbors crowded about the carriage, talking boisterously and irrelevantly, as is usual on exciting occasions, each anxious to do something if he only knew how to begin. One by one the gentlemen stepped from the carriage, leaving Lizzie alone, clasping to her bosom her dead that was alive again, gazing down at him with a face which shone as with the glory of a brighter world.

The effusive individual who rode with the doctor jumped down and shook hands with Jeduthon Harper—who was still holding the bridle of his gray mare, and walking back and forth the distance it allowed—looked into the carriage, and said something to the occupants, who were deaf and blind to all the world except each other, then began shaking hands with all the neighbors, called for three more cheers, and, finally,

stepping upon the porch, was about to begin a speech. He was a lawyer, and naturally thought a few remarks appropriate on every occasion. Just as he got under way, however, the Doctor, who had quietly tied his horse to a tree in the yard, gone to the carriage and felt the patient's pulse, came upon the scene, and took charge of the further proceedings.

"This won't do," he said, quietly, and in that sort of business-like, self-assured tone which all men obey at once. "There has been too much noise and excitement already. I wish, Squire, if it is not too much trouble, that you would take my horse, and drive to the drug-store, and get me this prescription."

The fussy, good-hearted man was only too glad to do something, and departed on his errand with alacrity.

Our young soldier had borne up wonderfully until he saw his sweet wife's face, and felt her clinging arms about his neck. Then his head sank upon her bosom, and he became insensible. Under the Doctor's directions, he was removed from the carriage, and placed upon a bed. His wife sat beside him, and held his nerveless hand. The neighbors came in, gazed pityingly at his pale face for a moment, and went away, one by one, bearing in their hearts the first woful message from the field of strife.

The injuries of Markham Churr were of that class which touch the life without greatly marring the frame. A vital nerve had been compressed, and through half its length refused to perform its functions. The strong limbs were lifeless and inert. No message from the brain could reach the relaxed muscles. The well-strung

sinews yielded beneath a feather's weight. The feet were leaden. Half the man was dead; the other half but feebly alive. The brain had felt the shock, and since that moment had been dull and heavy. One only thought had remained with dogged pertinacity, growing every day stronger and stronger: he must be taken home to die. He would bear to his young bride the message of his faithfulness—the story of his first battle, and his last. Then he would die. Then he would be willing to die. He did not want the shattered half-life which alone remained to him. He could not be content to sit in helpless weakness within hearing of the strife, and not be able to share the turmoil.

So he came home to die; to see his fair young wife, and receive her kiss of welcome, and soothe her sorrow as she said: Farewell.

When he had revived, the Doctor called Lizzie aside, and gave directions for his care, telling frankly his hopes and fears. The young husband had been his friend, and was also the first sufferer he had seen from the struggle, for whose righteous outcome no one prayed more sincerely. The patient saw them, and said, querulously:

“Don't bother, Doctor. It's no use. Let me die in peace.”

“There is no fear of your dying, Captain Churr,” said the Doctor, blushing at his own disingenuousness.

“*Captain* Churr? Why do you say ‘Captain,’ Doctor?” asked Lizzie, without waiting for her husband to reply.

“Why, hasn't he told you yet?” asked the Doctor,

laughingly. "That's what he came home for—just to let you know of his promotion. He was so anxious about it, that he had it telegraphed ahead of the train, so that we might be ready to receive him with proper ceremony."

"Now, Doctor, that is too bad," said Markham, petulantly.

"It was a mistake, then?"

"No, it is not a mistake. You know it is not true, and only do it to tease me. It is not kind to do so, when you know my condition," he replied.

"But I swear, Markham," said the Doctor, "I am in earnest. The telegram I received was to that effect. It was from Buffalo, and said that Captain Markham Churr would arrive, badly wounded, on the next train. It was sent by Colonel—somebody, I have forgotten who, but I supposed he knew. I assure you I have not been joking at all."

"Nor is it any joke," said Lizzie, who had left the room, only to return with a parchment in her hand. "You are a captain, and there is your commission."

She laid it on his breast, but the Doctor caught it up, and glanced over it.

"That is so," he said; "and it is for gallant conduct, too."

Then he read it over, and there was more cheering and handshaking.

"It's of no use now," said Markham, sadly, "except to show that I did my duty, as I told you I would, Lizzie."

"Oh, you darling!" she cried, mischievously; "you

deserve one more kiss for winning it." She gave him half-a-dozen, and rattled on, cheerily: "Won't it be nice, dear, when you get well? •

"And the captain with his whiskers cast a sly look at me," she sang, with a glance so arch that he could not help laughing, as he exclaimed, feebly enough:

"I declare, Lizzie, you would make a dead man laugh."

"Or a sick man well. That's what I am going to do, Markham. Why, sister Jennie, here Markham has been home two mortal hours, and no one has asked him to stay to supper!"

Amid the laughter which followed this sally, the Doctor took his leave, and Lizzie slipped out under the cherry-trees to ask him, once more:

"Do you think he will get well, Doctor?"

"I do not despair. You must keep him cheerful and lively. That is the best medicine for him," he answered.

"Oh! if it depends on me, he shall be cured," she said, and the tears ran over her smiling face as she turned back to begin the work of restoring her shattered hero—rebuilding the walls of her love's Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FROM THE GATES OF DEATH.

WHEN the excitement of his return had passed away, the dull, lethargic state in which Markham had been since the day of battle returned, and he seemed about to fulfill his own prediction, that he had come home to die. But to die was not so easy, with so brave a heart as Lizzie's battling for the husband who had come back to her, as it were, from the grave. Bright and sparkling as a fairy, she hovered about his couch, caring for the poor stricken body and inspiring the dull and languid brain. And whenever she wearied, from long watching, plenty of hands scarcely less tender waited to give her respite from the duties of his chamber.

Oh, never was nursing such as the first stricken soldiers of "the war" received! Friends were brothers and sisters in devotion then; strangers were friends; and private enemies were annihilated! The wounded man was the hero of a sympathizing and admiring circle. He was the opportunity by which non-combatant patriotism found its most congenial expression!

As time wore on, Markham began slowly to improve. The dullness left his brain and the terrible weight which pressed down his limbs began to lighten. The good Doctor aided the efforts towards recovery

by kind supervision and some few co-operative remedies.

“If we can prevent fever, and keep his mind active, he has still a chance,” he said.

So Markham was often encouraged to tell the sad story of his brief career as a soldier—that episode of ridicule and tears—the first “on to Richmond” movement of the war. Those who heard him were not critical. They were not only loving and tried friends, but they counted it a privilege to listen to the recital of one who had shared for a few hours the perils of battle for the sake of the nation’s integrity. Again and again he told over to a delighted and wondering auditory the story of his one battle—the first great battle of a great war. He told of the camp-life in Washington, in rough huts upon the public squares—a new element in the strangely-compounded life of the cosmopolitan capital. Their hearts had burned with new zeal for the conflict when they learned of the martyrdom of that fairest and most beloved of young warriors, Ellsworth, of the gold-brown locks and sunny eyes! Ellsworth, the knight and the ascetic! Peter and St. John in one! And then Markham told them how the novelty of camp-life began to wear off, and the daily routine grew dull and wearisome. How at last came the order to be ready to move at sunrise, and how, just as the first gleam of the sun tipped the city spires with light, while the late-houred metropolis was wrapped in the sweet sleep of the summer morning, the regimental band sent the shrill notes of “the assembly” shrieking and pulsing through the drowsy fog which still rested in the silent

streets and along the wide Potomac. Company after company marched out—every man with crowded knapsack and haversack, laden, not merely with rations, but with all the little luxuries that the citizen-soldier deemed convenient and pleasurable for a holiday campaign—and took their places in the line with a new, strange feeling that war had actually begun. The Colonel, a thoroughly-educated soldier, who had seen service in Mexico, and for whom the future held unlimited honor, came forth, clad, not in the pride and pomp of war, but in a simple blouse and slouched, black hat, looped with a small aigrette at the side, carrying his sheathed sword familiarly upon his arm; went to his place, half hidden by the morning's mist from the wings, and in quiet, unassuming tones, commanded:

“*Tenshone—battalyone! Order—arms! Parade—rest!*”

Then the Adjutant read the Colonel's address—“regimental order,” it was called:

“**SOLDIERS:** In a few moments we are to move out to engage, for the first time, in the actual duties for which you have enlisted and for which you have been preparing. To attain efficiency in this is the end of all the other duties of a soldier's life. The drill, the routine of camp, are only to teach self-restraint and the habit of obedience necessary for prompt and united action in time of battle. Should you be called upon to prove its value, I trust you will show that it has brought effective discipline.”

At this point there were indications of a cheer from these fresh volunteers, which was suppressed by a stern:

“Attention!” from the rigid figure in front. The Adjutant read on:

“To wait, to watch, to endure patiently at all times and all seasons, to obey without murmuring, to do without doubting, are far more important qualities of the soldier than mere bravery in battle. We are going into hostile territory, but remember that private property and the persons of non-combatants are as sacred there as here. Let me hope that none will expose himself to punishment, or his comrades to shame, by a disregard of these duties.”

Then the arms were stacked and the regiment waited “at rest” for orders. The sun rose fully; the morning dragged wearily away; the hot noon glared down, and still we waited for orders. The soldiers ate and drank and joked each other. The young Colonel, for his slight form, springy step and sparkling black eyes gave him the appearance of youth, though he was of middle age, walked back and forth, smoking, pulling his mustache impatiently, and practicing very illy the injunctions to patience that he had just given his soldiers. His officers gathered around him, and occasionally his Adjutant came to report.

“The movement has begun,” he said, at length; “the —th Infantry is crossing the Long Bridge.”

“That is good,” said the Colonel, with a smile of satisfaction. “The regulars should be in the advance!”

Again and again the Adjutant came and reported different regiments upon the march. The subalterns of the regiment, it occurred to Markham, as he sat

looking on at this by-play, were just such a body of men as Boaz Woodley had predicted, three months before, our army would be cursed with at the outset. In point of ability and character, they were hardly above an average of the regiment. Many of them were already despised and ridiculed by the soldiers under their command. Now, as a boastful discussion went on among them, regarding the movement just begun, the Colonel looked curiously from one to another. He was questioned, as to his opinion, by one of the loudest-mouthed of the garish, over-dressed crowd with whom chance had encircled the cultured soldier, and answered, savagely :

“I think we shall be whipped, sir—whipped like dogs !”

“Pshaw, now, Colonel,” said his second in command—a thick-hided numbskull, whom his superior had vainly endeavored to instruct in the rudiments of tactical science and the routine of a soldier’s life, but who, after three months of careful attention, was as ignorant of his duties as on the day when he laid aside the yard-stick and took up the sword, “why do you say that?”

“Why do I say it?” asked the Colonel, while his eyes flashed fire at the questioner and then swept quickly around the circle. He turned, and walked nervously away, chewing the end of his cigar fiercely, and leaving the question unanswered. Markham thought he saw in that keen look a sufficient answer. He thought, too, that he read in the faces of a few of those officers, young men who were worthy of the shoulderstraps they

wore, a sad confirmation of his own foreboding. Alas that they were so few!

The shadows were stretching well to the eastward, and the soldiers were looking back to the huts they had occupied so long, not a few regretting that they had wantonly destroyed the cosy domestic arrangements they had made in them, when the Adjutant rode up and briefly reported to the Colonel, who was stretched listlessly upon his blanket, a few steps from where a servant held his horse. The words transformed him. In an instant he was beside his horse, and in his saddle, and his voice rang out joyously, while his face flushed with pleasure. He was every inch a soldier as he ordered:

“Attention! Take arms! Unfix bayonets! Shoulder arms! Forward, file left—*march!*” And the *n*th N. Y. V. began its march towards the Long Bridge, and its commanding officer his career of fame.

Ah! many a one who followed drew at each step nearer to a soldier's grave! But who can tell the novel joy of that first march? The broad river; the green hills beyond, just beginning to be scarred with red lines of ditch and parapet; the smooth, winding road, leading to a gently undulating region; the low-branching, heavy-foliaged Virginia woods which bordered it; the setting sun, and the balmy evening air! The great full moon looked down upon our first night's bivouac. Oh! the music, the swelling songs, the jests, the exultation! The posting of real guards in an enemy's country! The bright fires, the fragrant coffee, the bread and bacon, unanimously voted better than Delmonico's best, by

reason of the relish that a few hours of lively marching had given, and the night of quiet rest among aromatic shrubs, with dreams of home and fame!

Markham's story of the battle of Bull Run was not the one given in the official reports, nor that of painstaking, veracious and ubiquitous correspondents. He knew nothing about the grand strategy which planned the battle, though he gradually formed his own opinion of it afterwards. Neither was it filled with galloping aids, caparisoned steeds, or magnificently-clad generals, whose coolness and temerity astounded friend and foe alike; not that he was unwilling to recount such marvels, but, simply, he did not happen to see them. As he grew stronger, he read many accounts of the battle in which he had been stricken. The more he compared these reports and narratives with each other and with the facts which he had observed, the stronger became his conviction that he knew nothing of the battle which he had helped to fight, and he sometimes caught himself wondering whether he was there at all. He wondered, too, if the poems and pictures of battles long past would seem as strangely absurd to those who fought them. There must always be a vast difference between the view of a battle as it presents itself to a private or a line officer, and the aspect presented to a staff or field officer. The little happenings about the former so absorb his attention that he has no time to take in the larger events which are a little remote, and of which he is a small and insignificant part. And a still greater difference separates both of these from the general view made by the newspaper correspondent, who gathers and

combines the many parts to form his entire picture. While the yet later historian stands at a still greater distance, and on higher ground, and loses most of the detail in his grand perspective effect of the *tout ensemble*.

In fact, the soldier's story of the battle is no story of the battle at all, but only the tale of his own day's fighting. Madame History takes no account of anything less than a Colonel, rarely coming below a General; and as Markham Churr was only a Sergeant in a volunteer regiment which had never smelled powder before that day, perhaps it may be counted an infringement of the prerogatives of that veracious jade, that he should be allowed to tell his own story of the day's fight and his part therein. On the other hand, perhaps for that very reason it is worth telling, and as it is, after all, the story of *his life* which concerns us now, he has, doubtless, a right to give his own account of the battle in which he fought and suffered.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SERGEANT'S STORY.

AS Markham's talk is a pretty long one, the printer's device of quotation-marks may be omitted. It ran as follows:

We had been at Centerville for two days. There was some firing, off to the left, the day we came there. The day before, two men were whipped in one of the

regular regiments for desertion. It was a sickening sight. I think that was the first thing we had seen which seemed like real, earnest war. All before had been a sort of sport—a long holiday.

It must have been about three o'clock Sunday morning when I was wakened out of the pleasantest of dreams, all about home and Lizzie, by Lieutenant G., who said: "Rouse up the men, Sergeant, and have them get breakfast as quickly and quietly as possible. We must be ready to start in half an hour. Be sure and make no noise."

So I went around and shook each of the men, and whispered to them, and could hear others doing the same all over the half-wooded hill on which we were camped. In ten minutes, there was a perfect hum over the whole hill. Every one was trying to do as much as he could with as little noise as possible. As a consequence, I think there was more confusion than if nothing had been said about being quiet. The coffee was ready, finally, and we gulped down our tin cups full of it almost boiling hot, from fear we should not be ready when the order to march came.

I don't know why it was, but all this time I had been trembling like a leaf. It was not a cold morning, though of course the early dawn was chilly. I don't think I was afraid, either; but it came so suddenly—waking from a sound sleep, and knowing that we were going to march out to fight, and might never have another breakfast—somehow, it all set my teeth chattering like an ague. We knew the enemy were just across the creek, not more than two or three miles

away, for there had been a skirmish there three days before, and once or twice there had been growls off at the left, which showed that the chain of hills south of the Run was to be the first line of conflict. Our enemies, too, we were very far from despising. A good deal of the boasting of our men had died away since we left Washington, and I saw an inclination towards peaceful life in our company bully which I had never noted before. I think it did more to cure my ague, to see others worse affected, than anything else could have done.

It was about five o'clock when we took our place in the line of march along the pike towards Groveton, which crosses Bull Run at what is called Stone Bridge. It must have been nearly a westerly course, for when the sun rose it was almost at our backs. The march was a very silent one at first, every one seeming to think that we might stumble on the enemy at any moment. We were listening, too, for the roar of artillery in our front, telling us that the battle had begun. We kept halting every few moments, waiting to clear the road in front, they said, though I never saw anything that could have obstructed it, except a broken bridge across a small stream, which we might have gone around just as easily as over. The light and warmth of the sunshine seemed presently to drive the gloom from our minds, as well as the darkness from the earth, for we soon began to laugh and talk as much as ever. After a while, we turned off to the right, on what seemed to be an almost unused country-road, and then began to push along the low, oak-wooded ridge at a smart pace.

About eight o'clock, a sort of thrill went through the whole column. Every one stopped instinctively, turned his head to the left, and listened. There was no mistaking it at first, but every one waited to hear it again before he spoke. It came in a moment—clear, heavy, harsh, and terrible—the sound of artillery, to the southward. It seemed only just beyond the thin skirt of woods to our left; and when we passed an open space we looked off toward the opposite line of hills for the smoke.

“They are at it,” was the general remark; and then all was bustle along the line. Officers and orderlies rode back and forth, and everybody began to hurry everybody else. It seemed to be a general understanding that our column was late. We did not know where we were going, nor whether we were in the main body of the army, or a mere unimportant fraction; but, from the anxiety manifested, we naturally judged the former. It was said that General Hunter was in command of our column; but we knew no more of General Hunter than we did of a general advance, having no knowledge of either until that day.

When there came a halt for a little time, we were ordered to examine our arms, and see that our ammunition was in proper order and ready for use. It had been inspected before we left camp, and it is probable that this examination was due to the over-caution of some subaltern rather than made by the command of any competent authority. However, it was a good thing to be done just then, for it gave us something to do. Soon we hurried on again. Turning off from the

wooded ridge we had been following, we crossed some narrow valleys, and came out upon a wood-crowned hill, overlooking as fair an arena as was ever prepared for the conflict of two armies.

At our very feet was a green valley, stretching away to the right and left, dotted here and there with wheat-fields where the grain stood in shocks, and flooded with the hot sunlight of that midsummer Sabbath morning. The hill upon which we stood sloped gradually southward to the very bank of a bright stream, which rushed, sparkling and gurgling, over its rocky bed, broken into here and there by cross ravines, that marked the course of numerous tributaries. From the opposite side, rose another slope, similar in all respects to that on which we stood, and crowned, like this, with the low-branching, heavy-foliaged oaks of the South. Here and there, upon these two slopes, were the regiments of our column which had preceded us. Some had already crossed the ford, and were going into position, or were already engaged upon the other side, while others were hurrying towards the ford or crossing over. A little to the right, in a pleasant grove, was the church from which the ford takes its name; almost in our front, upon the other slope, a dwelling; and to the left, at some distance down the valley, an old mill, with some other buildings. On one of the knolls into which the opposite ridge was broken by intersecting ravines, we could see a line of white smoke puffing out from the base of the wood that crowned the summit, and, at a little distance below, a wavy, blue line, over which flew the Stars and

Stripes, half-hidden by answering puffs of smoke, while the light breeze bore to our ears the sound of an irregular, fitful fire of musketry. From another crest came, at short intervals, sharp, angry jets of flame, and the spiteful roar of artillery, which was sending its "plague of iron death" into the regiments emerging from the woods and filing towards the ford.

To our left, and well advanced upon a spur of the ridge on which we stood, was a battery of our own, which had just unliabered, and was sending back a fierce reply to the challenge of the enemy's guns.

Here we were ordered to leave our knapsacks and blankets, which we placed in a neat pile, with a guard detailed to take care of them, little dreaming that we should never see them again. Then we filed down towards the stream, which sparkled and glowed beneath the sun like molten silver. The shot came screeching over us as we passed on, and buried themselves in the hillside, or ricocheted, and went howling away into the woods from which we had come.

"Faith," said our company jester, "it's lucky we didn't stay where those fellows are going." Everybody dodged as they howled by us except the Colonel. He rode as quiet and erect as if on parade.

"Steady! They haven't got the range yet," he said, coolly, and rode on, unmoved.

As we crossed the ford, how grateful the cool, splashing water seemed, after the hot, dusty march. A shot which struck in the stream just below scattered the drops over us. Then, as we started up the slope, they came screeching over us every few yards. I tried to

keep the ranks closed up, and endeavored to distract my own thoughts by attending to this duty. Presently a shot struck the ground just beyond our company. There was a cloud of dust, and a smothered cry from the rear of the column. I stepped forward a little, to where my friend, Sergeant W., was marching. As "experience" began to come close, I felt the need of a friendly grip, and held out my hand to him. His face was white; his eyes had a strained and glaring look; but his mouth was firm set, and the grip of his hand like the clasp of a vise. Just then we were changing our line of direction to the left, and the side of the column was exposed to the battery's fire. As I halted, to let the column pass on till I should be opposite my place again, a shot whizzed by so near I could almost have reached it with my hand. What a fierce, howling devil it was! I knew it was charged with an evil errand, and shut my eyes that I might not see its work. I heard a strange, dull thud, some half-uttered groans. Something warm splashed up in my face. There was a horrible sickness in my heart. "Close up!" I shouted to the men. God knows what I should have done if I could not have spoken. I turned half round before opening my eyes. All the faces before me were blanched and quivering when I did look towards them. One of the files of our company was gone!

We kept on to the left, towards one of the cross ravines, the dry bed of a winter stream. Between us and it was a meadow, where the hay stood in cocks. As we crossed, all at once the straggling woods on

the farther side became alive with armed men, and the bullets began to whistle about us. Poor Johnny Clegg, who stood just before me, was one of the first who was struck. He was a mere boy, as gentle as a girl, and much beloved by us all. He clasped his hand to his breast as he fell back into my arms, and said, quietly: "I am hit, Sergeant. Good-bye." I laid him down by one of the hay-cocks, in the shade of a tree which grew near—a hickory, I remember—almost afraid that I ought not to give even that much to friendship at that moment. While I was doing this, the regiment moved on across the meadow into the dry bed of the stream. It was a channel some three or four feet deep, and ten or fifteen wide, and formed a fine rifle-pit. Here we stood and fired at the enemy in the bushes above us. We were out of range of the battery, but back and forth above us shrieked and groaned the shell and shot, and the hot air shook with the clamor. The Colonel was in the meadow still. He had dismounted, I think, and was holding his horse near a persimmon tree which grew a few paces from the center of the line. I have learned since that he was wounded by a *minié* ball, which broke his thigh, and he retired. His successes came later in the war. His officers were so much attached to him that, I am told, quite a squad of them accompanied him from the field, and escorted him all the way to Washington. I do not know. I did not see them afterward I am sure. Those who staid were brave enough, however. We kept on firing, and after a little, nearly cleared the hill in our front of the enemy. All

at once there was a shout, and the bullets began to come from the rear. We faced about, and there, upon the other slope of the ravine, was a regiment coming down upon us. Some of our fellows called out to them not to fire, thinking they were our own men. They did not seem to understand what it meant. I noticed then that our colors were not in sight. They had been lowered, I think, to avoid concentrating the enemy's fire on the center. We were so hidden in the channel that I am not surprised they could not make us out. I did not think any of the time that they were friends, though I could not see their flag; but they had a strange, unfamiliar look. It was not the uniform that puzzled me, though that was gray, for both the Connecticut and Ohio regiments wore nearly the same color, but it was something in the look of the men themselves. They halted about a hundred yards from us and an officer rode forward, with two or three on foot near him, apparently to examine our line. I have thought since that he may have supposed we had surrendered, since, by that time, nearly all of our men were waving their hats and shouting: "Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" Our second lieutenant said, "I will go and see who they are," and jumped out of the ditch and started towards them. He had gone but a few steps, when the officer in their front turned towards his men, gave some command, and they began a scattering fire upon us. The lieutenant came running back, ducking his head, like a boy fighting bumble-bees, and shouting:

"Rebs! Rebs! Fire! fire!"

He rolled into our natural trench just as a full vol-

ley burst on us from the hillside and was at once returned. Their shots passed clean over us, we being so much below them, and protected by the bank, but every one of ours seemed to tell. The officer in their front fell from his horse, and one of those who were with him fell also. We could see their men falling and much confusion in their ranks. Their fire grew weak, and they began to move off with very little order up towards the woods on their left. Some one of ours clambered on the bank and shouted, "Charge!" Everybody—officers and men—repeated the cry—it is hardly proper to call it an order. We jumped out of the ditch and "charged" up the hill. It was not a very good line, but I have no doubt we looked formidable, for every one was in serious earnest, and we were much elated at having repulsed them. Before we came up with them, they broke entirely and ran towards the woods. They left a great many dead and wounded on the field. Somebody said it was a Georgia regiment, and that the mounted officer was General Bee. I think it was one of their wounded men who told us.

After this little episode, we did not go back to our old position, not because we were ordered to go elsewhere, but it seemed to be the general impression that we had had a narrow escape there, and had better look for a better place. There was very little like organization in the regiment after that time. The greater part of it went back towards the mouth of the ravine, and then wandered down near the old mill.

It was past midday then, and the fight was going on all around. I had lost my cap, and a shell bursting

near me blacked the side of my face with powder and filled it full of little particles of iron. It was a shell charged with fulminating powder, and expected to do great damage, but the powerful charge seemed to have shattered the shell into fine atoms, and it hurt no one. It was terribly hot, and we drank out of the pools in the bed of the dried-up streams. Some of them were very muddy, but who can resist the thirst that battle brings?

When we came back, down by the mill, we held a consultation as to where we should go. No one came after us, or brought us any orders, but we were in the business then, and of course had to do something. At some distance to the right we could see that some regiments with red uniforms were hotly engaged. So we decided to go there. We had hardly started, when some one on horseback came by and ordered us to form on the side of the hill above us, to the left, and hold our position until relieved. It may have been a general or only a courier; he was on horseback, so we obeyed him. There seemed to us no reason for our being put there, but the reason presently appeared. Before long, two assaults were made on our position and repulsed. We had got used to it by that time, bit our cartridges and rammed the bullets home and fired away as steadily as we could have done on drill. Our officers had picked up the guns of some who were killed, and fired as regularly as any of the men. A good many were hit. I was so busy that I could not tell who. There was a battery just at our right, a part of the time, before we had advanced to the hill-top.

I do not know what battery it was. It engaged the rebel battery then in our front, and the shells and solid shot flew over us, and sometimes through our line, without much interval between the explosions. Once, the left of our line was driven back, but it came up again and we held our position. There was a wide interval on either flank between us and any other force. Indeed, we could not see that we had any relation to the other regiments, nor they to each other or to us. We were so elated with having repulsed the attack, however, that we advanced our line and took up a position on the crest of the little hill. We were then in the woods. We could hear the battle going on all around us, but we were quite covered and apparently had no enemy remaining in our front.

Of course, there was a good deal of noise, and, in a certain sense, much confusion; but the noise of battle is not like the tumult of the storm, when one stands on the shore and feels the north wind pile the breakers on the beach, and sees the lips of his friend move, an arm's length away, and knows that he is speaking, but cannot hear a word. The roar of battle is over and above the soldier, but with him who fights there is a sort of silence which seems all the more terrible from the fact that it seems unnatural. You hear what a comrade says when he is stricken; you answer an inquiry of one on your right as to the enemy, and of one on your left as to how many cartridges you have left, without for a moment ceasing to fire. The roar of battle is terrible, but its silence is still more fearful. The turmoil is above and about the soldier, but the

silence with him and of him. So, too, he does not see everything that is being done in the range of his vision, but the few things which his eyes note are photographed on his memory forever. I shall never forget the sweaty, grimy faces, nor the set lips and straining eyes which I saw around me that day—no, nor the still, white faces and glaring eyes that, unseeing, looked upward to the hot summer sunshine. I do not believe I should have thought much of the roar and tumult had it not rang in my ears so long afterwards. I knew it must have been terrific, but I hardly heard it at all.

We were half-way up the southern slope, and the northern one that we had left in the morning shone hot and glaring under the afternoon sun. Gradually the contest seemed to flag. There was no musketry fire of any moment. Hardly an enemy was to be seen from our position. The battery at our right had limbered up and gone to the left, where we could hear it pounding away, with only an occasional reply. On the extreme right of our line, two of the enemy's guns were still served with some vigor, and there was some desultory musketry fire. I think this cessation of firing was more startling and demoralizing to our men than the continuance of the battle would have been. We began to look around, and wonder what we were doing in our present position, why we were there, how we were supported, and what would be the next move of the enemy.

We looked back into the valley, and saw first small and then larger crowds (for they lacked in general the order of regiments and companies), one after an-

other converging at the ford, recrossing, and going up the slope down which we had come in the morning. Half-way up it, they were met by a man, who rode back and forth in their front, waving his hat, and apparently remonstrating with them. Then some one said that a new line was being established, and that we were ordered to fall back and form on that line. So, back we went, down the slope to the stream, across it, and up the northern slope towards the halted mass—without any reason that we could comprehend, rather disgusted at the backward movement, but supposing that it had been ordered, and was “all right.” Before we reached the line, I was struck by a piece of a shell, fired from the battery which the enemy were still serving off at the right. I think it was a mere chance-shot, though the line, then formed, may have attracted the attention of the gunner. I fell, and the others passed on.

Now here is a curious thing. Lying there, I saw this “new line” dissolve without firing or receiving a shot, for I think the shot which struck me was the very last fired on that part of the line until the enemy’s advance an hour afterwards. The break began gradually, while the officer who had succeeded in stopping the first movement was still haranguing and exhorting; but soon it became a wild rush, sometimes with the semblance of order and sometimes without. At all events, the great mass surged up the hill, and the army which had come so proudly upon the field in the morning vanished before the sun went down—with scarcely an enemy in sight.

After a time, I saw the enemy coming cautiously

down the other slope. Then the fear of capture took hold of me. I could not walk. That was out of the question. But I crawled to the edge of the wood above. Then, made desperate by the exultant and increasing yells behind, I got into the wood, and kept on—God only knows how—through the long hours of the night, crawling, clambering, hobbling, on toward Centerville—not by the way we had come, but by some sort of blind instinct taking the right direction. It was morning when I dragged myself inside our lines. I was just in time. Somebody put me in an ambulance—they said it was the last one—and I was brought to Washington. The doctor said that night's trip did me more harm than the wound itself.

Now, that is what I saw of the battle of Bull's Run. I do not think we were defeated, in any proper sense. We certainly had the advantage so far as I could see, and had been gaining all day on that part of the field. That, too, was the very part where the panic, as it is called, is said to have begun. Somehow, it seems a queer thing to call a panic. I had heard of that mysterious, sudden, and universal terror which sometimes seizes upon the best-disciplined and most veteran hosts, and in an instant turns victory into defeat, and triumph into rout. I had always supposed that was a sudden and frenzied rush—a race for life. This was not so, at least in its beginning. There did not seem to be any lack of courage or confidence among any whom I saw, until those unemployed moments in mid-afternoon, when the conflict almost ceased, and the enemy had disappeared, except a few weary-moving gunners on a distant

hill. Our men fought bravely, even recklessly, in many instances. It is true that some of the officers of our regiment, and part of the men, by some means, became separated from us when the Georgians came upon our rear; but two-thirds of us remained together, and, during the remainder of the battle, had no responsible head. Yet they repelled two sharp attacks, and manifested no inclination to go backward. On the contrary, they were always for pressing forward. And I have no reason to believe that the others did not join some other command, and do their duty equally well.

When the fighting ceased, however, our men began to look around. Then came an overwhelming sense of isolation. Each regiment felt that it was by itself. We had not been associated in brigades, so as to know our comrades in battle. I doubt if a single soldier knew the name of another regiment in our brigade, or hardly that we were attached to any brigade at all. Nor did we know our commander. It was rumored that we were under General Hunter, but he was a myth. None of the soldiers knew him. He might have ridden through our ranks a dozen times, and not been recognized or distinguished from a courier, unless it were by the few regulars who perhaps knew his person in ante-bellum days. I don't mean to complain, but it does seem hard to blame brave men for not following those they never saw nor heard of in the relation of leadership. Besides, we had not even the vaguest knowledge of the plan of attack—the idea of the battle. It might not have been in accordance with army regulations and the articles of war to let common soldiers

know what the general intended; yet we know that Napoleon reposed just such confidence in his raw levies, and that Cromwell used to tell his army what he expected them to do, as well as what they had done, and that almost every general who has successfully led a citizen soldiery, from Joshua's day until now, has done so by making them, in a measure, his confidants. If our men had been told that morning, at roll-call, where they were expected to go, and what they were called upon to do, and in what general manner it was to be done, it would, I think, have been done. Though our force but little, if at all, exceeded the enemy's, and they had the advantage of position, we had the prestige of an established government battling with unrecognized rebellion.

Besides, however well-planned the battle may have been, there was no continuity of line or perceptible concert of action. The battle seemed to have been begun by detail, and carried on by accident. There was no appearance of a distinct purpose or design discernible by us, or, what is more to the point, by any one in whom we trusted. The officers of the line knew as little as we, and the field-officers of the various regiments we saw seemed to know no more.

For these reasons, I think it was that, when the fighting ceased for a time, the men of the separate regiments, looking about, concluded that they were unsupported, thought perhaps they had gone too far, and, becoming apprehensive that their isolation might expose them to destruction—having no knowledge of the rationale of the battle—began to fall back, in order to

put themselves in protective relations with other regiments. This backward movement at once became contagious. Yet it was deliberate and orderly until some time after they had passed the ford. I suppose it became a rout afterwards. It was certainly a frightened, disorganized crowd which we overtook after I was put in the ambulance the next morning. I was delirious after that, and have only a dim memory of rushing, fear-stricken throngs in the city's streets, and turmoil and apprehension everywhere.

The men were intelligent and brave, but were raw soldiers. Military discipline had not yet superseded the necessity of individual knowledge, nor obedience become so habitual as to supply the want of confidence. They needed the knowledge of co-operative and mutually-dependent movements to supply the lack of perfected discipline—to know what was required of them, and to realize that they were supported in its performance. I repeat my belief that, had the general plan of battle been read at the head of each regiment on that morning, and the movement been made on time, with an evident co-operation of forces, we should have won.

Thus the soldier talked to his neighbors of his first battle, during the days of convalescence. When he had seen and shared in many another, his opinion of this was still unchanged.

CHAPTER XXXV.

“SNUFFING THE BATTLE FROM AFAR.”

MONTHS elapsed before Markham Churr showed any visible improvement. It is true, his mind seemed to recover its vigor, and he became interested once more in the events which those pregnant days were bringing forth, but his body seemed forever chained to his couch by the dull, invisible power which sat upon his limbs. Many remedies were tried, some so full of torture and suffering, so combining the scari-fying knife, the scorching plate, and the stinging blister, that their recital would be a horror; others so dangerous to the life they were designed to save that the good Doctor's hand trembled, and his cheek grew pale, as he estimated the amount which he might use to conquer disease without sacrificing his friend. To attack the citadel* of disease, it was necessary to threaten the stronghold of life. The subtle extract of the almond-thrilled Markham's nerves and knotted his muscles with its acrid potency; Volta's mysterious fluid was invoked, and the tamed lightning was sent through the torpid members; but all in vain. Still, powerless and benumbed they lay, until the hopeless sufferer begged again that he might be left to die in peace.

But the young wife would not despair. She revived his hope, quickened his ambition, and stimulated his

love of life, by all the fond arts of affection. She was ever before him, beckoning him back to the world he seemed fated to leave. Music and sunshine came with her. Day after day she drove with him, carefully wrapped and pillowed, in the light sleigh, through the country roads, along the lake banks, into the remembered woods, first to this old friend and then to that one; to Rexville and Aychitula, to the county seat when the court was in session, even to Greenfield on the Pymatuning—to the house of Curtis Field. Wherever he had been, wherever the eddies of the great world might get hold of his sluggish, stricken life, the young wife took care that he should go.

As the months passed, she suggested that he might do something for the country which he loved, even in his crippled state—that his devotion might be used to inspire the flagging zeal of others. So he wrote some scraggly verse—full of patriotism and gush, and therefore suited to the times—which he read, sitting propped up on a chair, at fairs and festivals held to procure supplies for the soldiers. Sometimes he went to meetings and spoke, in the same way. It was a weak, crippled way to reach his fellow-men, and he almost always felt more helpless than ever afterward, but his good friend, the Doctor, began to look brighter and speak more hopefully to the patient wife.

At length the spring began to show, and one day, when the maples were yielding their first juices, he found that he could move one of his legs a very little. Hope shot up in his heart at once. Lizzie was so overwhelmed with gratitude that her soul overflowed in a

song of praise, sweeter and tenderer, if less majestic, than the fierce rhapsody which Miriam chanted in revengeful triumph over the drowned Egyptians. The Doctor was told the good news.

"Ah!" said he, with a look of confidence in his face at last. "Now we will try the strychnia again."

When the violets and adder-tongues began to show on the sunny banks in the meadow, he was able, with a crutch and Lizzie's arm, to hobble out to them and enjoy their beauty, with a glad hope making its spring-time in his heart.

Boaz Woodley had been the first to prophesy that Markham would recover. When he found him at Washington, after the battle, and talked with the surgeon who had him in charge, and informed that officer of Markham's conduct on the battlefield, as told by his comrades, the surgeon listened to him in wonderment. "And he made his way into Centerville alone?" he asked, incredulously.

"I know nothing about that," said Woodley. "The men of his regiment thought him dead."

"But I do," said the surgeon. "I was there when he was brought in by some of the pickets, to whose station he had crawled, they said, but a few minutes before, on his hands and knees."

"Just like him," said Woodley; "if he could not walk, he would be sure to take the next best way of getting on. I am not at all surprised to hear it."

"But I don't see how he could do it," said the surgeon. "I never knew anything to compare with it—so exhausting, hopeless and persistent an effort—and I

am sorry that he did it. We can ill afford to lose such men at this time."

"Lose them?" said Woodley, anxiously. "You do not mean to say he will die?"

"He may not *die* immediately, but he will never walk again," answered the surgeon, sadly.

"Not walk? I had understood that the wound was nearly healed already."

"So it is; but it seems, either from the sudden shock or from that subsequent exertion and exposure, to have produced a congestion of the spinal cord (the wound was in the neighborhood of the fifth lumbar vertebra), which has resulted in paraplegia—paralysis of the lower extremities," he explained, seeing that Woodley did not understand the term.

"No hope for him?" asked Woodley, musingly.

"Oh, yes—hope; but not a very bright one. He is young, and time, and care, and determination have much to do with such an injury. I must say, though, I think his chances very slight—hardly worth considering."

"You say it depends something on the exercise of will?"

"Oh, a very great deal."

"He will recover, then. I would guarantee him to walk without any legs if will could accomplish that miracle."

"It will require something more than will, I fear," said the doctor.

"Well, send him home," said the confident Woodley. "Here is his discharge. It will go hard if, between his

own pluck and his young wife's care, he does not get on his feet again."

Now that Markham seemed in a fair way to fulfill this prediction, he insisted that Woodley should be notified of the fact at once.

Boaz Woodley had left the staff of the Governor of the State, and, by the special order of the President, had been assigned to duty as Superintendent of Railway Transportation for one of the western departments—a position altogether to his liking, and the duties of which he discharged in a manner which might well be anticipated from his previous success in life. It involved an independent and discretionary power, an amount of responsibility and keenness of foresight well suited to his broad and adventurous spirit. His was one of the many appointments which so fully justified the sagacity of the President. But his capacity had yet been hardly tested. Before the conflict ended, in more than one crisis of the nation, he was yet to display a power of organization which was wonderful.

Boaz Woodley liked Markham Churr. He would hardly have admitted to himself how much. He was at all times a worshiper of success. His good opinion of himself was largely based on admiration of his own ability to accomplish what he undertook. He loved to promote success, and he dreaded and despised failure. There were several things in the character and life of Markham Churr which peculiarly pleased this iron man. In the first place, Markham, like himself, had started from the bottom-rung of society's ladder, with the determination to reach the top by dint of quiet energy

and sheer, unflinching pluck. He had never complained of difficulty or misfortune. So far as any one knew, he had never doubted or faltered. Whatever twig hung over his head, which could assist him in his purpose, he had grasped, and clung to with a quiet pertinacity which had hitherto accomplished its aim. Comparatively unassisted, he had worked his way to the plane on which the highest manhood fights its battle. Boaz Woodley had marked him at the first as one destined to success. He called him a lucky man. He believed in luck—so he said—though no man ever trusted to it less.

In the affair of the bank, Markham had displayed qualities which had won the admiration of his employer. There was a keenness of observation and clearness of reasoning displayed, which Woodley could well appreciate—he did not possess it in the same degree. He admired, also, the unhesitating readiness with which Markham had entered the service at first. He did not credit him with half the real, romantic patriotism by which the youth was really actuated, but counted it a bold, brilliant play in the game of life. Nay, Woodley was even unaware of his own self-forgetful readiness to do the same, because he did not stop to analyze his own motives. He had watched Markham's course as a private soldier, and found that he had unshrinkingly and unsparingly devoted himself to the performance of his duties, however irksome, and had assiduously consecrated his leisure to the attainment of a thorough knowledge of the various branches of the service, preparing himself for any contingency

which might arise. He flattered himself that this was on account of the advice which he had given, and determined to indulge his hobby, and enable the young soldier to achieve still further success in the service. He felt that he, himself, could only obtain a certain sort of renown in the war. Its more brilliant honors were not for him. His habits were fixed. He had reached very nearly the limits of his mould. He could only grow in the direction of his past life and thought. Yet he did not despise those honors which attend the successful soldier, and he determined to gratify the sense of conquest—his desire for achievement—by placing laurels on the brow of Markham Churr. He was thoroughly satisfied that the young man would do honor to his tutelage, and fully justify any hope which might be based on his capacity and manhood. He saw, too, or thought he saw, in Lizzie, the very nature which was necessary to supplement the qualities of her husband and insure his success. She was noble-hearted, ambitious, shrewd, trustful, and confident of the future. She would never stand in the way of his advancement, nor would any scheme of his miscarry for lack of her co-operation.

There may have been yet another reason. Let us not do him injustice. The wife of Boaz Woodley had never seemed to have any place in his life. She was a small, quiet woman, of rather weak mind, who had kept his house in order and never dared to have a wish or do an act contrary to her husband's will in all their long wedded life. They seemed to have in common only their abode and the one son of their mature years.

She asked nothing of his business, and he told her nothing. She knew that he was prosperous. She saw farm joined to farm, house added to house, and knew that still greater concerns were occupying her husband's attention, yet she made no inquiry. It seemed only a matter of course to her. All that she needed had been supplied by her husband without request and without failure. On the other hand, he had exercised no scrutiny over the affairs of the household. They had lived two separate, but not antagonistic, lives under the same roof.

Their son formed the one point at which these two oddly-linked souls met. His nature was like the mother's; silent, shy, of feeble constitution, he gave no promise of his father's strength. Of delicate tastes, and of tender and affectionate disposition, he seemed to suit the needs of both parents—the mother who had been waiting all her life for some one on whom to lavish her caresses, and the father for some one to appreciate his wealth and enjoy his munificence. So he had lived through a precarious childhood and a doubtful youth, only to perish at the threshold of manhood, during the winter before the war began. As a character, he had never made any impression upon his rugged father, who regarded the boy as much an incident of himself as any coveted possession. To his mother, however, his death had been an overwhelming calamity. She mourned for him a few weeks in a strange, silent way, and then took to her bed, and after a few painless days of listless decline followed her idol to the grave.

Boaz Woodley did not *seem* to mourn for her, not

even as much as he had for his son; but he wandered, in restless inquietude, about the deserted house for a few days, as if he missed an accustomed and necessary presence. Then he shut it all up except the kitchen, in which he put a trusted pair who had long been in his employ, and went away. The neighbors said he had not entered the house since.

It may be that this desolation of his hearthstone inclined him all the more favorably to Markham Churr and his young wife. He was said to have no relatives. Brothers, sisters, uncles, cousins, nephews, or nieces—none, if he had any, had ever made themselves known. Even his wife was the last of her family. Perhaps this very loneliness caused him to wish to link with his later years the fresh, young life, the energy and ambition, of Markham Churr.

There may have been still other reasons, or, indeed, it may only have been a freak of a nature so abounding in strength that his own needs and desires did not furnish burden enough for him to bear.

Whatever may have been his motive, he at once turned his attention to promoting the interests of his *protégé*, who, in the meantime, was surprising the medical fraternity by an unexpected recovery. Securing a short leave of absence, he came to the capital of the State, and, after a brief interview with the Governor, went on to his own home. He visited Markham, and his words of impatient kindness did much to hasten the recovery of his former favorite, who now made long and rapid strides towards full strength again. Soon thereafter Woodley received the following leave of ab-

sence, which was not published in general orders, and only came to the knowledge of the world, by accident, long afterwards :

"Colonel B. Woodley is relieved from duty as Chief of Transportation, in order that he may recruit a regiment of infantry, he having undertaken to arm and equip the same at his own expense."

Accompanying this, was an order from the Governor of the State, assigning Colonel Boaz Woodley to the command of the — Regiment Ohio Vol. Inf., which he was ordered to recruit within sixty days, and which would rendezvous at Lanesville. As soon as he was able to repair to this rendezvous, Markham Churr was named second in command of this regiment. On his arrival there, he found a house prepared for his occupancy, and was requested by Woodley to send for his wife, and make himself at home in it until the regiment should march. To the organization, discipline, and equipment of this, the undivided energies of both men were given, with such success that, before the time limited in the order, its ranks were full. and Boaz Woodley's bounty had put into the hands of every soldier in its ranks one of the new repeating or magazine rifles, by which a hundred shots may be fired in less time than was required for ten discharges by the old muzzle-loading system. Colonel Woodley had for some time been endeavoring to induce the Government to adopt this style of arm, which, but for his foresight and liberality, might not have had an opportunity to display its excellencies in the field during the entire conflict.

Woodley had constituted himself the patron and banker of Markham, and had insisted on supplying whatever funds he might require in his new position. To the details of the camp, and the condition of the command, he gave no attention beyond that scrutiny which all things underwent which fell beneath his eye. To Markham he had plainly said:

“You will command this regiment. I have no desire to do so more than in name, and that but for a brief period—only just long enough to get it well into the field. Then I shall bid you good-bye, and go back to the Transportation Office again. That is my place.”

To the drill and discipline of the new regiment Markham devoted himself with the utmost assiduity, gaining strength and vigor with every day, so that when the cherries were ripe in the old homestead at Fairbank again, he was ready for the field of battle once more; and when their orders came to report for duty to aid in resisting the rapid advance of Bragg in Kentucky, Lizzie saw him go almost without regret, assured that the Power which had so mysteriously preserved him hitherto would have him in charge thereafter. With him went the good Doctor, as surgeon of his regiment, and a thousand of the best and bravest of the country round.

On the rear platform of the train, as it vanished from her sight, stood Lizzie's husband—his face flushed with eager joy even as he returned her farewell salutations—and Boaz Woodley, with his unpretending blouse and the white Panama hat which he would persist in wearing, despite his rank. She wondered at the strange combination, and was not without apprehension

as to the result of this intimate association. As she turned away after the train had disappeared, and the crowd was dispersing, she opened a package which Boaz Woodley had put into her hand as he said good-bye, and found a duly executed deed of gift for the house they had occupied at Lanesville. It was just opposite Woodley's mansion, and they had found it neatly furnished when they went there, with Woodley himself ensconced in one of the rooms, which he said he should occupy while there, to save the necessity of opening his great house across the way. He had staid with them nearly all the time, and Lizzie had become so thoroughly domesticated there that it was with a pang that she had contemplated removing from it. A sudden flush of joy seized her when she realized that she was the mistress of this pleasant home and its belongings. She doubted not that it had been arranged between her husband and their friend to give her this surprise. So she wrote to them both, expressing her thanks for the gift and joy in its reception. When Markham, with the letter in his hand, sought his superior, and asked information in regard to it, he was met by that officer with this declaration :

"Markham, you and I may as well understand each other. You refused me when I thought myself your debtor, and now I have given your wife a house, to get even with you."

"But, Colonel, I cannot accept your bounty. You have more than made me your debtor, already, and I cannot receive further gratuity," answered Markham.

"But is not what I have my own? Can I not be-

stow it on whom I please? Have I not a right to give to you, or the country, or to whom I choose?" asked Woodley, petulantly.

"Very true, it is your own, and you have the undoubted right to dispose of it, but, at the same time, I cannot allow myself to draw on your bounty to such an extent," was the reply.

"Well, confound your pride, what are you going to do about it? Lizzie has the property, is pleasantly located, and is happy. Are you going to turn her out, and require her to take lodgings while you are away?" asked Woodley, sharply.

"No," said Markham, hesitatingly, "I cannot do that. She is delighted with the place, and it was my ambition to buy her just such a one as soon as I should be able. I'll tell you what I will do, Colonel. I'll buy it of you. I'll pay for it. Whatever money I receive above my necessities I will pay over to you."

"That's right. Do so, by all means, and I will invest it securely. Then, if you come out of this troublesome war safe and sound, we will settle to your satisfaction. If you do not, your wife will have a house, and I shall never feel regret for what I have done. Let it be so, and let us have no more words about it."

So the matter dropped, but, month by month, the young officer transferred his surplus funds to Woodley, and, month by month, the latter invested them for him.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE BAPTISM OF FIRE.

THE regiment was ordered to Louisville, before which city the Confederate Gen. Bragg was making a strong demonstration, while his forces were ravaging the fertile plains of Kentucky, collecting cattle, horses, mules, and all sorts of supplies, for the use of his army. A few weeks before, the scattered Federal forces had confronted the enemy at Cumberland Gap, at various points in eastern and middle Kentucky, and along the line of the railroad from Nashville to the Tennessee River. Bursting over the mountain range at different points, the Confederate generals either fell upon these detached posts or threatened the attenuated line, until, in a fortnight, with the solitary exception of Nashville, the Federal troops held only the line of the Ohio River, and the Confederate forces of Bragg and Kirby Smith, having effected a junction, held undisputed possession of "the dark and bloody ground," as Eastern Kentucky was called during the early days of Daniel Boone's conflicts with the Indians.

A state of affairs like this was peculiarly aggravating to a mind like Woodley's. Defeat in fair fight would not have disturbed his equanimity; but to be outwitted, out-generaled, and out-maneuvered—to see a superior force fleeing from an inferior one—taxed his patience sorely.

“Of course, I understand the retreat,” he said to Markham as they sat in front of their quarters on the line at Louisville, with a map spread out on the camp-table before them. “That is as natural as the flight of a covey of partridges when a hawk shoots among them. We had seventy thousand men scattered all over two States, a few here and a few there. General Bragg, with thirty thousand, drops on the extreme end of a line hardly strong enough to form an occupation, doubles it up like a piece of tape, and comes rushing along our scattered posts to meet Kirby Smith, who, with twenty thousand more Confederates, has been playing the same game at the other end of the line, in the eastern part of this State. Why don’t our generals fight battles, pursue armies, conquer the enemy’s forces, instead of trying to take towns and hold outposts? Why don’t they mass troops instead of scattering all the time?”

“Now, here,” he continued, “is this force in our front; it never ought to be allowed to leave Kentucky. The impudent rascals come over a range of mountains we seem to have counted impassable, and dodge around a force equal to their own, and we shall let them get back again, past these obstructions, with a force of double their strength pressing on their rear, and take with them all their plunder. When Bragg gets ready to fall back, we shall cautiously follow him. Instead of hemming him in between a strong force at Nashville and one advancing upon him from the westward, so as to compel his capture or dissolution, our forces must be brought around here by boats, so as to leave his line of retreat

open and unobstructed! We are massed here now on the pretense of keeping Bragg out of Ohio and Indiana. God knows I wish he would go there! Instead of being in his front we ought to be in his rear now, or at least upon his flank. He has given us an opportunity which will never occur again. If we let this one slip, it will cost us more men than he has in his army to get another such. He ought to be destroyed.

"So, too, we ought to arm our men with these new breech-loaders. It can be done in six months, and every nerve ought to be strained to effect that object. What is the use of army boards, and reports, and experiments? The facts are in a nutshell. A boy can master them in an hour. When our next spring campaign opens, there ought not to be a muzzle-loader in our army. One man with the magazine breech-loader is equal to five men with the old arm. Your regiment, Markham, though it has hardly a man in it who ever smelled powder, is equal to any brigade in this army."

"You mean *your* regiment," said Markham, smiling.

"No, I don't," said Woodley. "I mean *yours*. I am just staying with it as a sort of shoulder-strapped supernumerary till I can see it in one good fight. Then I go to my own work. I am no soldier, and am too old to learn now; but, if I were, instead of digging ditches about Louisville to keep Bragg out, I'd make him hunt a hole to get out at himself. If I had this army in hand, there'd be a fight or a foot-race devilish quick."

Boaz Woodley had correctly defined his relation to the regiment he had raised. He was only its nominal commander; and this fact was well understood and

recognized by his superiors. Had he desired, he might have had a much higher command. A man who could raise a regiment, and present it to the Government already equipped, and armed with a new and costly weapon, had claims to favor which few men could equal. Whatever related to the drill, efficiency, or duty of the regiment, he left in Markham's hands. He himself remained in the camp, in the city, or went hither and thither, on a perennial leave of absence, as he chose. What he said in his own quarters he uttered not less boldly in the presence of his commander.

At length, one afternoon in October, he came out upon the line, where the regiment was on picket-duty, and, calling Markham aside, said:

"Well, Bragg has got through his harvesting, and started off with his plunder, and we are to follow after, as I supposed. He has been gone three days, and we start to-morrow. There is not much likelihood of catching him, but I will stay with you a few days, in the hope that you may."

It was as he said; and the next day, the Army of the Ohio, under the most Fabian of commanders, began a pursuit which should have been of the most impetuous character, with a deliberateness of movement, and careful preparation for defeat, which nonplussed and irritated the unprofessional soldiers who constituted the bulk of his subordinates.

The weather was delightful, the very perfection of Indian summer. The forests were in the glory of their autumn sheen. The corn stood ungathered in the fields where it had grown in rank luxuriance. The

wheat-fields were brown with a dense growth of bitter sage. The tobacco had been cut from the hill, and the suckers were growing rank and green from the parent stocks. The hemp lay bleaching in long, even rows upon the margins of the surface-ponds which abound in that region. The chestnut-trees cast their pale-yellow leaves and the glossy fruit of their brown burrs at the soldiers' feet as they marched leisurely along the hard, smooth pikes or the less traveled but yet clear and passable country roads. As they neared the hill country which extends along the Salt River and its tributaries, the knobs became radiant with the gold of clustering hickories, interspersed with the rich brown of the oaks, whose wealth of mast crunched beneath their feet at every step. Only a scarcity of good water prevented the loitering march from being the very perfection of holiday warfare. The cool, brisk nights and mornings, the warm, hazy days, and the ever-recurring variety of scenery which the constant succession of hill and valley gave, all conspired to lend a sense of unreality to the march which only the unaccountable sloth of the Confederate general transformed into a hostile movement. It is true, Bragg was encumbered with the two thousand wagons, loaded with corn, which he was taking back for his winter supplies, and with the immense herds of cattle, horses and mules which he had collected from the rich valleys he had ravaged; but it does seem that, when he saw how careful we were not to press upon his rear, he ought to have used more expedition, and made sure of his retirement. At all events, he ought not to have halted between our forces and water, when the

supply had been so short that man and beast had almost been without for twenty hours. If he had only allowed us to get to the river, it is more than probable that we should have waited two or three days for our forces to come up, so that he would have been able to get clean out of our way.

On the rugged hills of Chaplin's Fork, however, our testy enemy turned at bay, having determined there to deliver a blow which would leave his rear free from pursuit during his further retreat. It was a finely-chosen position—on each side of the road by which his chief train of wagons had retired, his line stretching along a chain of heavily-wooded "knobs," and covering all access to the stream in their rear. An effectual repulse of the force which was pressing on him there would have virtually defeated them, since it would have been impossible long to continue the contest without a supply of water.

It was about 11 o'clock on the morning of the 8th of October, 1862, that the head of our column was halted by the imperial roar of the enemy's Napoleons. The division to which Markham was attached was in the advance, but his regiment had been detailed to guard the train that day. Woodley, with that disregard of all responsibility which characterized his relations to the regiment, immediately started for the front.

"What a pity," said Markham, as Woodley mounted to leave, "that it is our day with this miserable train."

"Never mind," said his superior; "unless I am much mistaken, the man who has blocked our way yonder will give us all enough to do before night."

Though the pursuit had been leisurely, the deployment, considering the nature of the ground, was exceedingly rapid. The gallant young general who held the extreme Federal left burned to show himself worthy of the star he had recently received, and, being ordered to *feel* the enemy, immediately attacked in force. It is evident now, from the dispositions which he made, that he supposed the hills were held only by a covering force, charged with the duty of keeping the Federal army in check until the main Confederate body could retire. A sharp artillery duel had been in progress, the guns on either side being posted upon some of the more prominent hills, during the deployment. As soon as that was completed, the general at once advanced his line to the crest of a hill distant less than two hundred yards from the enemy's line, and directed a battery to take position in an open field upon this line. He had unusual confidence in this arm, and himself accompanied the battery to its position; with him was Boaz Woodley. No skirmishers had been thrown forward, and the enemy's position had been disclosed only by a desultory fire from the edge of the wood. Hardly had the guns unlimbered, when a tremendous roar of musketry from the woods in his front announced to the young general that he was entirely mistaken as to the force he had to encounter, and had advanced his line perilously near a heavy body of the enemy, massed under cover of the wood. There was no time to retrieve his error. To retire was only to precipitate the assault which must soon come, and throw his disordered force back upon those who might be advancing to his sup-

port, or to invite the enemy to swing round his right and hold the road by which support must come, while he advanced his left, and cut in pieces our isolated right.

The young general's decision was made in an instant. The line must be held at all hazards. His first act was to despatch every officer of his staff to bring up support. Then he sprang from his horse, and encouraged the gunners by word and example. He even sighted some of the guns himself, as they vomited charges of canister at the fire-fringed wood beyond. Crash upon crash, came the roar of musketry from the massed battalions in the wood. Bravely but weakly the slender line replied. The gunners fell rapidly, and the supporting infantry was decimated, but some of their number sprang forward and took the gunners' places.

"I cannot hold my line fifteen minutes more under this fire," said the commander of one of the brigades as he dashed up to his superior.

"Then hold it ten," was the cool reply; "a minute may lose all. Hold the line while you have a man left. We *must* hold it, until support comes. I have ordered two regiments, from the right, and have sent all my staff for aid."

Hardly had Boaz Woodley parted with Markham Churr, when the latter was relieved from the command of the train and ordered to rejoin his brigade. Guided by the orderly who brought the command, he had threaded his way between the hills to the rear of the engaged left wing, when the first roar of musketry came from the front. Wheeling into line, Markham seized

the colors of his regiment and pushed forward at the double.

Boaz Woodley had not been idle. Though it was his first time under fire, he had divined at once both the error and the purpose of the general. He saw that if that officer left the battery, it would soon be silent, and the line would inevitably break and run. Like all masterful natures who have been accustomed to domination, his self-control was remarkable, and it was not shaken even by the tempest of death which raged and hurtled about him. So he constituted himself at once a volunteer aide, and rode coolly up and down the line with words of cheer and encouragement. The bullets flew thick about him, but he sat on his horse as quietly, and spoke as evenly, as if his whole life had been spent in campaigning.

“Steady, boys!” he cried, “fire low and steady! Support is just at hand! We must hold the line till they come. Then we’ll move the rascals!”

He was known to all, and his confident demeanor inspired a quiet determination which nothing else could have done.

“If old Woodley can stand it, we can,” was the thought of those whom he addressed. Presently an aide dashed up to him, and said:

“Colonel Woodley, you are now the ranking officer of this brigade! What are your orders?”

Just then, Markham burst out of the wood below, his men cheering heartily as they pressed on.

“Post that regiment on each side of the battery,” said Woodley to the staff officer. He rode up to his su-

perior, and reported. At that moment, the enemy's fire slackened.

"What does that mean?" asked Woodley.

"They are preparing to charge," said the young general, as he sprang upon a horse and dashed down the line, his powder-grimed face aglow with excitement, enjoining his men to stand firm, and wait for the word before delivering their fire. Bayonets were fixed, and the shattered line of blue lay silent, awaiting the onset. Just as Markham's regiment rushed into place, with a wing on each side of the battery, and two other regiments from parts of the line less sorely pressed formed on his flanks, the rebel yell arose, and the enemy burst from the wood above in magnificent array, line after line in close order, advancing swift and confident, with the easy, swinging step of fire-tried veterans. The captain of the battery gave the order to fire as soon as the gray column showed outside the wood. The double charges of canister plowed through the oncoming ranks, but they did not falter. Markham's panting men rested on the right knee, to give better opportunity for handling their new weapons. The few remaining artillerymen tried to drag their pieces to the rear as the enemy pressed on.

"Steady!" The word came from lip to lip along the line, while the yell of the enemy grew nearer and nearer, and the men awaited breathlessly the quickly-following order: "*Fire!*"

A sheet of flame shot from the kneeling line. The assailing column hardly wavered. Markham's men threw forward the butts of their new breech-loaders in

the peculiar position required for charging that weapon. The enemy, now rapidly advancing, within a short distance, saw the movement, and, ignorant of the purpose, mistook it for a sign of surrender, and shouted in triumph. Back to the shoulder came the many-charged rifles, and a second volley flashed into the faces of the astounded enemy. Again!—again! The column wavered, but still pressed on. Again!—again!—again! came the deadly sirocco. Almost to the muzzles of the rifles pressed the brave Southrons, but the stream of fire did not abate. It was too much, that regularly-recurrent blast of leaden death among their crowded ranks! They halted, and tried to return the fire. But their aim was uncertain, and the volley scattering. Still the smoking barrels steadily vomited destruction in their faces.

“Charge!” The word passed along the Northern line like wildfire. Whether it was really an order, or one of those inspirations which sometimes seize upon large bodies of men, it would be difficult to determine. But it was the right thing at the right time. As the enemy broke and fled, the line sprang up, with a cheer, and rushed forward, pursuing them to the edge of the wood they had occupied. Then Boaz Woodley, sitting quietly on his horse, gave the order to fall back; for the young general had sealed the record of his merit with his blood, and was lying stark and grim beside the silenced guns whose roar had been music to his ears.

The enemy's artillery promptly resumed its fire, a part of our guns were drawn off the field, and the others abandoned, as the unfortunate division, which had been

saved from annihilation only by Boaz Woodley's breech-loaders, withdrew behind a line which had formed for their support a half-mile in the rear, leaving a third of their number, and the bodies of two generals, upon the ground they had occupied. Their holding the line had saved the day, however, for when the enemy advanced again they found one which it was impossible to break; and if our forces which were within supporting distance had been promptly ordered up, and the advance of the gallant Rousseau, later in the day, had been made a general one along the whole line, as it should have been, instead of a large part of our army being held in reserve for anticipated defeat, the Confederate Army of the Tennessee would have been hopelessly shattered on the hills of Perryville, and Bragg's invasion of Kentucky would have met the fate its foolhardiness deserved.*

A few days afterwards, Boaz Woodley resigned the colonelcy of the regiment he had raised, which was conferred on Markham Churr. Woodley went on to Washington to report the success of the repeating breech-loader, and to urge its adoption by the Govern-

* The above account of the action of Perryville is given with literal exactness so far as concerns the crushing of the left division of our army, and the death of Generals Jackson and Terrell, except the incident of the first use of the Spencer rifle, which is borrowed from the fight at Hoover's Gap, on June 24, 1863, at which a regiment of Wilder's brigade, armed with the weapon, repulsed an assault in column of regiment, made by a division of the Confederate General Hardee's Corps. And, although the slaughter was terrific, the repulse was due mainly, I think, to the moral effect of the continuous fire after the enemy had mistaken the motion to reload for a sign of surrender.—A. W. T.

ment. A short time afterwards he was assigned to duty, in charge of that long line of railroad which for two years constituted the sole channel of supply for the Army of the Cumberland.

The *n*th Regiment became absorbed in the Army of the Cumberland, undistinguished from others, save by its number, as the — Regt., — Brigade, of the Fourteenth Army Corps. In the command of his regiment, and subsequently of the brigade to which it was attached, Markham Churr not only won distinction for himself, but shared the honors which clustered around the victorious army to which it belonged. They shared in its labors, marches, skirmishes, and battles—the relief of beleaguered Nashville, the rebuilding of the shattered road, the dogged struggle at Stone River, and the movement upon Tullahoma—until, when almost a year had elapsed, the ground lost by “Bragg’s invasion” had been regained, and the Federal forces swarmed over mountain and river in a counter-movement upon the same line.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

RESTITUTION.

IT was the night of the eighteenth of September, 1863. The Army of the Cumberland was straining every nerve to put itself between the united hosts of Bragg and Longstreet and the town of Chattanooga, the late-won prize of a campaign which had promised the most

brilliant results at the outset, as if to make its dubious conclusion only the more disheartening. So it was not more a question of prowess than of speed.

All day long, the Federal host had been pushing forward among the rugged hills, by the circling country roads, through field and forest, in the desperate endeavor to save the city which was itself the prize of the campaign, as well as the fruits of two preceding campaigns, and to protect the region lying beyond the Ohio River from invasion.

The day had opened brightly, but, as it drew toward its close, a dull, gray sky frowned down upon them, and a cold, raw wind blew from the northwest. The army did not halt at nightfall, but still pushed on. Now and then the overtaken road would become choked by the mere press of the thronging thousands, or the breaking of an axle, or other accident to the train, and there would be a few moments' delay. The soldiers, trained by many campaigns, would fall from their places without waiting for orders, and rest upon the roadside. Some of these halts had been long enough for those improvised meals which an old campaigner prepares and disposes of with such celerity. As the night came on, the air grew colder, and where the halts were made fires began to glimmer. A fallen tree or a roadside fence furnished excellent material, and around them grouped the waiting soldiery. The light gleamed on lumbering cannon; nodding troopers; straggling infantry, with their shining rubber capotes about their shoulders; dashing aides and busy couriers, who came out of the darkness—their horses shying at the firelight, or shrink-

ing from embers which scorched their hoofs—and then swept on in anxious search for those to whom their orders were addressed. There was nothing secret about the march. Each army knew that the other was on the move, and also that the pass to Chattanooga, through the hills that make the southern brim of the basin in which the Tennessee flows, was the objective point of both. After a time, some one began to sing, and the “Battle-Cry of Freedom” rang out from thousands who had “rallied round the flag” in its hour of peril. “John Brown” marched through the hills of Georgia that night with thousands who never marched again on earth.

With this army was the regiment of Markham Churr.

At one point, where the road passed through an open field devoid of anything combustible, the lines of fire were intermitted, and the gloom of the gray, bleak night seemed all the greater from contrast with the illumination which they had just passed through. To those who have never experienced the sudden changes of this climate, it would have seemed incredible that the shivering men who crept slowly along upon this midnight march with chattering teeth, seeking every means to avoid the cold or forget it, would suffer as much with heat upon the morrow, and on the second day thereafter would faint beneath the sultry sun, upon the battle-field.

At the gloomiest point upon the road, a solitary man, closely wrapped in a soldier's overcoat, sat on a horse by the roadside and inquired anxiously as each regiment passed:

“What regiment is this?”

He received various answers, for the soldier is frequently a droll, and not seldom a blackguard.

"Company Q," one would say; "Rosey's pets," another would add; "Brown's Racers," said another, in allusion to a brigade of infantry which had been sent to catch John Morgan's cavalry some months before.

The inquirer paid no heed to this fire of good-natured badinage, aimed principally at each other by the passing soldiers, being always sure of a correct answer to his question before the fusilade was ended.

At length, he was answered, as the head of a regiment appeared:

"The *n*th Ohio."

"Is Colonel Churr with it now?"

"Here," answered Markham, as he drew rein towards the solitary horseman.

"Can I have a moment's conversation with you, sir?" asked the stranger, in an anxious tone.

"Certainly," was the reply.

"Will you call one of your men to hold our horses a moment?" said the stranger, as he dismounted.

Markham did as requested, and when they had walked a few paces from the roadside, the stranger pointed to a pile of rocks, and said, with easy familiarity:

"Let us sit down. You smoke, I believe?" offering a case of excellent cigars.

It is strange what a sense of comradeship this simple act produced. Markham could have sworn that his *vis-à-vis* was an officer, and a gentleman, though the murky night hid every glimpse of his face, and the great cavalry overcoat effectually concealed his rank.

Then, handing Markham a match, the stranger said:

“Wait till I put my hat over my saber-hilt, and we may get a light, in spite of the wind.”

Bringing his sheathed sword around to the front, and covering the hilt with his hat, he extended it towards Markham, who drew the match upon the rough, shark-skin hilt. He noticed that the weapon was finely-mounted and of exquisite finish. He had barely lighted his cigar, when the hat was withdrawn, and the match extinguished before he could make any further observation of his companion.

When his cigar was fully lighted, he proffered it to his companion, who remarked:

“Thank you. I will not light now. It will be incumbent on me to do most of the talking, while you will only have to listen.”

“I presume you do not know me, Colonel Churr?” he continued.

Markham replied that, while his voice seemed familiar, he could not quite distinguish to whom it belonged.

“If it were not essential to my purpose in seeking this interview, I should not disclose it at this time,” said his companion.

“Is it—can it be?” said Markham, as he leaned forward and tried to peer into the stranger’s face.

“Yes, Markham Churr, I did not hope to deceive you, though I wish I might remain unrecognized. I am Frank Horton.”

Markham grasped his hand and shook it warmly.

"There is no one whom it would give me more pleasure to meet," he said, with earnestness.

"I do not know why," said Horton, with something of sadness and incredulity mingled in his voice.

"Because," answered Markham, "I was afraid you would throw away a future which might easily be made to atone for the past."

"And how do you know that I have not done so?"

"It would be hard to say," replied Markham, "but there is something about your tone and manner which convinces one that your life has been creditable."

"Yes, a soldier's life is an honorable one, and I have tried to do my duty, even in the ranks," said Horton.

"But you are not a private," said Markham. "The ease and self-possession you exhibit are the sure evidences of rank and authority. I am too old a soldier to be mistaken in this. I venture to say, too, that I am addressing my equal, perhaps my superior, in rank."

"Colonel Churr," said Horton, earnestly, "what I am, or with what branch of the service I am connected, I do not wish at this time to disclose, and am sure that you are too honorable to ask me or to seek to discover. I have sought this interview for the purpose of asking you a favor."

"You know that I shall be most happy to serve you, in any manner that may be in my power," said Markham, quickly.

"I have never once doubted your readiness to do so. My desire now, is, through you, to begin the work of reparation. When the war broke out, almost at the time of the discovery of my guilt, it struck me as afford-

ing a providential opportunity for redeeming my error. I accordingly entered the service under an assumed name, which I have not hitherto dishonored and hope I never may. As soon as I had broken away from my old associations, and came to consider my act without the color which they gave it, I was horrified at myself. I had been ashamed before, but now I regarded myself with utter loathing. I do not think I could have lived—could have endured the contemplation of my own infamy—had not the hope and determination to repair so far as possible the injury I had done, come as a stimulus to exertion. Of course, I know that I can never remove the stain which I have put upon my name, or compensate my father for the suffering my act has cost him, but I can make good the loss, and, perhaps, gain another name, which I may not be ashamed to bear, or he to recognize as that of his son. For this I have toiled constantly. You would be surprised to know how little of my pay I have expended since my name was first written on a muster-roll. Besides, I have used some of my earnings to such good advantage that they have brought me many times the original investment. So that I am able to-night to replace all that I used of the money I took from the bank, with interest, to the present time. Here," said he, handing Markham a packet, "is a sealed package, which I wish you to transmit to Boaz Woodley, whenever you have an opportunity. It contains a check for the amount, on bankers in New York, where the money to meet it is on deposit. We are going to have rough work in a short time, and I could not think of going

into another battle and leaving this undone. I shall fight better, and, if called upon, die easier, for this act."

"But you know that Colonel Woodley is connected with the army, I suppose," said Markham.

"Yes," answered Horton, "I know that he has charge of the transportation of the Department, but I do not care to have him know that I am in it. I can trust to your honor and charity, but Beaz Woodley might not be willing to grant my request for silence."

"He would, if it had not been for that affair of the cash-box," said Markham.

"The cash-box!" said Horton, "well, I am sorry I took it. He ought to know that, but he has no real ground of complaint. He did not lose anything. I took the box and buried it without even opening it. It may have been inconvenient, but I do not see how he could have been injured seriously by that. I suppose you found it in good condition where I told you to dig for it?"

"We did not find it there at all," answered Markham, coolly.

"What!" exclaimed Horton, "did not find it at all? Did you dig where I directed?"

"We dug as you directed."

"Under the second bush from the east end of the row?"

"Yes."

"And found—?"

"Nothing."

"Found nothing?"

"Nothing!"

“Did you search thoroughly?”

“You ought to know that I would not be apt to abandon such an investigation lightly.”

“No, indeed! And you did not find it?” said Horton, in a voice of horror. “What did it contain?”

“Ten thousand dollars in bank bills, and valuable papers,” said Markham.

“My God!” cried Horton, springing to his feet, and walking back and forth, with his hands clasping his head. “Can I never get clear of this infamy? And you and Woodley—perhaps even my father—think that I have taken the money, and that the statement I sent you was a deliberate falsehood. I swear to you, Markham Churr,” said he, turning impetuously towards him—“I swear to you on the honor of one who may meet a soldier’s fate to-morrow—yes,” said he, quickly drawing his sword and laying it in Markham’s open palm, “I swear to you by this blade, which bears the name of a dozen hard-fought fields, on every one of which it has won honor and never known disgrace, that I never opened that box and never saw it after I buried it, as detailed in my letter, and I supposed it to be still there when I wrote to you. Some one has stolen it from the thief! Well, Colonel Churr, I thought I should be ready to die, when next I went under fire, with the assurance that I had made restitution for my offence, but I see I am still ten thousand dollars short. The property which I assigned to my father will some time pay it off. I suppose he has not realized from it yet?” he asked, anxiously.

“I do not know,” said Markham. “Before we came

out a year ago, I learned that he had leased a part of it to a company, who were engaged in developing it."

"And you have heard nothing of the result? You know nothing of what they have done?" asked Horton, eagerly.

"I heard they had struck oil."

"Ah!" breathlessly.

"Yes, a remarkable flow."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. Did you not know that the great Columbian well was on the McCormick property?"

"The great Columbian, that flowed four hundred barrels a day?"

"The same."

"Then," he cried, with an accent of relief, "my father can well afford to pay Woodley what he lost!"

"Very well. He is one of the great oil magnates now. I suppose a millionaire, or something near it. If it were necessary he would do it cheerfully."

"If it were necessary! Has he already done so?"

"There was nothing to pay. We recovered the money, and all the box contained, except one paper, which I suspect had nothing more than a sentimental or fanciful value at best."

Markham then gave his companion an account of what had occurred in relation to the box, and acknowledged that he had taken the course he had, in the conversation, to reassure himself as to Frank's ignorance of its removal. He was now fully satisfied that he knew nothing of the matter, and was happy to inform

him that every loss, except the one mentioned, had been made good. As he said this, he returned him the package, which he had been holding while they talked, and urged upon him to resume his name and abandon the idea of hiding from a fault which had already been amply expiated.

“No,” said Horton, sadly, “I cannot do it. As Frank Horton I am forever disgraced. Under my present name, I am equal in honorable repute to the proudest. What you have told me gives me inexpressible pleasure. I can die now with the feeling that my crime has wrought no man’s injury but my own. I will take the check,” he added, lightly, “for it will help to bury Frank Horton. I hope it may be my lot to die before my identity is discovered, however. You cannot imagine how long I have struggled to harden myself for this interview. I have tried to meet you a thousand times, but do not believe I should have succeeded even now, had not this night’s march afforded an opportunity and the prospect of desperate work rendered it imperative that I should delay no longer. Now that it is over, I have only to ask that you will forget that it has occurred. If you should see my father, you may tell him that you saw me; nothing more, please.”

“And Colonel Woodley?” asked Markham.

“Tell Colonel Woodley as much as you may choose to disclose—upon condition that he promise you that he will not attempt to penetrate my disguise.”

“You need have no fear,” said Markham. “I can answer for him. I am sure that he will regard your wishes.”

"I do not know," said Horton; "Boaz Woodley is not given to changing his purposes."

"Then he shall hear nothing from me," said Markham.

"That I do not doubt. But your cigar is out. Have another," said he, handing him his case. "And now I must go." He extended his hand to Markham, who clasped it closely, and, detaining him, said:

"Ought you not to tell me the name you bear, in order that your family and friends may know should you fall?"

"I have provided for that," he replied, hurriedly. "You may tell my father that, should I die, I have arranged to have my will forwarded to him. It is already executed, and deposited in safe hands in a Northern city."

They walked back towards their horses, hand in hand, but silent until they had nearly reached them. Then Markham said:

"Have you no word for Amy Levis or your mother?"

"Don't! don't, Markham!" he exclaimed, withdrawing his hand, and repressing a great sob. "Yet, let me ask one question. Do they know of my offence?"

"Not a word."

"Nor suspect it?"

"No more, I think, than if you had never lived."

"Then they shall not until I am dead. If you ever hear of that—you will know it—my father will know it—tell them I loved them too well to look on their faces again."

They mounted, and rode together until Markham's

regiment was overtaken. Then they shook hands again, and Frank Horton galloped on to his own place in the column, which moved steadily forward to the plain where so many were soon to be gathered to the harvest of death. Markham listened to the regular hoof-strokes, as his recent companion galloped away over the sounding pike, and wondered what was the place in that column which his old acquaintance occupied, and to which he sped on in the dull night.

The next morning, as his wearied regiment filed into position in the line of battle which was forming upon the bank of the Chickamauga, a body of cavalry dashed by at full speed, going towards the point where it was said the enemy were crossing the stream. Just as they were passing around a curve in the wood, he happened to glance towards the cavalcade, and saw the officer who rode in front rise in his stirrups and, locking back towards him, wave a bright blade in salutation, and heard a voice shout: "Good-bye!" He looked around to ascertain to whom it was addressed, but could see no one. His own regiment was lying in the woods in front, and only his own form could have been visible to the trooper when he shouted back a farewell from the jaws of battle. He wondered, carelessly, who it was that had bestowed perhaps his last greeting upon him, and whether it was an acquaintance or a stranger. A fire along his own front called his attention from the matter before he could collect his thoughts, and it was not till several weeks afterwards that it occurred to him that the voice he then heard was the one to which he had listened the night before.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

KING CAUCUS.

WHILE the army carried the flag of the nation into the heart of the revolted country, a battle was going on in the rear which was hardly less interesting or important—the ever-recurring struggle of parties—the question as to who should rule the country for which the army fought.

Markham Churr, in his tent before Atlanta, thought but little of this struggle which was impending, and not at all as of a matter personally concerning himself. But there was one who thought for him, and who, before the summer campaign opened, had determined that the young soldier should in the autumn be transferred to another field of action. This was the Chief of Railroad Transportation.

At this time a convention was held for the purpose of nominating a candidate to represent the *n*th District in the next Congress.

The American mind is nothing unless inventive; and it is not in the material world alone that this attribute is displayed. The American nation, from its first establishment, has been a series of startling inventions. The intimate and yet undetermined relations of the State with the General Government; the form of that Government itself; the marvelous system of municipal cor-

porations, known as towns or townships, which overspread the States, are all fruits of that inventive faculty for which our people are so justly celebrated. But neither these wonderfully interlocked and related systems; nor the financial and political schemes by which they have been put in operation and successfully worked; nor the fact that we have made the beasts of the field both sow and reap, as well as plow, for us; nor that we have oddly contrived to sew and knit with our feet rather than our hands; that we have taken from Eolus the kingship of the deep, and given it to the imp who tilted the lid of the kettle for so many centuries without detection; nor yet any other marvel of Yankee cunning, surpasses in beauty, and fitness for the purpose it was designed to accomplish, that purely American institution—the *Caucus*. From the brain of what subtle political schemer this splendid mechanism was evolved we are not informed. It smacks somewhat of the restless fertility of Hamilton; but he was not a man to leave so brilliant a device to reach efflorescence under the fostering care of another. There is an elastic simplicity about it, too, which emphatically negatives that hypothesis of its origin. It would have been as intricate as the ring-puzzles of the Chinese if he had devised it. It has taken such universal root that it must be regarded as one of the spontaneous outgrowths of our governmental system, which the inventor, if he may be so styled, was first keen enough to discover and adapt to his purposes and the needs of future generations of designing aspirants. Perhaps the first indications of its existence were in the early years of the

Tammany Society, as its most perfect illustrations are said to have been found in the later years of that order. No, not its most perfect; for this system, which has been the instrument of so great political enormities, is but the germ of that most beautiful and effective arrangement, already partially in operation—the system of preliminary elections, by which the candidate receiving a majority of the votes of his party becomes its candidate.

However, no such millennial idea was operative in 1864. King Caucus ruled in undisturbed absolutism still. The halcyon days of the political trickster had not yet become overcast. The politician who was the actual choice of only a tithe of his party, or who was even unknown to a large majority of the constituency he sought to represent, had still an opportunity of causing himself to be enthusiastically declared their chosen standard-bearer, in the place of men far more popular and capable than he. How much more pliable is the will of the sovereign when expressed by a representative than when uttered by the sovereign himself! A constituency of high-principled, strong-willed, intelligent voters, who would never dream of selecting other than an incorruptible, far-seeing man to represent them in a conflict of principle with their opponents, by means of the mysterious agencies which King Caucus has at his command, may be so managed, and their will and wish so perverted, as to be made to select and support an unknown trickster in his stead. Twenty thousand voters could not possibly be corrupted. One or two hundred fallible men, even if they be of the best, are

almost sure to afford opportunity to the demagogue. There is always some angle at which the delegate may be attacked at a disadvantage both to his previous intentions and his good resolutions. Not unfrequently, the very strength of his attachment to a good man is made the means of securing his support for a bad one. The caucus is to the scheming, unscrupulous politician only a field for the display of his peculiar gifts; while to the statesman of merit, principle, and modesty it is the ordeal from which he shrinks with insuperable aversion. That the greed, ambition, prejudice or stupidity of a set of delegates should be made as important factors in the selection of a candidate as the fitness or unfitness of the candidate himself, is an idea utterly repulsive and dispiriting to any man worthy of preferment. However pure and upright he may be, he cannot help feeling himself belittled, to an extent that few can bear without impairing their worthiness, to know that the place to which he aspires with the purest ambition is made the price of intrigue, or perhaps put up at almost open barter—to know that his own merits are to be balanced in this struggle for preferment against the art of the demagogue or the purse of the millionaire.

But Caucus was king at Lanesville. The convention met, and he stood behind the chair and directed the eye and wielded the gavel of the chairman. He sat with the committees, and deliberated in mock solemnity with the delegates.

The question, who should represent the district in the next Congress during the ensuing duennium was to

be decided here. The election which was to come afterwards was but a farce. The district was sure to ratify the choice of the convention. Never since the State was organized had one of the Opposition been elected from that district. The majority was overwhelming, so much so as usually to prevent even an attempt at electing one of the other party. Some martyr to the party faith was, it is true, biennially given the compliment of a nomination by the few faithful ones who were still found in that benighted region, but the man thus selected for temporary and uncertain distinction never troubled himself about the election. He wasted neither time nor money in a vain attempt to stem the current of public thought—and as to bolters, wherever else they may be found, they were not there. Through all the long battle with Slavery in the halls of legislation, the truest of the true, in constant and unswerving opposition to its encroachment, was this very region. Time after time, it sent to its place in the House of Representatives men whose names will go down in history as the staunchest and boldest of the Spartan band who from the first had withstood its aggressions. This had for many years been the one pre-requisite for the place. He who could best fight this battle, whatever his other attributes, was sure of his election and re-election so long as he maintained this pre-eminence.

But this test no longer applied. Who could do most to encourage, carry on and promote the success of the war? was the inquiry which succeeded it. The friends of every one who hoped for anything from the action of the convention magnified the capacity of their

favorite in this respect, regarding it, as indeed it was, the *sine qua non* of their success.

There were three distinct and antagonistic elements in this convention, of which it is necessary to take account before describing its action. The first was composed of personal friends and adherents of the present incumbent, who sought a re-election. The second consisted of the particular friends of the representative who had been displaced by the present one. The third was a new faction, which had for its object and purpose the nomination of Mr. Latham, who had designedly been very active in making speeches favoring the war-policy and the furnishing of troops and supplies. He had been the favorite orator on such occasions, and was always on hand when speeches were to be made to obtain recruits, or any other worthy service to be performed for the cause he had espoused. It is true, his mind had not that practical cast which was needful to make him valuable as an organizer in such a struggle; and, though neither he himself nor any of his sons had done the nation any service beyond his eloquent appeals to sluggish patriotism in her behalf, yet it was admitted by all that he had done what he could, and it was certain that he was highly regarded by the war-party of his district and State. This regard was not at all lessened by the consideration that for many years he had been considered the most accomplished and able orator that his party had, and the recollection that during this period he had many times been an applicant for nomination to the candidacy for various positions of trust and profit, and had always failed before the convention.

He was regarded as one who scorned the arts of the demagogue, and, if the voice of the people could have been directly heard, would no doubt have been the choice of three-fourths of his party. Indeed, it was generally believed that the tide of his ill-fortune was about to change, and that he would easily get the nomination on about the third ballot.

There was, however, another element in the convention which none of the contestants had counted upon meeting there, and the presence of which none regarded as of importance until resistance was too late to be effectual.

This presence was Colónel Boaz Woodley, still Chief of Railroad Transportation for the Western Department, but lately from the seat of hostilities, and still later from the capital of the nation. His full figure, rich but modest uniform, the two silver eagles, of far less than regulation size, outspread upon a field of soft blue velvet on his ponderous shoulders, would have made him a marked figure in any assemblage. But Boaz Woodley had lifted himself above his former level to an astonishing eminence since our story began. He had not only entered the army at the very first, and done himself credit in the position to which he had been assigned, making himself a name and a reputation of which all his old acquaintances and friends—and there were few in the *n*th District who were not the one or the other—were deservedly proud, but he had done two other things which had wonderfully endeared him to the hearts of a people proverbially impatient of shams and of the ordinary means of seeking preferment. The first

of these acts was to decline promotion. When the President had tendered him the commission of a brigadier-general, accompanied with a letter of appreciative congratulation, he had returned the commission, asking to keep the letter, and giving as a reason for his course that, while quite assured of his ability to serve his country in the position which he held, he feared that the higher rank which was offered to him might impose duties for which he was not so well fitted, and which, at his time of life, he was not likely to thoroughly learn.

Another thing which had wonderfully endeared him to all, was the fact that he had been a sort of military god-father to all the boys in blue who had gone from his old home and the adjoining counties. He had secured their rights, redressed their wrongs, and looked after their comfort, till he had come to be regarded as a sort of supplementary commander-in-chief of the troops from his State, with purely beneficent powers and intentions. He was looked to as the procurer of advancement by the gallant and ambitious, and as the avenger of innocence by those who suffered oppression from the brief authority conferred by ranking shoulder-straps upon those whom military courtesy styles "superiors."

But neither of these facts accounted for the surprise and consternation which his presence excited among the contending factions. There was another fact which did: Boaz Woodley had never been seen in a nominating convention before in his life. Each faction feared his influence, and took immediate measures to ascertain his views and aspirations. They might as

well have tried to quiz the Sphinx. Before the hour of assembling had arrived, he had learned the strength and prospects of each faction, and had instilled a sort of discontent, which it would have been hard to account for, in the minds of several of the most active followers of each aspirant.

No sooner, therefore, had the regular organization been effected, than the leaders of the separate factions, in order to gain time for that peculiar maneuvering which is so necessary before the work of the convention begins in earnest, called loudly for a speech from Colonel Woodley. If Mr. Latham had been present, it is not probable that his adherents would have committed this blunder. As it was, however, Colonel Woodley, who never missed his opportunity, proceeded to address the convention, urging with the art of the practiced advocate the paramount necessity of naming at that time, for a seat in Congress, the particular man who could most thoroughly and efficiently uphold and support the National Administration in the conduct of the war. He managed shrewdly to call attention to the weak points of each of the aspirants, without naming any of them, but producing a sort of nameless "weakening" in the hearts of all except their immediate personal friends. "Fortunately," he said in conclusion, "it was not necessary to consider the question of availability. Any member of the party, any lover of the country, whom the convention might select, would be elected. The only question was, who could and would do the most for the nation in this her hour of need? Who would strengthen and sustain the arm of Stanton

and the heart of Lincoln? Who would most ably uphold the Government in the policy of devoting the last man and the last dollar to the defence of its territorial integrity, and the still greater principles to which it now stood pledged—of universal manhood and liberty for all?” Here the applause was tremendous. “Then,” he said, “he hoped the convention would act with deliberation. He had recently been in consultation with the President and knew that he looked for that district to send him a man in whom he could trust implicitly, and on whose zeal [this was a hit at the present incumbent], disinterested patriotism, [a cut at the known ambition of his predecessor], and practical sagacity [what the country people call a ‘surbinder’ on Mr. Latham’s pretensions] he could always rely with the utmost confidence. There were many men in the district who possessed all these qualifications; the only question was, who had them most abundantly?” He then proceeded to name several, including in the list those already mentioned and also some others who were present, and on whom this deft flattery was by no means lost. Among these, he mentioned, as if casually, “that gallant young soldier, of whose fame we are all so proud, who, by his own unaided ability, has risen from a condition of impoverished orphanage, on the banks of the Pymatuning, to scholarly distinction first, and afterwards to soldierly renown (cries of ‘Name! name!’); that young hero to whom every conflict was but an opportunity for added glory (‘Name! name!’); on whom the President had lately conferred one of the brightest and best-deserved stars which he had bestowed since the war

began." ("Name! name! name!") "Name?" said the orator, "why, it is a name which has been written a step higher in every battle by the sword of its gallant owner, until upon the heights of Kenesaw it reached its present deserved distinction, and, like a city set upon a hill, could no longer be hid from an admiring nation—the name of"—you might have heard a pin drop in the expectant hush—"Brigadier-General Markham Churr, promoted for gallant conduct, in battle after battle, from a private at Bull Run to his present rank!"

No one had heard of the last promotion, but all knew something of the brilliant career of the young officer, and thunders of applause burst forth before the announcement was complete. An enthusiastic delegate jumped upon a bench, and shouted:

"Three cheers for General Churr!"

They were given with a will, and then three more. Then there was a confused partial hush, and a uniformed figure, with a major's straps on his shoulders, was seen standing upon a seat directly in front of the chairman, waving his cap determinedly towards that functionary. The chairman recognized, and announced:

"The delegate from Aychitula."

"Mr. Chairman," shouts the delegate, "I move that Brigadier-General Markham Churr be declared the nominee of this convention, *by acclamation*, for a seat in the *n*th Congress, from the *n*th District."

Cries of "No! no!" "Adjourn!" "Order!" are drowned in shouts of "Yes! yes!" "Question! question!" The chairman pounds the table in vain. The tumult only increases; but there is no mistaking its

tendency. The blue-coated delegate who has made the motion turns towards the seething crowd, gesticulating wildly with his cap. As he does so, we see that it is the stubbly-faced, warm-hearted Doctor of Fairbank. Finally, the chairman appeals to Woodley to still the tempest. He steps forward, and, with an air of command, raises his right hand above his head, with the open palm towards the crowded hall.

“Hush—sh—Woodley—see!” runs through the audience, and there is an instant’s quiet. Then the chairman cries out, in the pause:

“All in favor — motion — delegate — Aychitula—say Aye.”

“*Aye!*” burst, in a prolonged and echoing shout, from every part of the hall.

A moment’s silence, and the chairman called for those opposed. The few who had remained faithful to their particular friends through the burst of contagious enthusiasm which had carried away the vast majority of the convention, saw how useless it would be to row against so strong a tide, and, fearful of injuring the future prospects of their favorites, were silent. The chairman therefore announced Brigadier-General Markham Churr to have been unanimously nominated by that convention to represent the *n*th District in the next Congress.

Then there were unlimited cheers, innumerable handshakings and congratulations among the delegates, a short speech on behalf of the candidate by Colonel Woodley, a little routine business, and the convention adjourned *sine die*, the members going to their homes

in a sort of mæze, to tell to their wondering neighbors what had been done, and to read in their questioning faces the "Why?" which they could not answer.

After all, human nature is human nature; and King Caucus is never secure against the influence of the "one-man" power.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HELMET OR TOGA.

A TÈLEGRAM from the Superintendent of Railroad Transportation, which was forwarded to his headquarters by special messenger with the compliments of the general commanding, was the first intimation which Markham Churr had of the new honor which had been proffered him. Soon, congratulations poured in from every quarter; but the young soldier, with the brightness of his new star yet undimmed, could not, for a long time, bring himself to contemplate the abandonment of the service in which his laurels had been won.

There is something about the soldier's life peculiarly attractive to all finely-strung natures. Poetry and war are almost inseparable. The story of the siege of Troy made the blind Homer surpassingly eloquent. The very thought of struggle and conquest stirs even the most sluggish soul to its depths, and fires natures of finer textures to a frenzy which scorns death and dan-

ger, transcends earth and time, and intoxicates as thoroughly as the juice of the poppy itself. Markham was no stranger to this feeling. He remembered, when his men had fallen around him under a scathing hail of hostile bullets, that he had laughed in careless glee as he went up and down the line, heedless of danger, and half-surprised that death should come with the hissing pellets which flew about. He remembered once, when he had led a charge on a hostile battery, through the brown autumn woods ahead of his line, with flashing sword in one hand and plumed hat in the other, how the blood danced through his veins as if the very elixir of joy had inspired its impulses. He remembered thinking, as some grape-shot struck a pace or two at one side, that they made just such a scurrying in the heap of leaves as he had often seen a flushed brood of young partridges make in the forest at home. The atmosphere of conflict was a joy to him.

Then, too, he was fond of command, and the ever-widening sense of power which his frequently-recurring promotions had brought was peculiarly grateful to a nature like his. He was neither a tyrant nor a martinet. His men loved and trusted him. Subordinates and superiors alike rejoiced in his success. He did not desire power for the purpose of exacting deference or commanding place and honor, but simply because he loved the activity and responsibility which it brought, and prized his rank as an expression of approval from his comrades and his country.

Besides all these things, it should be remembered that the career of the Army of the Cumberland, to

which he was attached, had been the embodiment of all that was poetical in the soldier's life. Sweeping along the broad pikes which wind through the rich fields of Kentucky; fighting in the hazy October under the hickories which crown with golden sheen the knobs of Perryville; pushing on after the flying foe to Nashville; and from thence creeping out in the early winter upon the pike which seams the serried hills to Murfreesboro', where Bragg lay sullen and defiant—where a new year was ushered in with a death-grapple on the banks of Stone River, amid the broad cotton-fields and low, clustering cedars; its cheerful fortitude under unexpected reverses, and that daring which turned actual, and perhaps not unmerited, defeat into unexpected victory, made the Legion of Honor soon after instituted by the commanding general a not unfitting tribute to its high qualities.

Then a few months of repose, and, in the sultry summer, they followed the flying enemy again, through the fortified hill-gaps of Tullahoma; from Tullahoma to Bridgeport; over the hills by Decherd, University, and Jasper Mountains, with their marvelous "coves" and rich valleys interspersed—across the Tennessee, and into the mountains of Georgia. Then came the shock of battle at Chickamauga, and the sullen, surprised retreat to Chattanooga; the farcical siege, with the enemy's approaches miles away upon the crest of Mission Ridge and Look Out's inaccessible brow; the wild dash when the enemy's line was broken and a hundred rival flags vied with each other in the hasty scramble up the shingly steep; the swift pursuit and the stern conflict

which marked the campaign of which Resaca, Bald Face, Buzzard Roost, Peach Tree Creek, and Acorn Run were the landmarks, and which had brought them face to face with the long ranges of works behind which rested the Queen City of the Confederacy—Atlanta.

Markham and his comrades counted their marches by the thousand miles. Every day of their association had been one of active campaigning, in a region full of romantic interest and rich in every variety of production. When they had not been closely engaged with the enemy in their front, they had been busy with Morgan and Forrest and Wheeler in their rear, and along their outstretched line of supply, amid a hostile population. They had had none of the sloth and inaction which corrupts armies, hardly enough of real defeat to sweeten victory. They had enjoyed an exemption from disease which is exceptional in the history of armies. If war could be thoroughly enjoyable anywhere, it must have been in the Army of the Cumberland, where it wore its most attractive guise. No wonder that Markham hesitated. But the tempter was at hand.

The Chief of Transportation had won as many laurels in the rear as our hero of many battles had in the front. The genius which kept a single line of railway track in active and effective operation from the Ohio River to the mountains of Georgia can never be forgotten while the history of that great movement is read or sung. The soldier-civilian under whose direction it proceeded, whose eye was upon every part of this long line, and whose busy brain never rested or fagged in its ceaseless activity, was only half-aware how great was

the work which he devised and executed. So strong and self-reliant was his mind, that he laughed at a task which will long be thought gigantic. He was not ambitious. After the patriotic impulse that took him into the service, he did not work for honor or power, but merely for the pleasure of having a task commensurate with his energies. The very chief whom he served could not fathom his capacity. He asked no questions, sought no forbearance, made no explanations. His prescience seemed almost infinite. Whatever he required he had always at hand. Whatever he was ordered to do, he accomplished. Whatever power he was given he exercised. Whatever further authority he needed he assumed. Rhadamanthus was not more inflexible; the Fates not more inscrutable. He held the army by the throat, and every man, from its commanding general to the poorest private, must obey his imperious behests. He knew it, and smiled grimly when the "stars" bowed to the will of the "eagles."

He divined that Markham might hesitate, and went to the front, ostensibly to consult his chief, really to see his *protégé*.

They sit, after supper, under the rude arbor which constitutes the headquarters of the young general. Upon either side, in the soft evening light, stretch away over hill and valley the encampments of the army, which has just forced its antagonist back, inch by inch, to the line of the Chattahoochie.

"So you are in doubt about accepting this nomination?" says Woodley, indefinitely.

"Yes," answers Markham; and his tone clearly be-

trays his perplexity. "I cannot think that it is my duty to leave the field."

"It is strange what different names we give ambition!" says Woodley, with a half-sneer.

"Ambition!" exclaims Markham, coloring nevertheless. "I am sure you do me injustice in that respect. You know that you counseled me, at the first, that this would be a long struggle, and that I had better make warfare my business until it was over."

"You will admit that I could have hardly contemplated then that you would be offered the position which is now thrust upon you," said the elder, with an expressive laugh.

"Of course not," said Markham, still much embarrassed; "but I know I am prepared to perform the duties of my present position, and I think I ought to give my service where it is worth the most."

"No doubt those are your actual reasons for hesitation," said Woodley, with good-natured mockery; "yet I would like to know General Markham Churr's candid opinion as to how many there are around the camp-fires of this army to-night who are quite as able to command this division as himself."

"I don't know," answered Markham, pleasantly; "a good many, I suppose."

"Exactly. Just my own opinion, too. Now, if Markham Churr had stopped to inquire scrupulously whether he was the very best man for promotion every time a new shoulder-strap was offered him, about what do you suppose would have been his grade in the service at this date?"

“I am sure I don’t know,” answered Markham, dubiously.

“Don’t know? Well, I can tell you. You would have been about a junior first lieutenant in one of those regiments yonder,” retorted Woodley. “Understand me,” he added, seeing that the young officer winced under his brusque language—“understand me. I do not mean to depreciate your talents or capacity. That I rate them highly is proved by the fact that I have pushed you forward, or, rather, given you a chance to push yourself, from sergeant to brigadier-general, and then, without your knowledge, managed successfully your nomination for Congress in a district where a nomination means an election.”

“I am sure, Colonel,” said Markham, with an assumption of formality which had not marked their conversation hitherto, “that I am very grateful for your kind exertions in my behalf.”

“Grateful! Fudge! I don’t want any gratitude. I’ve taken my pay as we went along. I have endorsed you whenever there was a chance, and you have justified my judgment every time. That was my pay. Whenever I heard a good report of you, or read of any gallant deed of yours, I said to myself: ‘There, Boaz Woodley, you can discount that, and put a share of it to your credit. That’s your boy. You haven’t any son in the field, but you have been the good genius of one who is overtopping those that started with him as easily as a sunflower overtops a thistle. It’s your work, Boaz Woodley, and he’s your boy now.’”

“I beg your pardon,” said the young man, huskily.

as he extended his hand, while tears glittered in his eyes; "I will do just as you wish about this matter."

"No," said Woodley, "I do not want that, and have no right to ask it. But there is one thing I think I have a right to ask, and that is, that when I come down here to consult with you about a matter so important to your future, that you should deal frankly and fairly and not palter with me."

"Now, really, Colonel Woodley," began Markham.

"Oh! I know. You think you have been entirely candid and truthful, both with yourself and with me; but you have not. The fact is, you have been making yourself believe that your decision in regard to this is based upon consideration for the interest of the nation. This is not so. The question you have to decide, and the one you have been really trying to decide in your own mind, is, Which will best subserve the interest of Markham Churr—to continue in the service as a brigadier, or take a seat in Congress? Which will secure the most certain and brilliant future?"

"I hope you do not consider me entirely selfish," said Markham, seriously.

"Really, now," said Woodley, "that is a funny idea! You think I do you injustice, when you would have me believe, in all seriousness, that your reason for declining the nomination is a fear that among a million of veterans there is not one who could so well discharge the duties of your present position as yourself. Verily, that is modesty with a vengeance!"

"But," began Markham.

"But," said Woodley, interrupting him, "you are

wrong even in that view, which you assume to take. The military crisis of the nation is passed. A trained soldiery will always furnish a capable and efficient corps of officers. You might kill every general in the army to-day, and to-morrow it would be just as well commanded as now—perhaps better. You might take off by disease every one that wears shoulder-straps in a week's time, and in a week more it would be as well officered as at this hour. The war has outlasted the dearth of officers."

"But you know I have no experience in legislation," said Markham, desperately.

"That is right," said Woodley, "you are talking sensibly now. Markham Churr is sure that he can acquit himself creditably as a brigadier-general; as a Congressman he is not so sure of himself, and he hesitates. In so doing, he is quite right, if he fully and properly estimates his own capacity. A man should never undertake what he feels himself incompetent to perform, and one who studies himself with reasonable diligence will always have a fair idea of his own powers. A man may be fit for a major-general, for instance, and yet be utterly worthless as a topographical engineer or a—a—"

"Chief of Military Transportation," laughed Markham, recovering his spirit a little.

"Well, yes," answered Woodley, "I am vain enough to think that there are not many major-generals in the army who could compete with me in that department."

"Nobody believes that there is one," said Markham.

"Thank you, General. You have found my weak

point. I cannot stand flattery when it takes the form of commendation of my service in this war. I am afraid I am as vain as the veriest peacock of a lieutenant who struts about on parade,

‘as if he felt
The eyes of Europe on his tail.’”

“I declare,” laughed the young brigadier, “I had no idea you were so susceptible to flattery; but, in truth, my remark was not flattery at all. It was simple fact.”

“Ah! well, I am not ashamed to have you know that I take the greatest pride in my work, nor sorry to know that you are gratified at the way it has been done. It is something like the respect of the son for the father’s handiwork,” said Woodley. “But, laying this aside,” he continued, as he looked at his watch, “let us speak of your affairs for a few minutes. I must report to the general in half an hour, and it is quite a ride to his quarters for one who gets into a saddle as rarely as I do.

“You are hesitating because you are not sure of yourself in the proposed place. Well, you are the only one who can decide that. Never take or ask advice as to what you can do or what you are fitted for. Follow your own mind—your ‘bent,’ as our country people in Ohio say. At least, never take a man’s advice. A woman—a keen, subtle woman, with her wits sharpened by love—may, and frequently does, know a man’s capacity better than he himself. There is your wife, now. If you knew her opinion you might follow it safely. She is a remarkable woman, in my judgment—a very remarkable woman. Oh, no thanks, I did not mean it

as compliment, and you do not by any means appreciate her superiority—not as you will before you come to my age. She has that in her which would make an impress upon the life of any man—strong or weak—to whom she might give her love. You will bless or curse her, young man, before you die. But that is neither here nor there as regards this matter. If you think you cannot hold your own in Congress, don't go there; but if you just feel a little startled, and know that it is in you to meet fairly, in defence of your own ideas, whomsoever may come to oppose them, don't hesitate from any fear that you are risking too much. Let me tell you, it is my notion that we have passed the divide, and are on the down grade in this war. The fighting—the heavy fighting—is about over, and the heavy crop of military honors is about harvested, too. There will be, of course, many a line officer who will get into the field, and sergeants and corporals will change worsted into gold. Just at the last there may be a crop of brevets, which every one will despise; but the men who will command armies and make names are already famous. Remember that. The chances are more than ten to one that the star on your shoulder will never see its fellow, unless in the final meteoric shower of customary and meaningless honors. But my time is up. Think well and decide promptly and finally what you will do. Good bye.”

He held out his hand to the young man as he rose. The latter took it, and, looking into his eyes as he detained it an instant, said, quietly:

“I have decided.”

“Well?” emphatically.

“I will accept.”

“Good!” with a hearty hand-shake. “I had accepted for you, you know, and should have felt chagrined enough to have you refuse.”

CHAPTER XL.

THE TEMPLE CLOSED.

SO Boaz Woodley rode away into the summer twilight to the tent of his chief, smiling grimly to himself, thinking that his persuasions and managment had induced Markham Churr to accede to his wishes. It did him good to think so. He knew that it was to the young soldier's advantage that he should, and he had helped him on so long, that he had come to enjoy the very act of promoting his good almost as much as if he had never had any but the most disinterested motive in so doing—more, in fact, for to a nature like Boaz Woodley's a sense of ownership is essential to perfect enjoyment. That which is his—which exists only in the circle where his own influence is predominant—is by that fact itself made superior, in his estimation, to everything else of the kind.

This sense he had, as he had admitted to Markham, in regard to his young *protégé*. Markham had been *his* captain, *his* major, *his* colonel, *his* general, and now was to be *his* Congressman. He did not use this possessive

in the sense of ownership or control. He would have despised Markham Churr if he had surrendered his own will, his independent self-direction, and he was far enough from despising the young man. In truth he loved him more than he had ever defined or would have admitted to himself. Yet it was as his own. He had, as it were, created him. He had at least built up his fortune and his fame, or showed him how to do it. Certainly no one could deny that Markham Churr, as he stood there upon the hill-top, watching horse and rider disappear in the darkening valley—Markham Churr, the successful soldier, commanding the best division in a victorious army—Markham Churr, the embryo statesman, was in no small degree the product of Boaz Woodley's energy, shrewdness and power. Well might the Chief of Transportation mingle in his waking dreams the two great thoughts of the life he then lived—*his* Railroad and *his* Congressman.

Yet they were both myths.

Men have owned railroads before and since, and men have owned Congressmen before and since. Men have bought and sold, and consigned and leased, and made and marred, both articles, and no doubt will do it again. Yet perhaps there has not been another who so entirely believed he had both, while, in fact, he had neither.

And yet the railroad *was* his, because he managed it. That is true. We must yield him that moiety of the foundation on which he built so just a pride. And the Congressman (that was to be), had he not the same rights of self-gratulation in regard to him?

We shall see.

That very day there had come a little white-winged messenger to Markham Churr, the words of which had broken down the last stronghold of his hesitation. This was a letter written by Lizzie—now domiciled in the pleasant home she had coveted as the paradise of earthly felicity, the title to which was duly recorded, in the name of Elizabeth Harper Churr, in the Register's office in the court-house, whose shadow fell upon its front porch when the summer sun "hung red o'er the westling hill!"

From this cosy home-nest, which her love had peopled with unnumbered dreams of bliss, and which was still so new as to have, to her imagination, the sweetness of the fresh and evanescent flowers of the early spring-time, came the missive which had decided his course.

At the top of the well-filled sheet were pasted two extracts from newspapers, the one announcing his appointment as brigadier, and the other giving an account of his nomination as candidate for Congress in the *n*th district. The letter began:

"MY DEAR HUSBAND: Truly, your honors come so thick that your poor wife hardly knows what title to bestow. I almost fear that the one I use upon the envelope will be out of date before this letter reaches you. It seems but a little while ago and you were simply my 'bold soldier-boy,' without distinction or title save what my fond heart and your own valor gave to that crushed but unsubdued survivor of the first Bull

Run. Then you were a captain. I wonder if that title and honor did not bring you more joy than any you have had since? And now—

“‘Thamis thou art, and Cawdor, and shalt be
What thou art promised.’

“You know, my dear husband, how I rejoice in your honors and dignities, not only because you are my husband, and your laurels shine with a reflected light on me, but also because you have so nobly earned them, and I know what a genuine, honest pleasure they bring to you.

“After all, I do not love to hear of your rewards as well as I do of the acts by which you have won them. I think I have read that account of the assault of Bald Face a thousand times! I have tried to imagine your brigade struggling up the sharp acclivity, through the scraggy oaks and cruel *chevaux de frise*, up to within twenty steps of those terrible works, and then lying there so many hours under that fearful fire. Ah, my husband, it was then that I was proud of you!

“And yet, Markham, I was very glad when I saw your nomination for Congress. I am not blind to the fact that it was a surprise, not only to me and to you, but to almost everybody else. I am sure, though I do not know how it came about, that it was the work of Colonel Woodley, or, rather, that he was the instrument. For you know, Markham, I pray for you so much, and you have been kept through so many dangers, that I am sure God orders the events of your life, and that he overruled events so as to lead to your nomination.

“Do not laugh at my simple faith, dear husband. I

am sure I do not wish you to accept this proffered fortune because you would thereby avoid danger. I would not have you do that if I knew you would be brought dead to my arms, though I shall be too happy to tell my joy when you are out of the horrible jaws of war.

“And I think, darling, that you can do quite as good service in the new career which has opened to you. It is one which is harmonious with your early training and old ambition. And then, I do not know why, but we all seem to think the war is not far from being ended. If it be so, you have personally gained all that can be hoped for by it. Indeed, if it shall give you such an entrance into the life you desired, you will have reaped a bountiful harvest from the field of blood.

“And, besides all that, darling, your little wife will see you again, and show you our sweet home, and—oh, I shall look and long, and count the days until you come. I know, I feel, that it will not be long.

“My dear, brave husband, God bless and keep you.

“LIZZIE.”

When Boaz Woodley counted himself the power behind the throne he did not know of this letter, nor did he think he was only playing second to so potent an influence in the life of his favorite. Yet his keen eye had seen what would be the woman's counsel, and he had certainly *lost* no point in his game by commending Markham to seek and to act upon it.

In obedience to the behests of King Caucus, moved

and instigated by Boaz Woodley, and ratified, with singular unanimity, by the voters of the *n*th District, Markham Churr laid down his martial honors, donned the civic toga, and assumed his place in the councils of the nation, before the closing scenes of the great struggle had been enacted. He saw the tide of battle from afar, as the war went on to its close, but he did not feel its shock again. His heart only was with his old comrades as they swept through Georgia to the sea, and then up through the Carolinas to the end.

He mourned with the nation when its noblest fell by the assassin's hand, and felt the rough grasp of his brothers in arms once more when that grandest pageant which the continent has known—the Army of Freedom, on their way to the homes they had left four years before, crowned with the laurel of victory, the bronzed and bearded veterans of a hundred fights—swept through the avenues of the Capital, their rhythmic strides attuned to that quaint anthem whose prophetic notes had taught their untrained feet the way of triumph—immortal old “John Brown!”

And then the wave of war passed by and sank into the ocean of peace, and Markham Churr bent his young brain and earnest heart to the task of making of those twain into which the nation had been broken, and which had faced each other in battle so long, a unity over which ensuing time should ever breathe the marriage covenant: “Whom God hath joined together let not man put asunder.”

Whether he and those with whom he wrought planned well or ill their work, we are not now concerned to in-

quire, and only Time, the inscrutable and never-hastening arbiter, can rightly tell. We know that they loved Liberty—had been consecrated to her service by the baptism of blood—believed in manhood, abhorred bondage, and trusted in God to verify their faith. Let us, therefore, wait and hope.

CHAPTER XLI.

HOME.

L ANESVILLE, the county-seat, which was now the home of Markham Churr, was twelve miles to the southwestward of Aychitula. By what strange chance a town was built there, and made the seat of government of the county, is probably at this day an insoluble riddle. It was not quite in the local centre of the county; was at a considerable distance from the centre of business, and when first constituted must have been equally distant from the centre of population. All these variations from true centres were entirely repugnant to the genius of a people singularly scrupulous with regard to their own rights and given to exact measurements in establishing points of public assembly. How the inhabitants of those rectangular townships, cut at regular intervals by intersecting roads, were ever brought to consent that the citadel of county power should be set up in a township one range to the westward and two to the northward of the intersecting

median lines, is a question of singular interest to the historian of the Western Reserve.

Especially is it made marvelous when we consider the fact that the court-house is not even in the centre of the township in which it is located, but is five furlongs, three chains, one pole and one link to the eastward thereof!

Various solutions of this mystery have been suggested by speculative minds. The most probable, and the one usually accepted, is that every village in the county contended stoutly for the honor, each frantically opposing the claims of all the others, being jealous of the additional prominence and importance which the possession of the *imperium comitiæ* would confer upon any of its rivals. The strife grew so hot, that it was finally agreed, as a measure of compromise, to select some point where was not only then no village extant, but which, from its natural characteristics, was the least likely to become the dwelling-place of any save the necessary county officers and the few who might, from time to time, find lodgment in the county jail. The country people, it is said, agreed to this all the more readily, since, as they said with grim humor, the unhealthiness of the situation would tend towards a frequent rotation in office, discourage lawsuits, and be an added terror to evil-doers.

So, on a flat, low-lying plain, between a thousand acres of untamable swamp and a creek whose black waters wandered in many a crook and turn through the oozy banks of loam and over its soft bed of slippery clay, seeking lazily for an outlet to gulf or lake, as if

undetermined or indifferent as to its fate, was pitched the village of Lanesville. Whether the story be true or not, the location in those early days must have justified a belief in its verity. Time and industry, however, are wonderful healers of the ills which the face of the earth, as well as the heart of man, is heir to; and they have developed the fact that this stretch of clayey loam, but just above the level of the neighboring marsh, is of unexampled richness. As the forest disappeared, wide stretches of meadow and pasture took its place, and Lanesville became not only the seat of county government, but the true metropolis of Dairy-land, crowned in the springtime with cowslips and daisies; in summer, a gem, set in an expanse of waving green; and at all times the home of thrift and prosperity. The malaria which the hungry office-seekers looked forward to with hope disappointed their expectations, and, to the amazement of all beholders, Lanesville continues to this day one of the healthiest towns of the Reserve. For the town itself, three words describe it. It was white, level, and rectangular. A faint-hearted rivulet occupied a bed marvelously disproportionate either to its force or volume just upon its outskirts. On a little elevation to the eastward of the court-house stood the mansion of Boaz Woodley and the home of Markham Churr. Despite its disadvantages of position, the rows of lymphatic maples and aspiring elms which nodded to each other across its streets gave the town a rare attractiveness, and those who had once lived there could never be persuaded that any other spot on the planet combined so many enjoy-

able features, or was so desirable as a starting-point to "the undiscovered country."

This home, sanctified by love and made beautiful by care, was to the heart of Markham Churr the Elysium in which were realized all his hopes, and where he saw the fruition of his fairest dreams. To it his heart turned ever, with expectant longing or blissful remembrance, and from it, he was wont to steal away, but at brief intervals only, its rarest jewel, to cheer him in the discharge of his duties at the national capital, until the war was over, and Boaz Woodley stepped once more, or, rather, more perceptibly, within the circle of their lives.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE T. C. R. CO.

THE close of the war left Colonel Woodley without occupation. He had arranged his business at the beginning so that it should require as little of his personal attention as possible, and during its continuance, chiefly through the agency of Thomas Horton, he had from time to time changed his investments, keeping closely in view safety, permanency, and a minimum of personal attention, rather than the mere chances of profit; so that during the latter part of the struggle he had been in receipt of a certain income, even the amount of which he hardly cared to estimate, which was regularly re-invested for him, under his direction, it is true,

but without his actual intervention. With this, he had also invested in Markham's name the sums which the young officer had from time to time paid for the home which had been given to his wife. When he had left the service, however, and his accounts as a disbursing officer had all been settled, he found himself afloat in the world with no particular business to engage his powers. He could not, and, indeed, had no inclination to return to his profession. It is true that the name still remained above his office-door, but the letters had grown dim with age, while on the side, in bright gilt letters, was the name of Markham Churr. The masterful, self-sufficient man could no longer feel at home there. His own prevailing personality had been wont to fill its every nook and cranny. The books, the cases, the grim old desk, now shoved into a corner to make room for the trim and neat arrangement of shelves and drawers which served Markham's purpose, were old friends, intimates, part of himself, as it were, and he could not but feel a sort of jealousy that any one should supersede him in their association, even though that one should be so cherished and favored a friend as Markham. So he cast about for something to fill the void, and, looking still to those whose welfare he had so long been accustomed to regard as a sort of charge upon his energies, he conceived the idea of opening a household establishment in Washington, which should be nominally that of Markham Churr, who was required by the events of that stirring time to pass the greater portion of the year at the capital. To conceive a plan, with him, was to execute it. So, merely broaching the matter to Markham

and Lizzie, and hardly waiting to hear their doubts before he had overruled them with an impetuous disapproval, he had said:

“See here, Markham, and you too, Lizzie, you must not set yourselves to balk me in this. I will be plain with you, and you must indulge me. I am an oldish man, but not in any manner broken in body or mind, with an estate which yields an income greater than I can expend, and which I have no reason to hoard or increase. I have no one in whose welfare I have any wish to interest myself but you. From a sort of dogged wish to have my own way, I have devoted myself to your interests until they seem my own, and you are like my children. You have been good children, too, I will say that. No man ever had a better son and daughter, or, I believe, dearer ones. You, Markham, have responded nobly to every effort I have made for your advancement, and by every step you have taken have made me prouder of you, and of myself for having aided you. You have never accepted my favor as a thing of course, nor asked a single gratuity, though you have often been certified of my willingness to grant such request. Indeed, you have not unfrequently compelled me to thrust assistance upon you, and have sometimes almost provoked me by your unwillingness to receive. I have often wished that you would do otherwise, though I see now that I should have come to mistrust and perhaps to despise you if you had.

“As for Lizzie,” he continued, as he laid his hand upon her head, and looked into her tearful eyes, “I fell in love with her when she was in widow’s weeds, be-

cause of her loyal devotion to one she supposed dead, whom I knew to be alive; and I have often wondered at myself that I was not jealous of her love for you, Markham.

“Oh, you may laugh,” he added, “but do you know, I never thought it possible that I could have such affection for any one who did not regard me, Boaz Woodley, as the be-all and end-all of their existence. I find that I have been a tyrant even in my affections, and have ever scorned the tenderness that has been offered me by those whose devotion I regarded as a matter of course.

“Now, there need be nothing further said. I am an old man, and have only you. You are young, and have each other and the life that is before you. You can add to my happiness by letting me edge into a corner of your life. I can add to your comfort by that intrusion. What I have is yours, henceforth. What you may have I will make mine, and my shred of life will be all the happier for the interest I shall have in yours. You shall be my son and daughter—you are such already by my will—and I—I will be your old friend.”

Only quivering lips and hearty clasping of the hands, with filial caresses, and tears that needed not to be repressed, could answer this.

So Boaz Woodley had his way, and in an incredibly short time a spacious mansion on one of the avenues was fitted up, and the Washington establishment of Markham Churr, under the watchful supervision of his masterful benefactor, and graced by his accomplished

wife, became one of the centers of society and intellectual life in the capital. Whatever heart could wish of material comfort or enjoyable luxury, Boaz Woodley lavished upon that household. Whatever of watchful regard and tender devotion the hungry heart of their benefactor could desire, they lavished upon him. Happier wife, tenderer daughter, prouder woman than Lizzie there was not in all the land. Age never proffered sweeter repose after a busy life than that which waited on Boaz Woodley's declining years. Life never promised a fairer harvest than that which had its roots in the eventful past and showed its swelling buds in the fair present of Markham Churr. Honor, ambition, love, and wealth never found a worthier trio, or lavished their blandishments more abundantly. So it seemed; so said the world; and so they would have said themselves, but the rapture of unmeasured content filled their hearts, shut out the future, and drove apprehension from the threshold.

Into this Eden came the serpent!

In this wise it came to pass that he found entrance. Markham Churr, as a legislator, was a hard and conscientious worker. Consequently, he soon became one of those on whom the labors of different committees are cast, with a full consciousness on the part of the other members that they will be done. He courted labor rather than shirked it, and thoroughly enjoyed going to the bottom of questions coming before him for consideration. As chairman of numerous committees and sub-committees, he had submitted many reports which had great weight in shaping important legislation. Not

unfrequently the knowledge and experience and sometimes the great perseverance and tremendous power of application which characterized Boaz Woodley were of the utmost value to the young congressman in accomplishing such results. Especially was this true when the question under consideration was some intricate point of finance or of commercial, material interest. For such questions Woodley had an instinctive fondness. They were akin to his own life-work, and were of that solid, practical nature which he especially delighted in. It was mainly through his efforts that Markham soon came to be looked on as an authority of the highest respectability in all matters of finance, but especially upon questions of Trade and Manufacture. In searching for authorities, compiling and combining facts upon such questions, and deducing from them the principles which should control the force of government in regard to them, he was but following his natural bent. It was, in fact, but the theoretical side of his practical life. Moreover, in relation to these he was himself an animated compendium of those facts, not infrequently of the last importance, which are not to be found in any printed volume. More than once, while listening to the debates in the House, had his little pencilled memoranda enabled Markham to make some of those ready hits and demolishing retorts to an ill-prepared opponent for which he was rapidly becoming famous. Woodley's vast knowledge of practical affairs supplemented admirably his favorite's assiduity of research, and gave him a fund of illustration and accuracy of detail which he could not otherwise have

acquired. In short, as Boaz Woodley had conferred on Markham Churr already so much of the material results of a life of varied and continuous toil, so now, with equal readiness, he bestowed on him the intangible results of his reflection and experience.

Under these circumstances, it was with peculiar pleasure that he heard Markham say, at the late breakfast which was the one time in every day when the three members of this happy household were sure to meet for an hour of unrestrained enjoyment:

"Well, Colonel, I have a job on hand now which will afford you the utmost delight."

"Indeed," said Woodley, "what is it?"

"I was yesterday appointed chairman of the special committee in regard to the charter of the T. C. R. Co."

"And what do those mystic letters represent?" asked Lizzie.

"Track across the continent, I suppose," said Woodley.

"Well, very nearly so," responded Markham, smiling, "they mean Trans-Continental Railway Company."

"What do they want, and what do they propose?" asked Woodley.

"That's exactly what I want you to find out," said Markham, "as well as whether they ought to have it."

"H'm! That's cool," said Woodley. "Have you noticed what a lazy dog our Markham is getting to be, Lizzie? You do the bulk of his correspondence; I do the big end of his thinking, and what he finds to do himself I'm sure I can't make out."

"Oh! he makes the speeches and does the voting.

I understand that is very exhausting work," said the wife, "especially the voting!" she added, with a smile.

"Yes," assented Woodley, "no doubt; but, I say, don't you think that next time we ought to run a firm for Congress, instead of an individual—say, Markham Churr and Company?"

"Perhaps so," laughed Markham, "but why should one work at all who has two such willing and capable helpers?"

"Very adroitly done, sir. Flattery is always grateful unless it is put on too thick," said Woodley. "Well, I suppose I must look into this matter. When do you have to report?"

Markham gave him the date, which, with his accustomed method, he entered carefully in his diary, and asked:

"Are there any papers?"

"Yes, you will find the bill and a large mass of printed documents bearing on the subject, in a hamper in the library. Knowing it to be in your line I had them brought here without looking into them at all."

"Well," said Woodley, with a confident relish of the task before him, "I will take hold of it, and soon be able to post you as to what is in it."

His words were but too true. He soon knew all about the Trans-Continental. The vastness of the project charmed his masterful brain. He grasped at once its possibilities. To wrest an empire from savagery, to baffle climatic forces which seemed insurmountable, to pass the huge barrier which had lifted its head and parted the waters of the East from those of the West,

suited the daring ruggedness of his nature. To link ocean with ocean was a grand achievement of itself; but to project that line through the wilderness which the foot of the trapper had never trodden, to climb the mountains where the Indian had found no thoroughfare, to defy Boreas and conquer the desert, and then to fill the silent space between with the voice of many peoples; to plant thrift and prosperity where darkness and barbaric waste had been; to join mead to fallow, and pasture-land to harvest-field, till towns and cities and states should grow where now only desolation and darkness dwelt, was a conception of such magnificent audacity that Boaz Woodley yielded at once to its fascination. It was all possible. He saw that science and daring and self-denying boldness and matchless hardihood had established that, and in pursuing, step by step, its demonstration, he forgot that his thought had outrun the present, and had leaped the barrier of time.

So the report, which he in the main prepared for Markham, pulsed with the thrill of happy augury, and caught at once the ear of the House and of the nation. What reward was sufficient for those who had shown this possibility? What terms should be proffered to those who offered to found empires? Why speak of chaffering with them? The discoverer's moiety only was fit to be mentioned to such. Not less kingly was the dream of the prophet-minded Genoese when he set sail into the Unknown to found empires for Castile and Arragon, and not less regal should be their recompense! So said the committee; so said the nation, and so the Congress enacted!

But Boaz Woodley could not stop with what he had done. The Trans-Continental had entered into his soul. It was not greed, nor the lust of power, but the ambition to do still greater things than he had yet accomplished, which possessed him. The thirst of the conqueror filled him. New worlds to subdue; new difficulties to vanquish; new marvels to perform, were what he sought. He soon knew more of the gigantic enterprise than its projectors. They made him their head. In fortune, character, capacity and experience, Boaz Woodley was a priceless acquisition to the Trans-Continental. His very name was an assurance of success. Difficulties vanished before him. Fortune showered favor and success upon him. It seemed that he was about to add to his laurels the subjection of Time itself. Already, the magnificent domain which had been looked forward to as the seat of empire generations hence had become the fast-filling refuge of the peoples of the Old World. Norwegian and Dane, the sturdy children of the Vikings of the Norseland, flocked to this new battle-field with the Ice King, and laughed gleefully in his face as they filled the dark wilderness with the bustle of cheery life, and grew fat upon the marvelous harvests which the brief summer evoked from the soil. It seemed as if the hands upon the dial of Time were about to be moved forward a century in a single decade. The world disgorged its hoards with eagerness, to obtain a share in the magnificent domain. The shares of the Trans-Continental were quoted among the best in the haunts of trade. The oldest and wisest, great and small, believed in its success.

Boaz Woodley did not stint the hazard which he took. What he had approved in word he had endorsed in deed. Whatever funds he could readily control he invested in the Trans-Continental. Side by side with his own venture, he placed the fund of Markham Churr, which had long ago outgrown the modest price of the little home, and was constantly coming to his hands, and as to which he had *carte blanche*, to do with it as his judgment might dictate for the owner's gain. These funds, however, he kept strictly separate and distinct, only, sometimes, anticipating Markham's capacity, and advancing for him the funds necessary to make subscription for shares, charging him—in the passion for strict accounting which had become a part of his nature—with all sums thus advanced, as if it had been a stranger for whom he acted.

But all this wondrous progress was not enough to satisfy Boaz Woodley and the Directorate of the Trans-Continental. They sought to discount the future at a still more rapid rate. They would forestall the ages, and crowd into a day the labor and the fruitage of a generation. They held the pledged bonus to be invaluable, leaving the work out of the estimate. A king's ransom was to them a bauble. Golconda, and the wealth of Ind, were but the usurer's fee of the uncounted possibility. So they determined to pledge this, in order to multiply their wonder-working power, and hasten still more the marvelous consummation.

To do this, an amendment of the charter became necessary, and to do it in the way proposed, the creation of a new company, which was to be known

as the Railway Construction Syndicate of America. To this end a bill was drawn, and submitted to the lawmakers. Its scope and purpose was to make the Mississippi an impassable barrier to rival enterprises, and to enable the old company to pledge and hazard to the new organization all that had been achieved, all that might hereafter be done, all that it had already received, and all that might hereafter accrue to it,—as an unencumbered security, subject to irredeemable forfeiture upon default—on condition that this Construction Syndicate should carry on and complete the herculean task within a certain limited time therefor.

The plan was new only in its vastness. It was the usual scheme of him who perils what he has upon the chance of what he hopes for.

That Boaz Woodley understood the peril of this movement is undoubted, but that he was blinded to its probable consequences, both by his belief in the ultimate success of the Trans-Continental and by that clear perception of a remote future which so often leads the most far-sighted and sagacious to overlook intervening perils, is equally certain. However, it would seem that—with a touch of his old caution, and by way of securing a share of the new profit, if that should swallow up the old—he had united with others of its projectors in a contract to furnish a certain amount of the capital stock of the Construction Company. Perhaps the lust of gain had again possessed his soul, and made him callous to the means by which it was achieved.

Engrossed in his official duties, Markham had taken

little actual interest in the grand scheme which had so absorbed the mind of his benefactor. As the months grew into years after the passage of the Trans-Continental charter, Boaz Woodley had gradually drawn himself out of the happy household which had promised to be the haven of his old age, and his intercourse with Markham had become less constant and intimate, not from any coolness or lack of interest in each other, but because they were both absorbed in divergent lines of thought. The interest of the Trans-Continental had called Woodley away from the capital a large portion of his time. At first, he had insisted on Lizzie's being his companion on each journey, and had seemed to reap unmeasured satisfaction in showing her the new regions which it would open up, and explaining to her its wonderful capabilities. To her he had for a long time confided all the plans of operation of the company, and had sought her counsel and assistance in the performance of his duties. As these operations grew more complicated and gigantic, however, her share in the labor was transferred to clerks and stenographers, and he became so absorbed in his own labors that he forgot to require her presence or consult her, as had been his wont. This association with the fertile and masterful old man, admission to his counsels, and participation in his interests and pursuits, had been a source of great pleasure and no little intellectual profit to the woman whom he delighted to call and treat as his daughter. With him, she had visited almost every portion of the country, and had become familiar with its characteristics, capabilities, and social and business life. As the

wife of the eloquent and rising young Congressman, and the daughter of the great and honored financier, all circles opened with gladness to admit her, and her native sprightliness and amiability, genuine culture, and unpretending grace, were sure to confirm the welcome she received. She met the strongest and bravest, the richest and highest, the brightest and gentlest—the best types of the race, which the opportunities of our New World have pushed to their fullest development—and enjoyed their association with a zest which only those early years of thoughtful seclusion and ambitious dreams could have given. It had come, too, as an antidote for a great sorrow. Her only child had been taken from her arms almost before they had become accustomed to the precious burden, and she had seemed for a time inclined to lapse into cheerless melancholy on account of her bereavement. The busy life of her husband, and the fact that he had been separated from her so much since their marriage, as well as the fact that she had never taken any interest in merely political matters further than to rejoice in her husband's success, no doubt tended to increase the readiness with which she availed herself of these opportunities, and added to the enjoyment of those intervals which she spent with Markham at the capital, and the halcyon days when he could snatch a respite from toil and they were permitted to revel in the enjoyment of each other's society in the quiet seclusion of their country home. By this life, while they had lost something of that intimacy of knowledge which only uninterrupted daily association can give, the husband and wife had unconsciously preserved

that freshness and intensity of delight in each other's society which is usually accounted the distinguishing feature of young love. Each had always some new charm, some before-unstudied delight, to offer to the other when they met, which had prevented satiety, and excluded the commonplace from their lives, so that they were noted, among all who knew them, as a pair of married lovers.

When, however, the care and attention of Woodley flagged somewhat, by reason of his greater absorption in the Trans-Continental, and Lizzie found herself unable at once to interest herself in the labors and aims of her husband, she had seemed for a time oppressed by the very absence of something to engage her active consideration. Having, in a measure, dropped out of the intellectual life of both of the men in whom she had so keen an interest, she was able to note their divergency of thought and character, and to measure the gulf which was gradually widening between them. For a time, she tried to bridge it over by striving to awaken in each an interest in the pursuits of the other. Failing to do this, and fearing she knew not what of evil consequences to arise from it, she had wisely concluded to strengthen by every means in her power the ties which bound them both to her, in the hope that, if what she feared should come, she might be able to avert its consequences. More than anything else, she had always dreaded for Markham a conflict with the man who had been their friend, and she determined that, if it should come, her husband should find in her no mean ally. So she lost no opportunity to minister to Woodley's comfort and

pride, or to bring the two men together in her society. Did Woodley intimate an intention of spending a few days in Washington, he was sure to find her there, ready to devote herself during his stay to his enjoyment, and demanding a large share of his attention. Did he seek a little relaxation at Lanesville, he found her there, making the home he had bestowed so bright and cheery that he never once thought of opening the mansion that stood opposite; and if she could but induce Markham to leave his duties for a season, her efforts were at once redoubled for the happiness of both. She seemed to have a vague impression that through their love for her the two strong natures in which her life was bound up were to be kept from ultimate antagonism. It was a fortunate prescience.

The Christmas holidays of 18— were drawing near. Lizzie had not gone to Washington with her husband at the opening of the session. Boaz Woodley had come to the capital to watch over the interests of the Trans-Continental. He had been absorbed since his arrival in arranging for the passage of the amended charter. Markham, equally engaged, in the duties of an important political chairmanship, had paid but little attention to that which engrossed the mind of his friend. Other members of Congress had been interviewed and courted by Woodley and his coadjutors; had been plied with argument and persuasion, until the view which it was desired that they should adopt had, it was believed, become fixed and ineradicable in the minds of the requisite majority. As to General Churr, as will appear, he was supposed to need no attention.

Markham knew that such a bill was pending. He had read it, and, looking at it coolly, had thought its provisions unwise. However, as he had not been consulted, and was, beside, much pressed for time to attend to matters more peculiarly in his immediate line of duty, he had given it little thought, and had intended merely to act upon it according to the judgment he might form from the report of the committee charged with its consideration and the developments that might arise in the debate. It had not even occurred to him that Boaz Woodley could have any especial interest in it, or that his interest might be contrary to the dictates of sound policy and absolute right.

One night, just before the matter was to come up, Woodley came into the library, after the usual flood of callers had retired, and found Markham reading the report.

“Ah!” he said, with evident pleasure, “I am glad to see you reading that. We have both been so busy that I have had no chance to speak to you about it until now. It comes up for action to-morrow, and I want to post you on a few points about the bill. We do not anticipate any serious opposition. The matter has been worked very quietly, and those whose interest it might be to oppose us have not yet waked up to that interest, or have not joined upon any common ground of hostility. I have taken care of that. There are a few who may oppose, but they have not studied the matter closely enough to do so with any effect. It may be necessary, however, to have a few speeches in reply, just to give *éclat* to the thing, and in order to prevent any depression of the stock.

"But, Colonel," began Markham.

"Hold on," said Woodley. "It won't do for you to take too active a part, because of your intimate relations with me. It would be said that I put you up to it, and all that, you know. It may be fairly presumed, however, from this very fact, that you are better informed in regard to all matters affecting the Trans-Continental than any other man in the House. This is not exactly true, because you have been busy about other matters. I have not let on as to that, however, as it was not necessary that I should. I can put you up to everything that is necessary to answer all their arguments in a very brief time. It has, therefore, been rather tacitly understood that if there is any fight, after two or three speeches on each side, you will take the floor and just skin the opposition in your own peculiarly happy style. That is your *forte*, Markham," he continued, laughing. "I think I would rather hear you riddle an opponent, when you know your ground thoroughly, (as you generally do,) and he has been going it blind, than anything I know of. There is no one who can begin to equal you in that."

"Thanks," said Markham, smiling, "but suppose I can't do it?"

"Cannot do what? I tell you, you can do it, and you must do it. I have promised that already."

"You misunderstand me, Colonel," said Markham. "I don't refer to the speech, but suppose I should oppose the bill?"

"Suppose the devil should turn saint," laughed Woodley.

"Really," said Markham, flushing, "I do not see why you should laugh. I do not think the bill ought to pass!"

"What!" exclaimed Woodley, as he stared at the Congressman in amazement.

"I do not think the bill ought to pass," said Markham, testily.

"You are not in earnest, Markham?" said Woodley, still gazing at him in wonder.

"Indeed I am!"

"What! You think of opposing that bill? You have not read it!"

"Yes, I have, and carefully, too; and the report of the committee upon it."

"And you mean to oppose it?"

"Why, certainly; that is what it seems to me I ought to do."

"My God!" said Woodley, as he got up and walked once or twice across the floor. Then, turning abruptly upon Markham, he asked, in a low, suppressed monotone, while his face worked and his eyes glowed with excitement:

"Will you tell me why you intend to do so?"

"Certainly," said Markham, hardly noticing his agitation; "the time allowed for redemption of the lien created is entirely too short."

"Excellent!" said Woodley. "Do you know who drew that bill?"

"I do not."

"The President of the Trans-Continental Railway Company."

“Indeed!”

“Yes, *indeed!* I suppose you will allow that he ought to know what he is about?”

“Yes; but,” with hesitation, “you do not expect to be able to pay the debt off in the time named?”

“Suppose we could get the money on no other condition?” asked Woodley, hoarsely.

“Then why not continue as you have so well begun?”

“It would take ten years to complete the road through. Under this plan it will be done in three.”

“Well?”

“Well!” said Woodley, with impatience. “Here, can you not see that time is the essence of our success? Look here!” He drew Markham to a map which hung upon the wall, and swept his finger over it rapidly, as he continued: “While we are waiting, and slowly working, a road will be built from this point, and another from this, and a third from here, all sweeping down and converging in our great rival. Then, of what good will it be to complete our line? The country which should be our richest feeder will have been tapped a half-dozen times, and sucked as dry as a squeezed orange.”

“Still, with its magnificent domain, the road would be sure to pay, in time?”

“Probably it might,” said Woodley, “if it could hold out; but as a line of traffic and commerce, it would be greatly crippled both by the delay and by the failure of this bill to pass.”

“But, Colonel Woodley, it would not be right to

expose the stockholders to almost certain loss to hold that advantage."

"They are not complaining."

"Very true. I cannot understand why they do not; but that does not relieve me from the duty of trying to protect their rights when I see them threatened?"

"You do not, you *cannot* mean what you say, Markham. You just do it to try me. It is a grim joke. Only say it is, Markham, and relieve me. Do you not see how I am suffering?" and the great, strong old man put his hand on the shoulder of the younger one and looked into his face, with a countenance full of beseeching.

"I am sorry that my sense of duty should contravene your wishes, Colonel Woodley," responded Markham, firmly.

"Do you know, Markham Churr, who has the greatest personal interest in the passage of this bill?"

"I hope it will not affect you so seriously as you anticipate," said Markham, anxiously, as he resumed his seat.

"Oh, do not mind me. Do not stop to consider me at all, I pray," said the other, with a sneer. "Boaz Woodley will take care of himself!"

"I am glad to hear you say that," said Markham, coolly.

"Oh, yes; you show a great regard for my interest, considering what I have done for you—"

"Colonel Woodley,—"*interrupted* Markham.

"Don't stop to protest. I don't want to hear your miserable excuses, but I wish to say that there is an-

other besides myself whose interest, honor—aye, whose very life, so far as concerns anything that may be worth living for—is bound up in the success of this bill!”

“Indeed! and who is that?” asked Markham, with interest.

“That man, sir,” said Woodley—as he bent over Markham, and shook his finger in his face, while his lips grew livid, and his countenance was distorted with passion—“that man, sir, is the *Honorable Markham Churr!*”

“What!” exclaimed Markham, starting up. “What do you mean?”

“Ah, yes,” sneered Woodley, “you are alive, you are awake, now. When only Boaz Woodley was to suffer, when only the man who has made you what you are was likely to go down, you could prate about your ‘conscience’ and your ‘duty.’ But, now it is yourself, you begin to wish for explanation! While I only conferred favors, while my brain conceived and my hand executed schemes for your advancement and success, you were complaisant enough; but when, for the first time, I preferred a request—even when I ask but the poor meed of your silence—you refuse me without a moment’s hesitation, and only prate about your ‘duty.’ Markham Churr, I am glad I have found you out, as the base ingrate that you are.”

“Stop, Colonel Woodley! I will not listen to such language from you.”

“Ah,” said Woodley, “pardon me; I had forgotten. You are the *Honorable Markham Churr*, and I am only Boaz Woodley! Our relations have changed since we

first met! I will be mild," he said, hoarsely; "but allow me to say to you, in all candor, that every cent that you have, and a liability amounting to many thousands more than you possess, is dependent on the success of this bill. If it fails to pass, you are a beggar—not only a beggar, but a hopeless insolvent—and Boaz Woodley is your creditor."

"What do you mean, Colonel Woodley?" asked Markham, in amazement.

"I mean, sir, that, by your permission and under your authority, I have invested for you, and in your name, every cent you have ever put into my hands in the Trans-Continental Railway Company. I mean that, acting still by your permission, I have advanced several thousand dollars to secure stock yet but partially paid up, and which stands in your name."

"There must be some mistake!" said Markham.

"Mistake!" sneered Woodley. "You well know that Boaz Woodley does not make mistakes in matters of business. I can show you my book of account in a moment. It is true, I did it on my own judgment, but I did it for your advantage, even as if you had been as I counted you then—my son. I put your money where I put my own."

"I do not doubt it. I do not question your motive or sincerity for an instant," said Markham, interrupting.

"Oh, you do not? You know me too well! But this is not all. The day you open your lips to oppose this bill—nay, the day you refuse to advocate its passage—you are not only a pauper—you and your pretty wife—but all these comfortable surroundings, which

came from my bounty, will disappear, the fortune you have no doubt anticipated will vanish, and Boaz Woodley will be your enemy. Do you hear? You have known me as a friend. How do you like the prospect of having me for a foe?"

Markham had sunk into a chair, and, with his head leaning on one hand, was gazing into the fire.

"I shall be very sorry," he said, after a moment.

"You will be sorry, eh? Perhaps you would rather support the bill?"

"I wish I could! God knows I wish I could!" said Markham, in a voice of agony.

"You *shall* do it, Markham Churr," hissed Woodley in his ear, "or I will blast your good name, and make you an outcast—a thing to be hated and despised for all time by all good men, by all honest men!"

"You cannot! You dare not! I defy you!" said Markham, springing to his feet.

"You do! Let me but show my bank-book; let me but trace our relations for ten years; let the fact but be known that all this luxury was furnished by the President of the Trans-Continental; let it be recalled that you were the chairman of the committee who first reported in its favor; and then let it be hinted that you threatened me, that you tried to compel me to make over to you in fee the bulk of the estate I had already bequeathed to you by my will, duly executed, as the price of your support in this crisis of the enterprise in which my fortune, my ambition, my all, is bound up, and who do you suppose would listen to your paltering professions of duty?"

“O, God!” groaned Markham, as he sank into the chair, and put his hands over his eyes to shut out the dreadful picture.

“Do you understand what my enmity means?” said Woodley, quietly.

“Yes, yes! Go away! Leave me alone!” moaned the distracted man.

Boaz Woodley went to the door, glanced back, half-pityingly, hesitated a moment, and then returned, and put his hand on his shoulder.

“It is not too late, Markham,” he said, not unkindly. “Only say you will do what must be done, and I will cancel this debt, take the shares off your hands, and everything shall go on as it was before. Come, now, remember your wife!”

A shudder passed through the young man’s frame as he cried out, piteously:

“Go! go! Leave me alone! Let me think!”

“But to-morrow”—began the other.

“Wait till it comes!” said Markham, starting to his feet, with a look of defiance.

Boaz Woodley went out, and left him to wrestle with his agony alone. “What shall I do?” he cried, as the door closed upon him; and momentarily through that night of horror the question rushed through his crazed brain. The morrow came, and found it unanswered. When the House met, it was found that the sickness of the chairman of the committee would prevent the report being taken up that day. So it was made a special order for the first Tuesday after the recess.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ENMESHED.

SO, with this burden on his heart, Markham went to his home for the Christmas holidays. It met his consciousness in everything. When he looked out of the window of the train, he saw the question staring him in the face from every snow-draped field and hillside. The sound of the train, as it swept over the frozen, ringing rails, shaped itself into that horrid inquiry. As he neared his home, every familiar object seemed to be inscribed with it. When he stopped at the nearest station, and felt his wife's warm arms about his neck, and warmer kisses on his lips; when he stepped into his elegant sleigh, and drove his splendid bays along the beaten road, with his wife's eyes full of joy as she sat beside him, and her tones overflowing with abounding love; in her sweet sitting-room at home; at the faultless table which awaited him; in the cosy parlor, with the few friends familiar enough to drop in upon him even at that early hour of his coming—everywhere the same thing confronted and pre-occupied him. Neither Lizzie's bright eyes and loving ways, nor the congratulations of friends, nor home comforts, nor familiar scenes, nor all of these could drive from his heart and brain the horrid specter.

It was terrible! One little word making all the dif-

ference between wealth and poverty—honor and disgrace—and (how strangely things had become commingled!) wrong and right!

“*Yes,*” or “*No.*”

Three letters or two. That was all the difference—only one letter. And the sound? One was thin and sibilant! Just the word for a coward! It would come easily from lips which dare not attempt the masculine strength and openness of the other. He despised himself that he should hesitate; and, still despising, hesitated still!

He had loved honor and preferment more perhaps than he knew. Place and rank were prized by him, as they indicated the esteem of his fellows. He was proud of his position and eminence as a Congressman, chiefly because it was an exponent of the people's regard. He valued the good will of all, high or low, rich or poor, good or bad. He disliked to offend any; yet his regard for approval varied greatly in degree. Having a cultivated judgment, he realized fully that the esteem of the good was worth infinitely more than the regard of the bad. He said to himself that he loved the right, and did what was right because it was right; but it may be doubted if the approval of the best and wisest had not quite as much to do with what he considered his conscience as his own conviction had. And if it did, he was not the first who had deceived himself in this regard. The approval of the best of men is no ignoble motive. Indeed, it is second only to the highest. He that puts his own conviction above that of all his fellows, as a rule and guide of action,

may be strong though he is more likely to be counted stubborn. Besides, it is an amazing piece of egotism for a man to hold his own judgment and inclination higher than those of all others. He may be right in so doing; his thought and instincts may be truer than all humanity beside; but modesty is not likely to be a characteristic of the man who believes it.

Such men, fortunately for mankind, are rare, exceptional, monstrous. In morals, as in physics, the mind seeks for a criterion, a standard of comparison, outside of itself. In determining the quality of an act, the mind instinctively measures it by the appreciation of some other mind.

What will my friends, my enemies, the world in general, or some portion of that with which I am directly related, or some atom of the universal intelligence whom I revere or admire—what will *these* say of it?—is the usual gauge of action, the ordinary measure of conscience. The child thinks of his mother's approval, and his conscience is appeased with what will secure it; the youth, his teacher's or sweetheart's; the man, his wife's, friends', or exemplar's.

"What would Cato do?" asked the Roman; and when the question was answered, his doubt was solved.

Abstract right or wrong, as a standard of action, has no existence. The human mind may speculate on it, but cannot use it; may play with the abstract, but must work with the concrete. Acts are measured, and motives adjusted, by their fitness and harmony with certain characters and attributes. The highest of these standards is God, from whom they fall away in swiftly-

diminishing excellence down to the lowest of brutified mortals that has a solitary individual lower and weaker than himself to look up to him.

While Markham Churr's conscience was attuned to a high standard, yet it was infinitely below the highest.

Lizzie saw the struggle which was going on in her husband's mind, though she did not know the cause. Rightly regarding her love as the one link which consciously united her husband's soul to thoughts above this world, she strove to freshen and brighten that love, in order that it might be at its best when the final strain came to be put upon it. Somehow, she had a conviction that it would come very soon. She did not know why, but she felt that the struggle she had so long feared—between herself and Boaz Woodley (or, rather, between the two forces they represented), for the ascendancy in the spirit of Markham—was at hand. She forebore to question her husband, but did not fail to seek strength and inspiration from the highest Source.

So she clothed her face in smiles, and filled her eyes with the witching gayety of the olden time. It was strange, but she even thanked God for the little mound in the church-yard, which she had so often watched with regretful, almost rebellious, tears. She had so longed, so fervently prayed for a son who should bear his father's image, who should unfold, beneath her unceasing care, all his best traits, and whose manhood should be a noble rivalry of his father's heroism and fame! During the terrible dreary days when her Markham had been loaned to the country, and was doing his knightly devoir on the field of battle, this was at first

her hourly dream, then her cherished hope, and, finally, her perfected joy. Oh! what a blissful dream it had been, while her husband scaled the dangerous heights of Fame, to traverse alone the perilous valley of Maternity. Her way was lightened by a radiant hope. Fear came only as fleeting cloudlets across a summer's sky, to make the brightness still more enchanting. She would not tell her hero, lest his heart should feel apprehension for her. She would show him that she, too, had something of heroic stuff in her soul—that she was worthy of the soldier arm and heart with which she was mated. She burned to let him know the tender secret, and her letters had overflowed with sweet, wifely innuendoes, from which she half-hoped he would guess the truth. But he did not. He only read right on, man-like, ignoring the love-riddles upon the pages he perused, or, if he caught a hint of some new beauty in her letters, it was only as one unconsciously catches the fragrance of the flowers which his foot crushes in an evening walk, or forgetfully hums the refrain of a familiar air, unconscious of the tribute which his lips pay to pleasant memories.

So, when he came from the tented field and found her pale, but radiant, and saw slumbering in her bosom the mystical fruitage of their love, his heart went out in redoubled tenderness to her—his wife—but gave only a formal, half-jealous welcome, to the “little stranger.” His heart had not been prepared for paternity. Neither its joys nor its sorrows could touch him deeply.

And when, after a few weeks—quickly and painlessly, it seemed—the little life was exhaled, and the

little mound in the church-yard reared, the love which she had lavished on the child turned gradually to her husband; and, as year by year had since elapsed, her life had centered more and more completely in his. As for him, his love was undivided. He had no other on whom to lavish his affections.

She thanked God—now that she saw her husband's soul beating over dangerous seas, battling with deep waters—that there was no one upon earth to divide their love. She thought she saw the hand of God in it, and was rejoiced that He should make her an instrument in the great good for which she hoped. She believed, too, that the little life which had mingled with the Infinite, the fair first-fruits of their love, was a sort of offering, which would incline the ever-open ear yet the more readily to her prayer, and perhaps be the means of impressing upon her husband's heart the exceeding beauty of the promise: "and a little child shall lead them."

So she prayed, and smiled, and prattled, pouring the precious ointment of her love upon the feet of her lord, and forgetting not also to be "careful about many things," that, perchance, the sweets of home might lead his buffeted soul to think upon the restfulness and peace of "a home not made with hands."

CHAPTER XLIV.

DEEP ANSWERETH TO DEEP.

SO the days went on, until the Sabbath came, and all the people crowded to one or the other of the three white-walled, taper-spired sanctuaries which stood about the square, as if to guard the public morals from the taint to be expected from the court-house in the middle, and the one bar-room of the town, whose owner had the amazing temerity to put it in point-blank range of all three, on the fourth side of the enclosure in which the temple of Justice stood. To one of these plain, uncushioned edifices, as severe in their inner decoration as they were unattractive in their exterior, went Markham and Lizzie Churr: she, to pray unceasingly for her husband, whose soul she was then certain was beleaguered by some sore temptation; and he, to wonder at her simple faith, and ponder the terrible problem which was preying upon his life. He began to realize how it was that people became insane. His thoughts would run on nothing else, do what he would. All the time he seemed to hear that dreaded formulary from the Speaker's chair:

“The question occurs upon the bill entitled ‘An Act to amend an Act to incorporate the Trans-Continental Railway Company,’ upon its third and last reading.”

Upon this the gentleman from — calls the previous question.

“You that favor the call of the previous question will rise, stand, and be counted.”

A sufficient number up.

“You that favor the passage of the bill, upon its third and last reading, will, when your names are called, answer ‘Aye;’ and those opposed will, when their names are called, answer ‘No.’ The Clerk will call the roll.”

And then he heard the stentorian monotone of the Clerk as he came on down the list of names preceding that of Markham Churr, with the alternating “Aye” and “No” given in response.

What should he say when his name would be called?

He asked himself the question every minute; and after thus repeating it for myriads of times, he was yet undetermined as to the answer.

He did not come to church to pray. Perhaps he would have prayed if he had known how; but the capacity of offering petitions for aid to an unseen Power is almost lost by long disuse; and perhaps Markham Churr had never in his life really uttered an articulate prayer, a genuine cry for divine help. Of course, he had, at different times, used formal, stated prayers; but a prayer, in the sense of an outgushing intercession to the Divine Being for present-needed help, it is very doubtful if he had ever uttered. He had been a man of the highest character. No suspicion of any act approaching moral turpitude had ever rested on his name. No man or woman could point to any promise of his lips which had been broken, or any act or utterance for

which the purest ought to blush. He had been abstemious almost to the austerity of a Rechabite, both because he was satisfied that it was beneficial to himself and consistent with the ideas of those whose good opinion he most prized, and also because he was one of those natures too self-respectful to run the risk, even in insensate ebriety, of being the butt of his fellows. He liked mirth, but he could not endure and would not risk ridicule. He had always attended religious services with the punctuality and regularity which had marked all the habits of his life. It had become a part of his nature to do so—not from any particular sense of worship, perhaps, but because he always had gone, and because those whose regard he most cherished did so likewise. It may be said that this was a cold, unworthy motive, even if it had not a tinge of hypocrisy. Of course it was not the highest; but it was Markham Churr's. As the result of this habit, then, upon the last Sabbath of the passing year we find him in his accustomed seat, thoughtful and solemn—not about things divine, but about himself and the Trans-Continental Railway bill. His head drooped, and the corrugations upon his brow grew deeper, as, for the thousandth time, perhaps, he stated to himself the question which rose ever before him.

Should he choose wealth, applause, and shame; or honor, contempt, and poverty? If he voted for the bill, which, without much doubt, would pass in any event, it was more than probable that no one but himself would know that he did wrong, or suspect that he violated his conviction. By so doing, he would secure

wealth, and, if it were ever unfavorably commented upon at all, it would, in the dim future, perhaps, be counted as an error of judgment only. On the other hand, he, Markham Churr, would never respect himself again if he yielded to the temptation. That he knew. He would be always conscious that he deserved the execrations of good men, and he felt that he could never again enjoy their commendation with this unwelcome self-knowledge in his heart. Above all, he knew that if he yielded, he must forfeit the respect of his wife, if she ever learned the truth, and the right to her respect even if she did not.

But, then, if he refused, she would have to share the poverty and shame which must follow. He knew that no one would believe his protestations of innocence, however vehement and indignant. He felt that appearances were all against him. The relations between him and Boaz Woodley—the investments in his name—no denial would stand against them. It was morally certain that the bill would pass, despite his opposition. Then he would be regarded as one who had fostered and encouraged the matter, perhaps had reaped advantages from it, and had finally opposed it only from a failure to secure such terms and emoluments as he desired; or, from sheer faint-heartedness, had deserted his fellow-conspirators at the eleventh hour. Either hypothesis, he well knew, would seal his fate in the *n*th District.

He thought if it were not for Lizzie it would be easier to decide. How could he choose between the terrible alternatives? Would it be easier to deserve her

respect and see her forced to yield position, wealth, honor, or to become worthy of her contempt, and retain for her all that she now had? Which could he most easily endure—to impoverish or to deceive the wife whose fond eyes had followed him everywhere since his return, so full of tender, inquiring care? Should he wrong her love, or submit it to martyrdom—the flame of suffering?

All this was constantly revolving before his mind as he sat through the opening service in the little church. Mechanically, he found the hymns and held the book for his wife to sing, but he gave no heed to her look of anxious solicitude as she noted his absentness of mind. He did not know that at that very hour her prescient heart was wrestling in prayer for his imperiled soul. She knew not what was the cloud which rested over him, but she felt that there was one, and prayed without ceasing that the Friend from whom nothing can be hidden would lead him safely through whatever evil impended.

So the prayer, the hymn, and the opening chapter had passed, and Markham Churr, though apparently attentive to all that occurred, had not noted the fact that a stranger sat in the pulpit with the pastor. And now, after the second hymn had been sung, and the congregation was again seated, and quiet had succeeded the bustle which runs through an audience when it settles itself finally to listen to a sermon or a speech of which other matters are introductory or ancillary, he did not notice the tall, spare form, and countenance furrowed as with care or sorrow, the pale brow, and over-

shadowing eyes of lambent fire, dark and sad. He did not see the uncertain, half-agonized expression which swept over the fine, strong face as the speaker rose, advanced to the desk, and looked over his congregation.

“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,” came in clear, firm tones from the preacher’s lips.

Had an arrow pierced the heart of Markham Churr, he could not have started more suddenly, nor his whole demeanor more completely changed. His wife beheld the transformation with surprise, not unmixed with joy. Anything was better than the cold, absent brooding which had clouded his eye and taken the warmth from his tones since his return. This was *her* Markham sitting beside her now. Awake, alert, attentive to something beside the trouble he had hidden in his breast. She could not help watching him as the sermon proceeded. She saw his eye kindle and his lip quiver as the speaker went on, yet she could not resist the conviction that his interest centered more in the speaker than in the matter of his discourse.

There were two who were ill-prepared to join in the commendation which the stranger’s sermon elicited, when it was over. Markham Churr had watched the speaker, and his wife had watched him, so intently, that they could not at that moment have recollected a word of the message that had been delivered so effectively to other hearts.

“Ah! Mr. Churr,” said the old pastor, as he stood by the gifted stranger in the open space before the pulpit, “allow me to introduce my friend, the Rev. Mr.

Worthington, of Delhi, Kansas," and he half turned towards his ministerial guest with the air of a connoisseur who has something rare and exquisite to display to a congenial spirit.

"It is quite unnecessary, Dominie," said Markham to the pastor, as he proffered his hand to the supposed stranger. "Mr. Worthington and I have not to make acquaintance at this time. How do you do?"

"You will excuse my left hand," said the stranger, "I have taken to using it almost exclusively since we last met. Indeed, I think that almost my last use of it was waving a good-bye to you."

"Yes," responded Markham, "and I understand now why we never met afterwards. But now that you are in my power," he continued, as he still held the other's hand, "I claim you all to myself, and shall issue a writ of *ne exeat*, to be in force and effect until it shall be my sovereign pleasure to revoke it."

"A conspiracy, a rank conspiracy!" exclaimed the pastor, "to rob an old man of his guest. It was only by the mereſt chance that I met Mr. Worthington in New York, last May, at our anniversary, and fancied him so much that I invited him to come here and preach a little for me, when he could run away from his own people for a while. He finally yielded so far as to agree to stop with me for a few days on his way East this winter. He only came last night, and here comes this youngster and proposes to take him *vi et armis*. I won't stand it, General!"

"Here comes Mrs. Churr," said Markham, as Lizzie, smiling and animated, with her curiosity piqued to

know who it could be that her husband was holding so long by the hand, and talking with so freely, advanced through the crowd, exchanging greetings as she came up to them. "Allow me, my dear, to introduce my old friend Col. Worthington, whose hand I resign to you until we are both willing to shake it for a good-bye. And now, sir," he said, turning and shaking his finger in mock defiance at the pastor, "I defy you."

"Yes, yes," said the pastor, "two to one makes you very brave. I must give up, I suppose; but I want it distinctly understood that it is to your wife I surrender, and not to you."

"We will not quarrel on the terms, but it is well you surrendered, or I should have taken you both, bag and baggage, to our domestic camp forthwith," said Markham. "As it is, we will let you off until to-morrow, when we shall look for you to come and spend the minister's lazy day with us."

"Day of rest, my son," said the pastor, with reproachful solemnity. "Remember that is what hallowed the Sabbath, and should make the refraining from labor an ordinance commemorative of Deity. 'God rested.' The law of His rest became a part of our being. To rest upon each recurring seventh day becomes therefore an act both of duty and of praise."

"Well, come and spend your 'rest day' with us, then, and bring your wife also; that is," said he, bowing to Lizzie, "if my desire be consistent with the will that rules at Heart's Ease."

"Ah," said the pastor, "what do you say to that, Mrs Churr?"

“That it is well for his happiness that he did not forget the condition,” answered Lizzie, smiling archly.

“Oh, you young people cannot deceive me. I have been under the yoke too long. I know you will rate the General soundly for asking the old parson and his wife to a whole day with you.”

“Nevertheless, sir, you will come, and you shall have a pipe and smoking-cap, and an easy-chair in the library, and anything that your wife will certify to be for your good,” said Lizzie.

“Well, if you are going to take my guest, I shall surely follow him,” said the pastor.

“But,” said Mr. Worthington, “I really—I—have to preach to-night—and—”

“Quite useless, sir,” said Markham, “you are in my power, and I am merciless.”

A glance of peculiar meaning passed quickly between the two men; but not so quickly as to escape the notice of Lizzie.

“And if I comply with your wish, do you promise to observe the compact it makes?” asked Mr. Worthington, with a smile, but not without an accent of anxiety.

“Implicitly,” said Markham, seriously.

“Well, my old friend,” said Mr. Worthington to the pastor, “I do not see—”

“Oh, I am quite resigned,” replied the latter, “I foresaw it from the first. One might possibly resist the General; but his wife is irresistible, as the General himself learned long ago.”

“It was wise, then,” said Mr. Worthington, “to have surrendered at discretion.”

“Quite providential, I assure you. I did hope to introduce you to my beloved congregation as an entirely new specimen—a proper person to become my successor—thus making a merit of necessity, and securing the gratitude of both people and incumbent. But since I am denied that pleasure, and you and the General insist upon being old-time friends, I see I have but one chance, and that is to ally myself with the enemy. I cannot successfully oppose. So you may look for me—wife, pipe, slippers, and all—to-morrow, Mrs. Churr,” he said, with a courtly bow, as he offered her his arm and walked down the aisle.

“By the way, Mrs. Churr,” said he, “how did the General come to know this Mr. Worthington, whom he calls ‘Colonel’?”

“I am sure I do not know,” she answered; “I never heard of him before.”

“I was full of his praises last summer, for he made quite a sensation at the East, and spoke about him in your husband’s presence several times, but he seemed to have no knowledge of him. This morning, as soon as he spoke, the General seemed to recognize his voice, and never took his eyes off him afterwards.”

“They have evidently known each other,” said Lizzie.

“And as evidently have not been familiar,” said the pastor. “Army acquaintances, I suppose. I never heard of his being a colonel before, though.”

As they came out on the porch, he added:

“Well, Madam, you would better secure your captive. Mr. Worthington, I shall look for you to-night,

remember—seven, sharp. And then you will have hard work to keep up the reputation you have made to-day. Good-morning.”

Lizzie took the arm of Mr. Worthington, and walked quietly to her home between her husband and his friend. The winter sunshine was bright, the snow crisp, the air biting; and somehow Lizzie was happier than she had been any day since her husband's return. She liked the high-browed man, with his sad, earnest face and deep, dark eyes, the perfect counterpart and foil of her blue-eyed, rich-bearded husband. They were fine types, and well-mated. She was glad to stand between two such magnificent specimens of manhood, and call the one husband and the other friend. Besides that, she had a blind faith that they were mutual antidotes, and would do each other good. So she prattled cheerily with them as they went together along the bright, icy foot-path to her home, as gay as the snow-birds in the hedges by which they passed, but conning over great things in the little heart made wise and strong by abounding love.

CHAPTER XLV.

PRECEPT VS. PRACTICE.

AFTER the plain Sunday dinner, the two men retired to the library, and were closeted together until it was time for tea—for the prosperity of Markham Churr had not changed the old order of his house-

hold. An early breakfast, dinner about midday and tea at five o'clock—when all the rustic Northwest sips—was the order of the day by proclamation of the sovereign of the house. Unlike the bulk of their neighbors, however, this order was not varied on the Sabbath.

When Lizzie went into the library to call the cloistered gentlemen to this meal, she found the preacher with the military title striding up and down the room, with a look of pain upon his face which for a moment made her forget the cloud which had hung over her husband so long. Markham was sitting by the grate, looking at his friend with an expression of irritation, and his voice had a half-angry tone as he said—just as she opened the door, for neither had seemed to hear her light knock:

“Remember, ‘As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.’”

“Don’t, don’t, General,” said the other, in a tone of agony.

“Don’t! Why not? Do you suppose all the sense and truth you preach is for others only, and none of it for yourself?” her husband replied.

“I beg your pardon, gentlemen,” said Lizzie, brightly, from the threshold, “but I thought you must be faint, and as you would pay no attention to my knock, I was fain to open the door and announce that tea is ready.”

She made a mock courtesy to hide her embarrassment, while her husband sprang up, and said, cheerfully:

“I declare, wife, you don’t mean to say it is five o’clock, do you?”

"As if tea were ever served at any other hour in this household, sir! Unless, indeed," she added, saucily, "I had fallen asleep alone in the parlor."

"I turn her over to you, Worthington," said Markham, pleasantly. "I make it a point of honor never to apologize to my wife, no matter how much I am in fault."

"The best evidence of penitence is a willingness to reform our conduct," said Mr. Worthington, bowing to Lizzie and offering her his arm. "So I surrender myself to your guidance, to be led whithersoever you will."

"H'm!" said the General, as he followed them from the library, "that will do very well for an unmarried man to say."

"I hope I am not to understand that you are a bachelor, Mr. Worthington," said Lizzie, as they took their seats at the tea-table.

"Unfortunately, that is my condition," he replied.

"Unfortunately!" said Markham, warmly. "Why don't you tell the truth, and say 'foolishly?'"

"Now, General, remember our compact," replied Mr. Worthington, beseechingly.

"Well, I will. You shall not hear another word from me on the forbidden theme."

"Really, gentlemen, I thought you had had time to have finished your enigmas before this," said Lizzie.

"Well," said her husband, laughing, "I will have no more to do with him. I leave him to you from this time forth. I won't even go and hear him preach to-night, lest I should quarrel with him in the pulpit."

So when the meal was ended, and the prancing bays

were driven to the door, attached to the airy sleigh which slipped and squeaked on the snow as if impatient to feel the impetus of the restless feet before it, Markham told his wife and their guest that he would leave them to go to church alone while he went and dissipated his spite at the latter's obstinacy by a drive.

Perhaps, he said, he would be around in time to bring them home when the services were over. He would listen to no protestations. He had promised a friend that night, and go he must.

So he drove leisurely down the street till he came to where the road from Aychitula crossed it. Then he turned to the northward, pulled his fur cap well over his ears, tucked the robe close about him, and, tightening the reins, settled the restive bays down to steady work.

His blue eyes glistened with delight, and he shook his tawny beard in the face of the fierce north wind with defiant glee. He laughed and chatted to himself in broken bits as he drove out of the village.

"Twelve miles and back!" he said. "If I am not mistaken, before the parson gets to the doxology I shall have applied his sermon of to-day, and be waiting at the church-door to whisk him and Lizzie home in a trice! I am half-sorry I did not let the darling know my idea. But then, no matter, she will know in time, if I am right. If I am not, then I am the only one fooled!"

As he passed through the desolate swamp which lay between Lanesville and Aychitula, his spirit seemed to take on something of doubt from his surroundings, and

he discoursed less gayly to himself. The icicles had gathered on his moustache by this time, and the sleek bays were showing great patches of frost upon their flanks. The buckles of the harness had condensed the moisture from their steaming nostrils, and every one was plated with a coating of hoar-spines, which no art in metallurgy could rival.

Markham's feet were stinging cold, and the lobes of his ears tingled as if elfin hands were piercing them with crystal blades.

"If I should be on a fool's errand, after all!" he muttered; and he kicked the dashboard viciously. The steady trot of the horses now died down into a dull, reverberant walk while they drew the grating runners down the face of a northward-sloping hill where the sharp lake wind had swept the roughly-frozen surface bare. "I declare, I've half a mind to drop the idea, and go back! What business is it of mine, after all? And then, suppose"— His face grew hot, in the very teeth of the norther which whistled about his ears, at the thought which crossed his mind. "By George! I've a mind to turn back."

He pulled up the horses, who looked around in wonder at the command to stop upon the bleak hillside, and scanned doubtfully the gray north, where the mid-winter twilight hung like a leaden veil athwart the sky, shutting out the starry brightness of the coming night, and seeming like the frozen pall of a dying day. He sat irresolute a few moments, then turned his horses slowly half-way round. The light sleigh bounced about, and the steel runners grated harshly on the frozen

knobs. The horses laid back their ears, and bit at each other, as if they felt the uncertainty and doubt in the mind of their driver, and resented it. Suddenly he stopped, with the horses standing square across the road, and meditated again. Then, impulsively—

“Pshaw!” said he. “I have come five miles, and I am not going back till I know whether I am right or wrong!”

He wheeled the horses sharply into the road, touched them with his long whip, and did not draw rein again until he was going down the long hill into The Gulf, where he had gone to think that summer’s day before he linked his fate with Boaz Woodley.

The moon was shining brightly now, and the white snow-carpet was lighted up with a thousand sparkling star-shapes, which relieved the whiteness with ever-changing lights. The gems that deck the brow of winter were scattered on every hand in lavish profusion. The thick hemlocks were loaded with radiant diamond-dust. A frightened night-bird, flying through the clustering branches, loosened a shower of pearly spray, which fell, glimmering and gleaming like a silver cascade, to the ground. The breath of the horses rose in a filmy cloud about their heads; the harness creaked and rattled; the frozen snow squeaked beneath the runners; and the tramp of the horses echoed sharp and clear from the cliff on the other side. They crossed the little stream beside which Markham had sat and pondered when his fate was fixed. He heard the little waterfall above, and saw the vast white berg which the long cold had formed from its rills and spray, and

through whose crevices its waters still found their icy way to the fettered pool below.

He found himself growing doubtful and meditative again, but, as he reached the bottom of the hill, shook the reins to his horses, and in ten minutes more was dashing through the street of Aychitula.

The church-bell was just sounding for the evening service, and the windows of the shutterless, uncurtained church-edifice were aglow with the steady, yellow light which seemed so full of warmth to the chilled traveler without. Streams of church-goers were coming from the houses, swarming along the streets, full of life and vivacity, and entering the church with much stamping and shaking. Markham had to turn out of the beaten track to let the villagers pass. He let his horses walk, and peered curiously into the faces of the passers-by. Suddenly there came opposite him a trim figure, in ample muffings, with a glowing face looking out from the meshes of an encircling cloud.

"Amy!" he said.

The trim figure started, looked at him inquiringly, and then said, heartily:

"I declare! General Churr! How do you do?"

"I thought it was you," he said, complacently, paying no heed to her question.

"And you—how do you come to be here?" she asked.

"Get in," said he, lifting the robe, and making room for her beside him.

"But I am going to church," said she, laughing.

"That depends," he replied, significantly, "on your

ability to resist temptation in the form of a snug cutter and a good span."

"Which you know I never could do," she said, frankly, as she stepped into the sleigh and was snugly tucked up in the warm robes. "And now," she said, as they started on, "I want to know what all this means."

"I came over on purpose to see you," said Markham, hesitatingly.

"I inferred as much," she said. "But why did you wish to see me?"

Markham hesitated. They were driving eastward, and the full moon shone clear and bright on the fair, frank face beside him. He turned and watched it keenly, as he said:

"Amy, will you trust me?"

She looked at him in unshrinking surprise, and echoed:

"Trust you?" Then, with a demure coquetry, she added, with sparkling eyes:

"I hope your horses are not dangerous."

"As if it mattered to Amy Levis whether a horse were gentle or vicious!" he replied, with incredulous emphasis.

"Oh, I assure you I have quite reformed," she answered, quickly. "I have not shocked the proprieties by a runaway or a smash-up in quite an age."

"Ah! I congratulate whoever is destined to be your husband!"

"Thank you, for him. He will need your sympathy."

“Better give me his name, and let me deliver it myself.”

“No, thanks. He is a very bashful youth, and a third party would afflict him terribly.”

“Then you will not trust me, Amy?” he asked, with a meaning emphasis.

She looked at him steadily, and replied:

“You know I would, if I had anything to confide.”

“Will you answer as frankly whatever questions I may ask?” he inquired, earnestly.

“Why, Markham Churr! You know I have always been as frank with you as with a brother!”

“Yes; but I wish to be sure that you will be as frank with me, and as”—he stopped the horses and turned towards her—“as truthful as if life and death hung on your words. Will you do it?”

She looked at him a moment in amazement, perhaps in terror, at his excitement.

“Will you do it?” he repeated, still more earnestly.

“I will.”

“Amy Levis, I want to ask you one question.” He leaned forward and whispered in her ear.

In the bright moonlight he saw a burning flush flame over her fair face before it was hidden in the robe.

“Well?” he said, inquiringly. There was no answer.

“Well?” he repeated.

“Why do you ask?” came from the muffled face.

“You said you would trust me.”

She raised her head and said, earnestly:

“So I will—more than I ever trusted human being.

Yes, I do!”

"All right!" said Markham, joyfully, as he turned the sleigh, and started back the way they had come.

"Now, Markham," she said, entreatingly. "Why did you ask? Please tell me."

"See, here, Amy," he answered, laughing gayly. "You are to ride twelve miles with me to-night, and I am not going to answer a single question touching this matter. So either you must drop it, or we shall have a dull time!"

"Polite, indeed! Without so much as by your leave!"

"Hang the leave! Here is your father's! Tell them Lizzie has sent for you! 'When will I bring you back?' Whenever you choose to come! See that you don't cheat yourself, my lady! Quick now—wrap up a little warmer; say good-bye; and be back here in two minutes!"

"But how long *do* you think you will keep me?" she said, laughing at his impetuosity.

"A day—a week—a month—forever! How can I measure a woman's whims? Your liking may be long or short."

"But I must take some clothes!"

"Clothes! Fudge! As if you and Lizzie had not broken hearts in each other's clothes times without number. I can't wait for any fussing."

"Well, well," she laughed back as she ran up the path toward the house. "I'll be there in a minute."

Markham ran back and forth on the hard-beaten path, as far as his lines would allow, slapping his hands, and rubbing his ears, while he shouted his greetings and

excuses to Amy's father and mother, who urged him to come in and get warm. Finding it useless to try to persuade him, they helped Amy in her preparations, and soon the never-failing jugs of hot water were packed in the bottom of the sleigh, and, closely hooded and wrapped in furs, Amy Levis was whisking away to Lanesville beside Markham Churr—for reasons and a purpose which suited him. As Amy had said, she trusted her companion implicitly. She believed that the journey was planned for her happiness, and her spirits rose wonderfully. As for Markham, he was in the most extravagant of moods, and nothing but the cold, bright weather would have excused, in that staid region, the laughter and jollity of that Sunday evening's ride. The dwellers in that bleak clime know that mirth is a great enemy of cold, and festivity that would offend all upon a summer Sabbath disturbs no one on a winter Sunday.

As they neared Lanesville, both agreed that they had never ridden the distance so pleasantly and quickly. If the opinion of the bays had been taken, they would probably have confirmed the verdict.

"Now, Amy," said Markham, as he handed her out at his door, "go into the library and make yourself at home, while I drive to the church and get the family. You will find a fire, and the girl will attend to your wants."

And away he drove to the church, which he reached just as the congregation were coming out. Giving the preacher the seat behind him, he took his wife upon his knees, and, handing her the reins, talked incessantly

of everything, except his evening's adventure, until they were again at home.

When they had laid aside their wrappings, and had been warmed a few moments at the glowing stove in the sitting-room, Markham said, carelessly: "By the way, Worthington, the friend I have been riding with this evening wishes to see you. Won't you come into the library?"

The preacher bowed assent, in an absent way, and went with him towards the door. Markham opened it, and signed for his friend to enter. Instead of following, he closed the door upon Worthington, himself returning to where his wife was sitting, and, with an exultant look, said, significantly:

"They will not require an introduction."

"Who is there?" asked Lizzie, curiously.

"Who do you think, little wife?" he asked, patting her cheek playfully.

"I am sure I do not know."

"Guess!"

"I cannot."

"Amy Levis."

"Amy Levis!" she exclaimed, in surprise; "and who is *he*?"

"Frank Worthington Horton!"

"Thank God!"

"Amen!"

CHAPTER XLVI.

“WHOM GOD HATH JOINED.”

THE next was a busy and mysterious day at Lanesville. Scarcely was breakfast over at Markham Churr's, when Amy Levis and Lizzie were in a brisk chatter, seated upon the rug before the fire in the latter's chamber, as if the school-girl life were not a half-dozen years behind them in the dim past. Markham and Colonel Worthington seemed to be in a half-angry discussion in the library, until the former said:

“There comes the Dominie. Now, Colonel, don't be a coward. If there were any other way out of this, I would be glad to see you take it. But you are only putting off the evil day and suffering in anticipation more than you ever could in fact.”

“I can't, Markham, I can't!” Worthington replied, with a look of anguish and entreaty.

“You can and you shall,” was the answer. “I shall take the responsibility, and begin with the Dominie,” he added, as that worthy's steps approached.

“Don't! don't!” said Worthington, as he fled out at one door while the pastor entered by another.

Half an hour afterwards, the pastor was on his way home, with steps of unwonted haste, and with a sadly-troubled countenance. The mistress of the parsonage did not visit Mrs. Churr that day, and its master

scarcely left his study after his return until the hour fixed for the evening service. That the good lady had been seriously troubled in her mind by this strange deportment of her spouse may well be believed. In the thirty years during which they had traveled life's dusty road together, it had happened but few times that he had wrought in his study upon Monday, and those were times of sore distress to the aged pair. She could count them all upon her fingers, and as she wondered at this, she ran over in her mind the cause of each. Then she went up to his study-door and listened. He was walking back and forth, talking to himself, and occasionally stopping to write. This was his habit in composition, but it seemed incredible that he should engage in labor upon that day—his day of rest. She knocked timidly at his door, and, when he opened it, said wonderingly:

“John!”

His face was full of a strange, solemn light as he answered:

“There is nothing the matter, Mary—at least, nothing to trouble you. Only, do not ask me any questions, nor let any one disturb me.”

So he had worked until a little before the hour for service; she had brought a cup of tea and some toast into the study, and he had partaken of them in an absent, silent way, which left her still more in wonder.

All day, about the streets and in the stores and offices of Lanesville, there had been strange, vague rumors in regard to the gifted preacher who had so delighted all the day before. It was hard to tell whence

they had come, or what they were, but they all pointed to the church, and to that night as the time and place where some startling *dénouement* was to be made.

Since morning, Markham Churr's bays had been going hither and thither, flashing the bright sleigh, with its gay trimmings and abundant robes, around in a hundred unexpected places. The hour for the evening service arrived. The old pastor sat alone in the high pulpit. The house was crowded. The gallery as well as the body of the house was full. People sat upon the steps of the pulpit and around the altar. Chairs were placed in one of the aisles, and it was quickly filled. Every one was on the look-out for something, he knew not what. Those who sat in the seats before and behind the pastor's pew plied his poor wife with questions, which she could no more answer than her inquisitors:

Where was Mr. Worthington? Had she seen him that day? Was his name really Worthington? How did he come to be Colonel? Why was he not in the pulpit? Why were the Churrs not here? And a hundred more, of a similar import, until the poor woman could only reply:

“Don't ask me! I don't know! I don't know!”

It was a vast relief to her when the brazen tongue of the bell hushed the busy ones of her neighbors, and, with its last echoes, her husband rose in the pulpit and read the opening hymn. He was very pale, and seemed much affected. Every seat in the house was full except General Churr's—no one sat there. Whether it was by arrangement, or, because their family were so seldom absent, that no one else had been put in there, no one

seemed to know. Yet every one looked at it—some ominously, and with a shake of the head which bespoke unutterable mystery, and others just wonderingly.

The town of Lanesville might be said to have collected in the church. Not only this, but there were a great number from Aychitula. It seemed that the fame of the young preacher had reached there, and a large number had made their curiosity, as it seemed, an excuse to try the fine sleighing by a moonlight ride. Among these were four old people, for whom, at their two houses, a sleigh had called at a late hour, the driver of which declared that there was no mistake. He had been especially directed to drive them to Lanesville, to hear the great Western preacher, and return the next day. He declared that the team was already paid for, and the arrangements for their comfort made, though he refused to disclose the name of his employer. So, after much consultation, the old neighbors had consented to accept the favor of their unknown friend, and the ride from Aychitula had not been merrier to any of the young hearts who made it that night than to those hearty old people who sat side by side on the front seat in the little church, waiting in mute wonder to hear the preacher who was not present.

The service proceeded, and the old pastor poured out his heart in prayer. His tender, almost tearful, tones were scanned with curious criticism by his watchful auditors, who thought they might gather from his words the secret which they felt was in his heart, in his voice, in the very air, only so vague and evanescent that they could not quite catch its form and outline.

The prayer is finished, the Scripture lesson read, and yet the mystery is not defined. The air is charged with a mysterious electricity, yet they cannot trace its currents. Then comes the text, and the wondering auditors look into each other's puzzled eyes, as they admit their inability to see its application to the state of facts which had tacitly come to be presumed by every one, though hardly whispered by the boldest:

"What God hath cleansed, call not thou common or unclean."

The sermon is finished. From text unto conclusion it has been watched with the keenest scrutiny by every auditor. Nothing has been detected, however, except a humble tenderness, as if the old pastor had but recently been with Fisherman Peter, in his vision, when the great white sheet was let down from heaven, and had heard the gentle reproof which came from out the rifted cloud after it was withdrawn. The touch of God's finger had sanctified all mankind to him. Unconsciously, his hearers forgot what so many of them were seeking for, and, by the lips of his servant, the Nazarene taught again to willing hearts the one great truth of his dispensation—the Brotherhood of Man.

Hearts which came to criticise were touched and softened, and many a one not wont to pray joined fervently in the closing petitions. Eyes were moist and lips were tremulous in that congregation, for the tongue of flame rested above many a soul.

So hushed and solemn were the hearts of his hearers, that when, after the prayer, he said, "We will now celebrate the holy ordinance of marriage," and then picked

his way among the crowded worshipers to the front of the altar, the audience manifested no great surprise or undue interest; they had so far forgotten the curiosity which possessed them at first. But suddenly they saw, half-way up the aisle on the left, the form of the new preacher, with Amy Levis upon his arm, while behind them came General Churr and his wife, looking happier than their oldest friends remembered to have seen them. To say that the excitement was intense from that instant would but ill describe it. All rose to their feet, and waited, in anxious expectancy, for—no one knew what, but every one felt that the secret they had waited for so long was about to be revealed.

When they finally stood before the altar, the old pastor said, in soft, benignant tones, and with a look that he must have caught from some ascending angel in his most rapt visions:

“We are about to celebrate the marriage of Frank Worthington Horton and Amy Levis. If any of you know any just cause why this man and this woman may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or forever after hold his peace.”

He had purposely varied the form, spoken the names with unusual distinctness and a meaning emphasis; but no one uttered a word. The mystery for which they had been seeking was now in their grasp, but the words of the preacher were still in their ears, and every tongue was hushed. Tears were in very many eyes. Our four old friends in the front pew—the parents of the bride and of the groom—seemed too stunned to realize the full meaning of what was taking place.

The ceremony was quickly over. A few noticed that the bridegroom was as pallid as the snow without, and others that the wifely care already sat upon the brow of the bride. Then they passed down the aisle, and the voice of Markham Churr was heard requesting the audience to remain seated for a few moments. As soon as they had passed out, he said :

“Neighbors, you ‘have seen a strange thing—the beautiful outcome of a life whose fruitage many a heart in this house feared. As Colonel Frank Worthington, he who has just gone forth has a thousand times redeemed Frank Horton’s fault. Yet, so stricken does he feel, that he is anxious to escape from you here, and bury himself once more in the Great West. He has given you a surprise to-night. Will you come to my house to-morrow night and surprise him, whom I am glad to call my friend, with a greeting which shall make his old father young again and shame his distrust of your goodness?”

There was a little cheer, and a general cry of “Yes! yes!”

“At seven o’clock, then ; and we will shake that left hand until he will wish more than ever for the right, which he lost at Chickamauga.”

Nothing could stop the cheer then, and when the old pastor gave out the doxology it was sung with the jubilant clangor of Miriam’s triumph-song ; and the benediction which came after it was like the promise of life to the Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration.

The welcome of the next evening was over. More

heartily than the kindest could have dreamed, the good people of the town stamped their approval of that Christian manhood which had not only vanquished temptation, but had also made reparation for his wrongdoing and expiated the sin of youth by the self-sacrifice and devotion of maturer years.

The joy of Thomas Horton had been too profound for words. All through the evening, he could only rub the few gray-black hairs which formed a circlet round his smooth, bald head, take from over his ear the pencil which he had carried there so long that he could never be quite comfortable without it, examine its point until his eyes grew dim with tears, and then fasten them upon his long-lost son. And through this little circle of bewildered joy he went again and again.

In all the years since that terrible day at Chickamauga no one had heard a word from Frank Horton; but two hearts had clung to their faith in him—his father and Amy Levis. The fact that he had not been heard from since that time had been an assurance to both that he was still alive and at work.

“He would never die and leave no word for me,” said the cashier. “Think how anxious he was about the payment of that money. Then, too, he told General Churr, expressly, that both he and I should know of his death.” Markham Churr, in his busy life, had half-forgotten the interview by the roadside on the night before the battle. To Frank’s father it had been an ever-present fact.

“His last known word was of me,” Amy Levis had thought, and she set her face steadily towards a life

of devotion to her absent, silent—contemned love. She staked her faith in Frank Horton against the dreary desolation of an unloved womanhood.

No words can paint the contented triumph of these faithful hearts. Past all hope was the completeness of their joy. From being one whose name was remembered with a sigh of regret or a blush of shame, Frank Horton had leapt into the hearts of all, a presence and a life whom it was a delight to honor.

As Amy stood by her husband, and received the warm and often tearful greetings of the new-found friends, in the parlor of Lizzie Churr's pleasant home, and saw Markham, with the glow of friendship on his face, take the hand of her husband in the mere exuberance of his joy, she could but turn to her friend and, pointing to the evenly matched yet strongly contrasted pair, remark: "Were there ever two such splendid men before?"

And a swift glance of responsive pride and a warm impulsive kiss was the only reply.

And when the hand-shaking and felicitations were over, and the throng were about to separate, calling first for one word of collective farewell from the young divine ere he started upon his wedding-trip, which was expected to end, after a few weeks, at his Western home, he could only say, as the tears fell down upon his dark beard:

"I thank you, friends, for teaching me anew the truth of that promise: 'There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine which need no repentance.' May you each live so as

finally to prove its blessedness even more fully than I do at this hour ”

How the hearts of his hearers came into their eyes! There were quivering lips and choking farewells as they said “ Good-night,” and many a tear glistened in the winter moonlight as the sleighs drove away from the side-porch at Markham Churr’s that night.

And when, last of all, the old minister came to depart, as he stood at the door and gave his hand in farewell to his young co-laborer, he said, solemnly and tenderly :

“ ‘ God moves in a mysterious way,’ my brother. No labor of mine, no eloquence of yours, could have served to bring this people so near to the Cross of Him who is able to save—even to the uttermost. I would thank you, but it was not your act.”

“ Ah,” said the young man, “ if you only knew what I have suffered in the attempt to avoid what has here happened, in spite of my precautions!”

“ Therefore let us thank Him for overruling your weakness for His glory. Assuredly, you are a notable monument of His grace and favor, and I can only say to you, for your future guidance, in the words of the old Eli to Samuel, to whatever duty He may call forget not to respond : ‘ Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth.’ ”

His hands were tremulous as he placed them upon the bowed heads of Amy and her husband, but his face shone with a light which was not of earth as he said : “ The peace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with you always, even unto the end ”

He went away with the radiance of the peace he

had invoked shining about him, but when the next evening the young friend of his old age looked into his face, the patriarch's journey was over, and only the smile upon his marble lips testified of the peace which had been with him to the end.

At the earnest request of the people, and according to the dying wish of the old pastor, Frank Horton remained to become his successor, and, after his release from his Western charge, was duly installed as such.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE HEAVENS OPENED.

THE next day Boaz Woodley was in Lanesville. For the first time in many years—almost since the death of his wife, the neighbors said—the house was opened, and the fires lighted in the sitting-room and library.

Markham was informed of the return of this man, whom he hardly knew how to designate, whether as his friend or his enemy, by a note, in Woodley's peculiar handwriting, which was brought to him at breakfast:

"DEAR SIR: I arrived home last night, and am anxious to see you. Please call at 3 P.M., as I have matters of importance to communicate.

"BOAZ WOODLEY."

"So," said he to his wife, when he had read it, "our neighbor across the way is at home again."

He finished his meal quietly, wondering at his own coolness. After it was over, he went out, still wondering that he felt no excitement. He had almost forgotten his own trouble during the past few days in his anxiety to dispel the cloud which hung over his friend. He knew very well why Boaz Woodley had followed him to Lanesville. He knew, or thought he knew, the message which he had to communicate that afternoon. He knew that he was in this man's power. Yet, somehow, he did not dread to meet him as he had a few days before.

He wandered out to the stable. He had always been very fond of horses. His turnout was not extravagant, nor were his stables extensive or luxurious. But his span of dark blood-bays, with their glossy coats, black, silky manes and tails, eyes of fire, yet docile as lambs, with pedigrees which assured one of their speed and endurance—these were unequaled in all that region, though it justly boasts of its blooded stock, and every farmer-boy trains each successive foal for the track, in the fond hope that he may hit upon another Flora Temple or Goldsmith Maid among the colts of his father's farmyard. These horses were the pets of their owner. He had trained and caressed them until they knew his voice and step, and greeted him with tokens of recognition whenever he approached them. There was a sharp rivalry between them for the notice of their master. If one was caressed, the jealousy of the other was apparent. But both seemed at the acme of equine delight when he held the reins. It was a pleasure to see how they would strive to outdo each other when he

called upon them. About Lanesville, the bays were almost as favorably known as their master. The fondness of each for the other was so apparent that it had become a subject of frequent jest. It was said that whenever the General returned home, his first inquiry was for his horses and the next for his wife. From all of which facts it will be seen that Markham Churr and his horses were on excellent terms.

The cold weather, which had kept the sleighing unimpaired since the middle of December, seemed about to let go its hold on the last day of the year. A soft south wind was blowing. The sun was bright and warm. Already the passing sleighs were beginning to cut through the beaten paths, and the snow had acquired that slipperiness and proclivity to pack closely beneath the foot which betokens the swift approach of a "break-up."

The doors of the stable were open, and Markham lounged in to see his pets. There was no one in, as the groom's work for the morning was over. As he stepped into the stalls, it flashed upon his mind, for the first time, that his refusal to obey the will of Boaz Woodley might require him to part with these favorites. The thought gave him a sharp twinge, which he expressed in words, as he patted the head of one of them.

"Ah! Billy, poor fellow! We've been great friends, haven't we? Yes, and you too, Brownie! I didn't mean to neglect you, old fellow!" he said, as he stroked the forehead of the other, who had thrust his head into the stall of his mate, in jealous fear that he might not get his share of the endearments. "In fact, I believe

I should hate to let you go worse than Bill; but you mustn't tell him so, you rogue! I've had you longer, and watched you come out. Ah, Brownie, you're not the scraggy foal you were when I first saw you! Nobody thought you'd be the best horse in the county then. You've changed wonderfully, Brownie; and, for that matter, so has your master!"

This chance expression set him to meditating again. He soon became forgetful of his pets, and wandered dreamily in upon the floor of the barn, picked up a handful of the bright, fresh hay, smelled of it, looked carelessly at the mow, instinctively estimating whether there were enough to last his stock until spring. Markham Churr, as we have seen, had known the interior of a farmer's life. His boyhood and early youth had been passed amid the little economies and daily-recurring anxieties of that existence, which is so charming in fiction and so dreary in its dull round of fact. The poetry of his nature had run out to the enjoyments which the farmer's life is too busy to enable him to taste except by piecemeal, as his endless routine of toil and saving are intermitted for a moment by the exigencies of the weather or the exhaustion of his power.

These spots of sunshine in the farmer's life had always remained bright in Markham's memory, and when he had acquired a competency these simple pleasures did not pall upon his tastes. The barn had been the place where he had dreamed of the future all through his boyhood, and as he leaned over the breast-girt now, and looked down upon the billowy expanse of matted timothy, and then up the smooth wall, where the pressed

fibers had been severed by the hay-knife, it occurred to him that up on the top of the uncut mow was the quietest and fittest place for him to wrestle with the great question which had so long disturbed his peace.

So he clambered up the ladder, quite forgetful that he was a Congressman, and clad in fine clothing, and only remembering that he was Markham Churr, on his way to his old-time hiding-place to ponder his future. Back in the very farthest corner, under the sloping roof, near a tiny hole through which the sun came peering in, where the piled-up hay came almost to the cobwebbed rafters, the man who was a boy again laid himself down to think.

He thought of himself as boy and man, vaguely, pleasantly. Lizzie Harper, Boaz Woodley, war, peace, prosperity and fame, came to mingle with the remote, rough current of his young life, and remove the asperities of poverty by their blandishments. He had spoken truly to his horse, "Brownie." There *had* been great changes in him, and in his life. There came a familiar fragrance which mingled with his reverie. He hunted about in the loose hay until he found a stalk of yarrow among the rank-grown timothy. He knew at once where it had grown—up on a slope of the hill in the orchard. There was a patch of daisies near it. Yes, there was one now, and he picked out the dried yellow ball with its white fringe. He remembered mowing that very orchard the first summer that he swung a scythe. He worked by the day then, during his vacation, for old Judge Cheney, at fifty cents a day! Yes, there had been changes since then! He almost wished

there had not been; that he was a boy again, or, rather, that he had never risen from the walk his boyhood promised. It would be hard now, terribly hard, to fall, to lose wealth and station, and be no more, except in notoriety, than the farmer's boy he would have been had he been content with a farmer's life.

And then to think how he would be scorned! How his name would be published all over the land as one who was either a coward, a hypocrite, or a silly victim, even if his own true story were believed, which he was well assured it would not. Oh, it was terrible—very terrible—he said to himself. Yet he lay upon the fragrant hay, with the stalk of yarrow and the dried daisy in one hand, combing his tawny beard with the other, almost undisturbed, and not at all dismayed, as he had been hitherto, at the prospect. He asked himself from sheer habit, could he endure it? Could he lose all he had wrought for in life and not lose the manhood he had gained since he worked for the Judge at fifty cents a day? Somehow, do all he could, it would not seem half as horrible as it had done before. He was quiet, calm, yet as far removed from apathy as from excitement.

“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.” The words flashed across his consciousness with that peculiar vitality of meaning which only the inspired Word can give. It brought a strangely pleasurable thrill.

“Ah!” he said to himself, “the heart—‘as a man thinketh in his heart!’ My heart has been clean, thank God! Aye, and He knows it! Yes, He knows it!”

He started forward with a strangely-puzzled look

upon his face. A new joy gleamed in every lineament! Then the tears began to flow over the joy-lighted face, through the quivering moustache and down the glistening beard upon the clasped hands, as Markham Churr prayed the joyful prayer of faith, and for the first time in his life consciously looked to God for deliverance.

“Ah,” he whispered to himself, as he brushed away the swift-flowing tears, “I know now why I did not fear the evil which hung over me! I had learned to lean upon God without knowing it!

“‘As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,’” he repeated, smiling through his tears. “Yes, those who are strong and brave and true in heart are those of whom ‘one shall put a thousand to flight, and two shall chase ten thousand.’ ‘As a man thinketh in his heart!’ I think God approves my intention—He shall approve my act. I see now why I have ceased to be unhappy. I have something which I cannot lose.

“I am sorry to hurt Colonel Woodley’s feelings. He has been a good friend—a wonderfully helpful friend to me. He has been strong and genuinely kind—almost a father in his care. I wish I might not hurt either his pride or his interest. But I *can not* do as he wishes; I am compelled to deny him! I wish he could see this matter as I do! And why should he not? God can make him!”

So, while yet the tears of his new-found joy were upon his eyelids, he sent up from an humble, trustful heart a petition for the strange being who had so warped his destiny. The spirit of that love which he had but just found would not let him enjoy his happiness

alone, but sent him out even in the hour of his new birth into the by-ways and hedges of sin to seek for some halting soul whom he might bring in to the feast.

Calmed by this act, his next thought was of his wife, and, clambering down the ladder, he went out into the day. He thought it the brightest and fairest he had ever known, and, with the light of an eternal morning upon his face, he ran to find Lizzie to tell the glad tidings!

“Why, where have you been all the morning?” she cried, as he burst into the sitting-room.

He glanced at the clock on the mantel. Four hours had passed since he had climbed up on the mow! Where?—what? His thoughts were for a moment confused. Her eyes, made keen by anxious love, detected his peculiar manner—perhaps she even noticed that his voice was changed, that it had a new and peculiar cadence.

“Why, Markham,” she repeated, half alarmed, “where—”

“In heaven, I think, darling!”

The answer was irrelevant and almost meaningless of itself, but it bore sweet tidings to her heart, and lighted her eyes with a joy that tears could not quench.

As soon as the early dinner was over, the horses were at the door, and Markham sought the good old pastor at the parsonage, and made his heart glad with the same sweet message.

“Ah,” said the sainted patriarch, “I have felt that the Spirit of God was very near us of late—very near. I knew from experience that some soul would feel its

influence, and somehow I had been impelled to bear you in my prayers for many days. God be thanked!" That afternoon the good old man departed.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

A STORK'S NEST.

AT the appointed hour, Markham Churr was at the home of Boaz Woodley. The light of his new joy had not faded from his countenance when he was called upon to meet temptation.

The house of Boaz Woodley was one of the oldest to be found in that region, where newness is so universal that the appearance of age is as studiously avoided by the houses as it is said to be by marriageable ladies. The houses of the early settlers—the oldest of which could hardly yet have boasted three-quarters of a century—are scarcely to be found even in fragments, and never to be recognized. There are a few gaunt old structures still to be seen, whose yellow paint and unlimited display of that peculiar wood-work known as "honey-comb" bespeak the boastful tawdriness of the stage-coach era—the dwelling-place of some old publican, or some lucky proprietor of rich pasture or fat bottoms in those days of Eastward-bound droves. The house of Boaz Woodley was, however, one of a still rarer type. The rear portion of the old structure had been built by the original proprietor of "Section 2, Range 3, Township 4," for the purpose of a dwelling,

for which, in those primeval days, its two rooms and the loft above were quite sufficient. The various occupants succeeding him, to the time when the present owner's proprietorship commenced, had added to this primitive structure with a more rigid idea of practicality and less of garish display than was usual in the houses of that region. Low, strong-beamed wings spread out on either side, with wide, over-hanging eaves, and cunningly-placed windows in the many gables; while quaint passages and roomy closets had been stuck here and there as each owner thought might be "handy" rather than attractive. Its weather-beaten walls were bare and gray, and the ceiling and wainscot were smoked and grim, when Boaz Woodley became the owner of the quaint old pile, hidden away under the shade of giant, low-limbed apple-trees, with a walnut nodding over the main gable to a sugar-maple, with its great, round head—a ball of green or crimson as the season served—which stood on the opposite flank. A low, shady porch ran along half the front, with a climbing rose upon one side of the door-stone, and flaunting hollyhocks upon the other.

This was the castle in which Boaz Woodley, years before, had set up his household gods. There was no little of the artist hidden in the rough husk of the strange man, though neither he nor his friends would have been apt to select him as an exemplar of the artistic spirit. The place had come into his hands in discharge of a debt—payment of a fee. The neighbors all looked for Boaz Woodley to tear down the old, gray pile and put up a showy mansion in its stead.

Mr. Woodley was accustomed to have his own way, however, and despite all their advice and speculation he had it this time; and the result never ceased to be a wonder to the good people of Lanesville. Mr. Woodley did, indeed, repair, but did not rebuild.

The result was that the tints and outlines of the old house were saved, in the main, and there appeared one villa in Lanesville which was attractive to the eye without garishness, and neat without apparent newness. Boaz Woodley seemed to have created out of his old Castle of Unthrift a house which had a different language and purpose from that of any of his neighbors. It spoke of comfort and privacy, almost of seclusion.

Everything was as bland and comfortable within the mansion that day as was the weather without. The owner met his caller with that open, genial manner which sat so well upon him when he was at his best. Their talk flowed on so smoothly that Markham began to fear that he had wronged him in his thoughts. At length, Woodley said, as carelessly as if he were only referring to it for the purpose of apology:

“By the way, Churr, I have to beg your pardon for losing my temper the other day in our conversation with regard to that Trans-Continental bill. You know it is a thing I seldom do, and I can hardly imagine how I came to be so weak then.”

“I beg to assure you that I had no thought of taking offence at your warmth,” Markham hastened to say.

“Well,” Woodley replied, looking musingly into the great hickory-wood fire before which they were sitting,

“you ought not to have taken offence, that’s a fact; for I suppose that, really, it was much more a consideration of your interest than my own which made me so urgent in the matter. You know, Markham, that I have come to take a wonderful interest in you.”

“You have shown that in so many ways that I must be an ingrate, indeed, if I could distrust your friendship now,” said Markham.

“I don’t know how it is,” said Woodley, contemplatively, “but you have come to be more to me than any other man ever was. I seem to live again in you; yet we are not alike. Our purposes, plans, mode of action, all are different. I do not know why it is, but I seem to have made you a part of myself, and whatever promotes your interest or prosperity is as dear to me as the apple of my eye. I know I am weak and foolish, but so it is.”

“I am sure I”—began Markham.

“Yes,” interrupted Woodley, “I know you appreciate it, or think you do. We are so different, that I do not know whether we can ever fully understand and appreciate each other. I suppose if my son Amos had lived I should never have felt so towards you, though he was not strong enough to satisfy me. Perhaps, though, for that very reason I should have loved him more, and enjoyed working for him better.”

Strong, successful man as he was, Markham Churr felt a sort of jealous thrill at this mention of his dead son by the man who sat before him. Never before had he fully realized how close was the relation between them, and how tender was the regard which he had for

Boaz Woodley. Himself left fatherless at an early age, and at the very crisis of his fate thrown into such strange and intimate relations with this many-sided and childless man, it was, perhaps, less wonderful than at first it appeared to him that an almost paternal and filial relation should have grown up between them.

"I don't know, though," said Woodley. "It don't seem to me that any one could ever have been nearer to me than you and Lizzie have become."

"Yet you did not come to our house, though you know your room is always waiting for you," said Markham.

"There were two reasons for that, Markham," replied the other. "In the first place—well," he continued, as he flushed to his temples, "the young man Horton, I did not wish to meet him. No matter why," as he saw Markham about to reply; "I could give a sufficient reason if you asked, even if not the true one; but I do not wish to practice either falsehood or evasion with you. Besides that, I had a strange longing to get back to this house and to these rooms for a few days. I have a peculiar attachment to this house. Somehow, it seems like a part of my own individuality; much as, I should imagine, a turtle's shell must be to him. There are no loose joints nor unfilled corners about it to me. It is the perfect-fitting, absolutely satisfactory home of Boaz Woodley. I have one relation to it that no turtle could have to his covering. It is the sense of creation. I created this home. I did not merely build the house nor modify another's plans, but I put my own brain—my own idea of a home adapted to my

nature and my life—into this house. In so far, it is a part of my being—my identity. It is mine in a sense in which few men can claim things inanimate, except those which are worn upon the person.”

“There are few men who could have succeeded in impressing their personality upon a building as you have upon this,” said Markham.

“I don’t know that,” said Woodley; “lack of thought leaves its mark as well as thought itself. It took me eight years to evolve, so to speak, the plan of this house. Every stick of timber I put in it passed under my own eye, and every board had been seasoning in the shed for three years at least.”

“Indeed!” said Markham, in surprise. “I suppose, too, you have many pleasant memories connected with the house.”

“Yes,” answered Woodley, gravely; “at least, not unpleasant. I have never been a happy man—never. That is, not what you would call happy. Yet, if a man is prosperous, healthy, comfortable, and of good repute among his neighbors, without positive affliction or actual annoyance, he cannot be said to be really unhappy. This house is filled with such memories as come from such a life. There is nothing which I have to regret connected with it; and the past which it marks is altogether peaceful. I never brought the world home with me. The little gate yonder shut that out. I never saw a client or looked into a law-book under this roof. At the office yonder, I was Boaz Woodley, Attorney-at-Law, as certified by the sign. Here I was—well, myself. And, by the way, it is the only place where I ever have

been so. I don't think I loved my wife as you do your Lizzie. She was not such a woman, and I was not prepared to love any one better when we married. But she was a good woman, and our life was a quiet, peaceful one. She studied to adapt her ways to mine, and our lives came very close in her later years—as close as two such ever could. I was disappointed in my son. It is the only sorrow I have ever known—such as people call an affliction, I mean; but I was never harsh or unjust to him. He loved me with the blindest devotion of a weak nature, and I loved him with a tenderness which I had no idea I possessed before.”

“What a strange view you take of everything,” said Markham.

“Perhaps.” Boaz Woodley smiled. “Yet I could tell you still stranger things, and just as true. What would you think if I should tell you that I have thought more as to what should become of this house after my death than of what may become of my soul when it quits its tenement—more, in fact, than I have upon the question whether I have a soul or not?”

“It cannot be!” said Markham, with a tone expressing something akin to horror.

“Yet it is strictly true. I don't know what disposition to make of it. I don't want a successor coming in here who will mar my work or be as bad a misfit as I should have been in one of these gaudy show-houses around us, or as an oyster would be in a cockle-shell.”

“You might leave it to be used for some benevolent purpose,” said Markham.

“No, thank you. I don't want any beggars scratch-

ing their backs against my door-posts. The idea of making this, Boaz Woodley's home, into any sort of a gregarium! I would just as soon make it a caravansery for dirty teamsters! Just as soon!"

"I beg your pardon," said Markham, flushing.

"Oh, I know you did not mean to offend. You had no idea of my feeling. Markham," said he, suddenly wheeling towards his listener, and looking at him with something of fierceness, "do you think you and Lizzie could live here and make it a home—fit yourselves to it as well as I have done?"

"I am sure I don't know," said Markham, in surprise.

"Of course you can't tell at once. But think of it. Think seriously, too, because, if you can—well, no matter. If you cannot, no human being shall live in it an hour after I am done with it. If you cannot *use* it, no one shall desecrate it. It shall be burned the day that I am buried."

CHAPTER XLIX.

UNDER WHICH KING?

THEN the conversation wandered away to other subjects, for it was becoming too tragic to be altogether pleasant to two such men as these.

"Ah," said Woodley, suddenly shooting across the trifles they had been exchanging sentences upon for a

short time; "about that Trans-Continental matter. As I told you, it was your interest that kindled mine. 'This is how it stands.'" He had his note-book out in a moment, and showed Markham a memorandum account drawn up in his own distinct handwriting.

"You recollect that you gave me a power of attorney some time ago to invest certain sums of money for you at my discretion. I looked this Trans-Continental up, and became convinced that it was a good thing—in fact, the best at the figures it has been held at that was ever offered in the country. I took hold of it for you and for myself. The land the Government has given it alone is almost an empire. Fifty years hence it is certain to be worth many times the amount necessary to build the road. As I look at it, Markham, that stock will pay you a good dividend every year after five years, and by the time you are at my age will be worth a thousand per cent. advance. That is my deliberate conviction, and I am not one to be easily misled, nor am I counted over-hopeful in such matters.

"I admit there are two difficulties in the way: First, the enterprise is so vast that the outlay of capital is almost unprecedented in any private corporation. Second, we must be able to control certain connections east of the Mississippi, and the right-of-way across that stream. These are the points aimed at in the bill to which you object."

"I have thoroughly examined the bill, and fully understand its purport," said Markham.

"Yes, so I understood you to say. I wish I had

known you would have objected to it at an earlier day, and I would not have invested in it either for you or myself. As it is, unfortunately, the success of the road depends on that bill, and, I am sorry to say, the failure of the enterprise means loss—very serious loss—to us. Here it is in black and white," and he pointed to the page of the open memorandum-book.

"You know, there are two kinds of stock—what is termed 'paid-up' and that on which only five per cent. has been paid, the remainder being subject to be paid on call by the company. Now, you will see that I have purchased for you one hundred shares of the 'paid-up' stock, and three hundred shares on which five per cent. only has been paid. My idea was that a large portion of this would not have to be paid until all the stock was drawing a dividend, perhaps more than enough to pay the calls. It is morally certain that this will be the case if we can command the connections and make the arrangements provided for in the pending bill. If not, then the whole of the face of the call-stock will have to be collected, and that will realize only enough to enable the company to make a decent failure."

"It would ruin me," said Markham, quietly, though the sweat-beads hung upon his brow, and he looked at the account which he held and thought what it would be to him and Lizzie—to go back where they were before he had met Boaz Woodley and begin the world again.

"Undoubtedly," answered Woodley, as calmly as if it were a matter of little moment. "Just turn over a page or two, and see what it would do for me."

Markham turned the leaves mechanically, as he was

bidden, and looked down the neat columns of dates and numbers of shares purchased by Boaz Woodley until his heart grew sick.

"You see, Markham, I have acted in good faith in this," said the elder man. "I have not placed your money or your credit where I would not risk my own."

"Certainly not," said Markham. "I never thought of imputing such a course to you."

"I did not know. You were so hot about the bill the other night, I did not know but you thought I might have stuck you to get your vote."

"It did look as if you had counted on the vote."

"Of course I had counted on it. I would count on any man in his senses doing what is for his own interest when it cannot hurt any one and it the only objection is that it might be inimical to the interests of some unborn millions of another generation."

"Yet I cannot do it, Colonel Woodley," said Markham, looking him steadily in the face.

Boaz Woodley's face blanched, and the hand which ran down the column of figures trembled as he said in a voice hoarse with suppressed emotion:

"You see those figures, I suppose?"

"I see them!"

"And you comprehend that while it impoverishes you it beggars me!"

"I suppose so, from the amount."

"Absolutely—utterly!"

"I am very sorry."

"Do you know how old I am?"

"I suppose sixty-four or five!"

"I shall be seventy in a week."

"No!"

"Do you know what beggary is at three-score-and-ten?"

"Oh, God!" cried Markham. The book fell from his hand; he put his fingers over his eyes, pressing the throbbing balls back into their sockets to hide the dreadful picture.

"Do you realize what it is for a man to give up all that he has toiled fifty years to achieve and acquire?"

Markham groaned.

Woodley proceeded: "You think it hard to give up the proceeds of ten years of the most wonderful luck a young man ever met with! What do you think of fifty years of toil swept away in an instant?"

"What shall I do?" moaned the young man, as his frame writhed beneath the torture.

"Could you not say or do—*nothing*?"

Markham was silent.

"Men have been excused from voting before now because of interest in the subject-matter of bills before legislative bodies," continued Woodley.

"Excused from voting *for* them," said Markham through his fingers; "not from voting *against* them."

"But does not the reason hold? It is interest in either case. We don't compel a man to testify against himself, and he certainly should not be required to vote himself, and his friends, too, into the poor-house."

"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," flashed across the mind of Markham Churr. He took his hands

from his face, looked into the other's eyes, and said, in a low, tremulous voice:

"I cannot do it! I cannot do it! The bill is wrong, and on that account I cannot support it. To allow it to pass without my protest, having that conviction, would be cowardly and false! I cannot do it!"

Boaz Woodley walked up and down the room once or twice before he spoke. When he stopped before Markham Churr his face was ashy pale and his voice tremulous with passion.

"You refuse to do either, then?"

"I must, Colonel Woodley!"

"You have finally decided?"

"I have! God helping me!"

"God helping! It's too late for hypocrisy to help! Will you read that, sir," handing him a bulky document.

Markham took it and glanced over it.

"You perceive that it is my last will and testament," said Woodley, with a sneer.

Markham bowed.

"That, after certain devises, it names yourself and wife as joint residuary legatees!"

"So I perceive," said Markham.

"It would make you a millionaire."

"I suppose so."

"Well, sir, allow me to inform you," said Woodley, as he tore the paper from Markham's hands and threw it into the fire, "that when you get such a sum, or any other, it will be by your own exertions, and not by the will of Boaz Woodley. Allow me also to inform you

that it makes no difference whether you vote for or against the bill. It will pass in any event."

"At least I shall have done my duty."

"Duty!" sneered Woodley. "You will have shown yourself a damned ungrateful cur!"

"Colonel Woodley," said Markham, springing from his chair, "no man shall use such language toward me."

"Oh! certainly, certainly!" said Woodley, bitterly, pointing to his gray hairs, "by all means strike me. I am only seventy. It would be a brave deed for an ex-General to strike the man to whom he owes everything but life."

"I beg your pardon, Colonel Woodley," said Markham, "I owe you too much to display anger towards you! I owe you a debt I would gladly discharge with my life!"

"Oh! you owe me, do you? Yes, you owe me twenty thousand dollars for money advanced by your request, and you shall pay every farthing as soon as the law will permit, if it makes a pauper of you; yes, and of your smooth-tongued wife too!"

Boaz Woodley was too keen a judge of human nature not to know that the tender conscience of the wife had propped and strengthened the duller and weaker instinct of her husband. He knew, too, that love of his wife was the tenderest side of this man.

"Yes, go," he added, as Markham started to the door. "Go, with the knowledge that Boaz Woodley is your enemy—made so by your cold, base ingratitude; that he will never see you, hear your name, your voice or your step, without cursing you, as he does now, with

the anathema of an old man, and a betrayed and outraged friend!"

Markham Churr returned home, dull, confused, almost prostrated, by the terrible scene he had gone through. He felt that he had done what was right, but he almost wished that he had yielded even his conviction to one entitled to require so much from him.

Boaz Woodley was not a man to threaten lightly. He knew that nothing would change the determination of Markham Churr in the matter; he would oppose the bill at all hazards. He did not believe, however, that Churr could prevent its passage, but it might stimulate an inquiry which would be fatal to the success of the schemes to which he stood committed. The President of the Trans-Continental believed in that road most thoroughly, and was willing to hazard a great deal for its success; but failure had come too near for him to disregard its possibility. Could he have taken a quarter of a century off his life, he would not have dreamed of doing what he now determined upon. Had he been sure even of ten years more of life, he would have been equally averse to this course. But he began to fear age and expect death, and even to die impoverished or reduced as he would be should this bill fail to pass was a horror which he could not face. He did not fear this crisis. The most superhuman effort of a marvelous life he was sure had been sufficient to prevent that. But he must not risk another. The stock would rise as soon as the bill passed, and he must get rid of a good portion of what he carried. To provide against the

possibility of loss must be his first work; to punish the ingrate whom he had nursed, his next.

So he wrote letters at once to several brokers with whom he had had business relations hitherto, of which the following is a specimen:

“JAMES DUNN, No. 99 Wall Street, New York:

“*Sir*—Sell on my account one thousand shares T. C. paid up, and five hundred subject to call, and buy all the Lake Shore & Rock Island you can get at present rates. If you have chances, you may double sales to get hold of the connecting stocks.

“Resp’y, BOAZ WOODLEY.”

“That will do,” said he. “It will keep the T. C. firm, and send up the others. The result will be that they will sell the one and be unable to buy the other.”

Then he turned his attention to Markham and his revenge. The papers were already drawn. The mine was laid, and he had only to spring it to destroy the man he had raised up. He walked over to the courthouse, filed a *precipe* in the clerk’s office, and took out a summons, which he put in the hands of the Sheriff, also a copy of a petition, drawn in his own handwriting, and accompanied by a bill of particulars, showing an indebtedness on the part of the defendant of twenty thousand dollars.

While they sat at tea, the bell rang, and the Sheriff asked to see Gen. Churr a moment at the door. He went, and the papers were served. It was no surprise to him. He took the copies, and after supper showed them to Lizzie, and told her all that had occurred.

"And what will you do?" she asked.

He turned to his writing-table and drew an answer, admitting all the allegations of the petition, and read it to her in reply.

"And what will be the effect of that?" she inquired.

"He will have judgment against me for twenty thousand dollars," he replied.

"And then?" she asked; and her voice was firm, though her cheek paled, and her lip quivered.

"He will have execution, and in thirty days may sell all that we have," he said, with some bitterness.

"And what have we? I mean, how much is what we have worth?" she questioned.

"This property, you know, cost me ten thousand dollars, and was considered a bargain. It is true Woodley gave it to you, but I repaid him. I suppose it would be liable. Then my library, horses, and furniture would bring, perhaps, five thousand, and the hundred paid-up shares of the T. C. R. Co., whose value may be a dollar or ten thousand."

"Will what we have pay the debt?"

"I should think so, or nearly so."

"Then, my dear," she said, as she seated herself on his knee, and clasped her arms about his neck, "let us not be discouraged. We can begin again. We have learned much, and have tried to do right. We are only two, as when we began before. I think I can see now, Markham, why God took our little one away."

Their tears flowed softly together at the mention of this, their only affliction; but they were not bitter tears. And, on the whole, they slept with peaceful hearts that

last night they expected to be together in the home where they had been so happy that they had christened it "Heart's Ease." Had you seen them as they chatted next morning, over the early breakfast, before Markham started for the morning train, or looked upon the glowing face of Lizzie as she stood at sunrise on the porch and bade her husband "God-speed," with love-lit eyes and clinging kisses, you would not have dreamed that he went to the heaviest of duties, or that both looked forward to swift-coming poverty.

CHAPTER L.

IN THE LION'S DEN.

IT was the third day after Markham had left Lanesville, that Lizzie, dressed with exceeding care, quitted her house, and, crossing the street, rang the bell at the door from which her husband had gone forth with the owner's curses ringing in his ears but a few days before. It was hardly ten o'clock in the morning, and the bright winter sunshine was transforming the crystalline snow into many-colored jewels, and lighting up her fair face with a rosy brightness which Boaz Woodley could but notice when he answered her summons. That he was surprised at the sight of the trim figure which stood at his door and looked into his eyes with a calm, earnest gaze as she greeted him pleasantly; she did not need to be told.

He stood for a moment irresolute, and then a gleam of fire shot into his eyes. He bowed obsequiously as he returned her greeting, and said, coolly:

“Will it please you to walk in, Mrs Churr?”

“Of course it will,” she responded, with a light laugh. “You did not suppose I came over here just to stand in your front porch, did you?”

Woe betide the man who tries to out-manuever a woman in a wordy battle. Lizzie knew that she stood upon vantage-ground from the first. So she sat in the quaint study, occupying the great arm-chair which had been gallantly surrendered to her, and prattled lightly of indifferent things, while the great man whose strength had been in his power to manipulate others sat by and admired her quiet tact, admitting to himself that he had been outdone in the skirmish for position. But he said to himself:

“Let the silly creature prate. I will crush her when I choose. Pretty feathers will not pay judgments.”

Boaz Woodley had not exaggerated when he told Markham of his fondness for Lizzie. What he had done had cost him not a little, but revenge is sweet. It was very sweet to Boaz Woodley—very sweet and very bitter. He thought so as he stood looking down on the woman who had been to him as a daughter. Finally she spoke.

“I came to speak with you of your relations to Markham, Mr. Woodley.”

“Indeed,” said he, with sarcastic coolness.

“Yes,” she continued. “He has informed me of the purport of a conversation which he held with you

the other day, and I came to assure you that he is much distressed because his sense of duty compels him to act contrary to your wishes or your interest."

"And you are quite sure, Madam," said Woodley, sneeringly, "that is the cause of his distress!"

"Very sure," she replied.

"The fact that he owes me twenty thousand dollars, of course, does not trouble him at all?"

"On the contrary," she answered, calmly, "he only regrets that he gave you power to make investments for him. He did give it, however, and he has no doubt you acted honestly for what you thought to be his interest in the purchase of the shares."

"As much so as if he had been my son," said Woodley, earnestly.

"He does not doubt that," said Lizzie, "and therefore admits that he is bound, both legally and morally, to pay you the sum thus advanced on his account."

"Of course he is," said Woodley, "he is too good a lawyer not to know that."

"And, therefore," said Lizzie, "I am authorized to pay you the money upon delivery of the stock and the withdrawal of the suit; or, if you insist upon the continuance of the action, to confess judgment upon the shares of stock being paid into court for his use and subject to his order."

"What!" he cried, in surprise, "you have come to pay me the money?"

"Yes."

"But the summons was only served three days ago."

"That is very true, and it should not have been

served at all. My husband would have paid you cheerfully without suit. You wished to humiliate us, however."

"Of course I did," said Woodley. "But how did he raise the money?"

"Chiefly by the sale of our house," she answered, quietly.

"But that was yours," he said, in surprise. "A judgment could not have touched that."

"Markham said he thought it would, for, though it was a gift from you, he had repaid it," she answered.

"The d—excuse me. The fool! I never appropriated a dollar of that money, but invested it for him," said Woodley, angrily.

"I would not hold it while my husband's debts were unpaid, at all events."

Boaz Woodley looked at her in surprise.

"Well," he said, finally, "you are a wonderful woman. I am half-tempted to withdraw the suit from sheer admiration of your pluck. So you have made yourself homeless to pay your husband's debts! But you did not get twenty thousand dollars for the place did you?"

"Oh, no. I threw in the horses and furniture," she replied, "and put with it a little I had saved, to make up the amount."

"What!" he exclaimed. "Do you know that you have made yourself as poor as a church-mouse?"

"Oh, no," she said, smiling, "I expect to make a fortune out of that stock which you say in your petition now stands in your name, but is really Markham's, and which you will now transfer to me."

“Ah! yes,” said Woodley, exultantly, “I see your game, Mrs Churr. You are a shrewd woman and a brave one, but you cannot outwit Boaz Woodley—not yet. You could not have devised it, however. Your precious husband has put up a sharp job, but it won’t win!”

“My husband knows nothing of what I have done or intend doing.”

“Oh, of course not,” said Woodley, as he rose and paced the room. “He never laid this beautiful plan to save himself from disgrace. He never sent you, Madam, with your smooth tongue, to wheedle old Woodley to withdraw his suit and transfer the stocks to your name *in order to shield him!* Ha! ha!” he laughed, “it was a splendid plan, but, unfortunately for its success, Boaz Woodley has passed his first childhood and has not yet reached his second!”

“So you refuse to comply with my request?” asked Lizzie, quietly, though there was a tremor about her lips and a pallor in her cheek that bespoke her excitement.

“Refuse!” said Woodley, hoarsely, as he stood before her and raised his hand and shook the index finger in her face. “Refuse! I should think I did, Madam! You did not think I cared about the money, did you? It was revenge I wanted—revenge upon an ungrateful miscreant who—”

“Stop, Mr. Woodley,” she cried, springing to her feet, with flashing eyes. “No man shall speak thus of my husband in my presence—least of all you, Boaz Woodley!” she added, scornfully.

“Hoity-toity!” he cried, mockingly, “and how long

has it been that Madam could afford to despise Boaz Woodley? Who took her husband from the ranks and made him a General? Who found him obscure, and made him a Congressman? Who made him rich and respected that was a plodding beggar before?"

"You have been very kind to Markham, Mr. Woodley. We can never forget that, but do not press me too far? Remember that a woman jealous of her husband's honor is a dangerous thing! Do not drive me too far," said Lizzie, earnestly, "or you will regret it. Remember, I warn you that I shall not be silent always!"

"What, does she threaten?" sneered the great man, as he towered above her in wrathful pride. "The worm whom I have nourished! Know, Mistress Markham Churr, that I have loved you and your husband better than Boaz Woodley ever loved one not of his own blood before—aye, perhaps better than he loved even that!"

"You have been very kind," said Lizzie, interrupting him, with tears in her eyes, and laying her hand persuasively on his arm. "You have been very kind—a father to us—and we have loved you as such. Mr. Woodley, I love you—Markham loves you. If you are so angry with him that you cannot forgive him, let us at least part in kindness. Let me pay you the money, and you withdraw the suit and transfer to me those stocks which have been the cause of all this trouble."

"Transfer the stock to you?" said Woodley. "Do you persist in thinking me a fool? Will you not understand that as much as I once loved Markham Churr, so much and more I hate him now? That stock belongs to the Honorable Markham Churr, the virtuous

member of Congress who is about to inveigh against the road in which he has an interest! Do you suppose that any one will believe that he never authorized me to purchase those shares, but that I did it on my own unbiased judgment? Not a word of it. They will say he was to receive that amount for his influence and services; that he wanted more, and threatened to turn against the road if it was not given; that, when he did so, I sued him for money expended for his benefit, and to avoid a trial—to avoid exposure—he, the Honorable Markham Churr, confessed judgment and forced his wife to sell her home to pay it in order to secure his good name! That is what they will say. That is what I want them to say. I don't want your money, woman. I want revenge. Do you understand? I want to show you, Madam, and your canting sneak of a husband, that Boaz Woodley can unmake his own creations—can crush as well as build up! Do you hear, Lizzie Churr? I will make the name of which you are so proud a stench and a reproach in the whole country. I will illustrate your Bible to you. I will cover him 'with shame as with a garment.' I will make you thank God that your child is dead. I will make you pray hourly that you may never have another. Do you understand now? I would not transfer those shares to you for forty thousand dollars—no, not for a hundred thousand. Those shares and this suit are the first step toward my revenge. Ha! ha! The Honorable Markham Churr shall come out of Congress! The election comes on next fall! He shall come out, disgraced and beggared! You know the people of this District. How they will

despise a cowardly hypocrite such as they will believe him to be!"

"You dare not do it, Boaz Woodley; you dare not try it!" cried Lizzie, in tones of defiance.

"Dare not? And why, pray?"

"Because it is a lie. You know my husband never became a party to your conspiring to make this Trans-Continental Road a gigantic swindle. He *did* believe the road was needed, would be a good thing for the country, and the best use to which the public lands could be put would be to build it. I think he believes that now. But you wish to make those who have honestly put their money in the road lose their investments—the rich of their abundance and the poor their all—in order that a few of you who are in a ring—jobbers, contractors, whatever you call yourselves—may get it all! And, because my husband will not consent to this, you mean to defame and crush him. You cannot do it, Boaz Woodley. I, his wife, tell you so, and in his name defy you!"

"Ah! this is very brave! This is splendid!" cried Woodley, rubbing his hands gleefully. "And what will the little woman do when these rumors begin to creep through the District—when men who were her husband's friends begin to avoid him upon the street, to turn away from him in the court-room, to ignore him in public assemblies, to speak of him with scorn? What will she do when the wives of good citizens look upon her with pity and treat her with neglect? Will she go to every man and woman in the District—nay, in the whole land, and whimper: 'It is not so. It is not true. My husband

was not in the ring. He was only very simple-minded and credulous. He let Mr. Woodley buy and sell on his account, guaranteeing him against loss, and receiving profit, without knowing what this agent bought or did. It is true the agent happened to be Boaz Woodley, the President of the Trans-Continental Company; but my husband, my innocent, honorable husband, never thought of that. It is true, too, that this Woodley, the President of the Trans-Continental Company, has long been my husband's chiefest friend—had taken him from obscurity and placed him in power. My husband's home was also the home of Woodley. His door was always open, day or night, to this privileged friend. I, his wife, gave Boaz Woodley my confidence, my society—aye, a daughter's caresses. He was the nearest of friends—a benefactor and a father to us both. As his kindness was unbounded, so was our trust in him unlimited?' This is what you would say. This is what truth would compel you to say. And what would you add: 'But my husband never talked with him about the Trans-Continental. He knew nothing about his schemes in regard to that.' Oh, lame and impotent conclusion! Who could be found to believe it?"

"But it is true," said Lizzie, with tears running down her cheeks, and her hands clasped tightly before her. "It is true, Boaz Woodley, as you know"

"Yes, truth is stranger than fiction very often," he responded, with a chuckle; and when it is, people always believe the lie in preference to the truth. Yes, it is true. Your husband has such absurd notions about what he calls 'right,' and 'honor,' and 'truth,' that I never dared

let him know what I was doing for him, for I thought and intended that it should all be for him in the end. I was always afraid he would get on his high-horse, and, while charging some windmill notion, run his spear through his friends. I did not think that he was mean enough to injure me deliberately, but feared he might do so unknowingly. So I kept quiet on everything that could awaken any of his whims until the very last minute. Gad! it's well I spoke then. If we had counted on him without sounding him first, as all the rest thought we could, we might have been caught in a deal of a mess. Yes, it's true, as you say; but nobody will believe it. And that makes my revenge all the more complete. Your husband pretends to believe in the innate power of truth—that it is mighty and will prevail!”

“He does believe it, and it is true,” said Lizzie, vehemently.

“Yes,” continued Woodley, “*you believe* it. I give *you* credit for sincerity in that. And you have tried to indoctrinate him with the same confidence in the preternatural power of truth for self-assertion and vindication. Well, now you will have an opportunity to test your theory.”

“But surely, Colonel Woodley,” said Lizzie, “you will tell the truth when appealed to, and vindicate, by your own word, the character of my husband?”

“Well, I don't know, Mrs. Churr. I rather think now that I shall. I make it a rule never to lie unless something is to be gained by so doing. Not that I am afraid to lie, or would hesitate to do so if necessary; but

it is generally easier to establish and stand by a fact than an invention. A man's memory is less reliable as to what he has invented than as to what he has experienced. I suppose I should tell the truth if questioned; but I should do it in such a manner that everyone would believe what I said to be a lie. If necessary to my revenge, though, I would tell any number of lies—yes, and swear to them, too!"

"Oh! Colonel Woodley," cried Lizzie, in distressed tones. "Don't, don't—for your own sake, don't speak so! I know you do not mean it; you cannot mean it!"

"Do not mean it? Boaz Woodley does not mean it?" he exclaimed. "Ah, if you knew to whom you are speaking! If you knew how long Boaz Woodley had lived a lie, you would not wonder that he had ceased to fear falsehood."

Lizzie's cheek grew pale, but her voice was firm, as she said, looking him full in the eye:

"I do know it!"

"Know what?" he asked, raising his eyebrows and drawing down his lip, with an incredulous sneer.

"Both the lie you have lived, and how long you have lived it!" she answered, solemnly.

"Indeed!" he cried, in mocking tones. "And will the oracle speak? Will she deign to reveal the past? Pray be seated again. I promise myself a rich treat. Read my heart, unravel my life, and tell me how long it has exemplified a lie!" He threw himself into a chair as he spoke, and, with his head upon one side, his legs crossed, and rubbing his hands together, looked up into her face. She was as pale as marble, but her

eyes turned full on him with a gaze from which his own mocking orbs half-shrunk.

"Proceed, Madam!" he cried. "I am dying to know what you can reveal. Since when, think you, has Boaz Woodley been engaged in the very creditable business of enacting a lie to amuse the world which regards him as so matter-of-fact and prosaic?"

"Colonel Woodley," she said, beseechingly, "do not drive me to desperation. We owe you much, my husband and I. Do not force me to strike in his defence. Do not make me choose between my husband and our benefactor. Withdraw your suit, give me the order for the transfer of the shares, and let me go home."

"Oh! no, Madam. That is too common a gypsy trick. You cannot deal in vague hints and gain the name of a fortune-teller with me. I am not afraid of threats. I have heard them before. You must verify your words, and tell how long I have lived a lie, or acknowledge yourself a liar. Come, now, my charming child, my sometime daughter—since when?"

"Since the nineteenth day of April, eighteen hundred and twenty-one," she said, in calm, even tones.

Had a thunderbolt burst in the room, the effect could not have been more surprising. Boaz Woodley sprang from his chair as if his seventy years were but a feather's weight to his giant frame. His face was ashen in its pallor, his jaws strained close, his brows drawn down with agonized surprise, his eyes, staring with amazement, seemed to devour her looks with a hungry eagerness, as he leaned over her and hissed in her ear, in a hoarse, threatening whisper:

“What do you know of the nineteenth of April, eighteen hundred and twenty-one? Speak!”

She did not quail, but eye and voice were firm as she replied :

“I know that Boaz Woodley is Basil Woodson.”

The great hands clasped the massive brow; the fierce eyes closed, with quivering lids; the strong jaw drooped; the mighty frame quivered for an instant, and then sank, limp and powerless, with an unconscious groan, into the chair from which he had just risen.

It was but for an instant, though. He had battled too long to give up at one blow. He put down his hands presently, and looked up, with a dull, dogged stare.

“And how did you learn this, Madam?”

“You remember, Colonel Woodley, you employed my husband that is now, my lover then, in the matter of the Aychitula Bank.”

“Yes, damn the viper!” said Woodley, starting up. “I always had a suspicion that he was playing me false. I swear he has kept his counsel well all these years! He is deeper than I thought. But, by heaven! I’ll checkmate him yet. I’ll have my revenge, if it costs me my life! Do you hear?” he shouted. “I will have revenge if I die the instant it is accomplished!”

Lizzie’s lip grew pale, but she did not tremble. Her eyes burned with a steady blaze as she said :

“My husband was never false to you or any other man, Colonel Woodley. He could not be. He knew nothing of your box until it was handed him by the express-messenger, and has no idea *to-day* from whom it came.”

"He tells you that?"

"I know it!"

"How, pray?"

"I sent it to him myself."

"You? *You* sent it to him?"

"I did."

"And how, pray, did you come to have possession of my property?"

"I dug it up in the garden of Thomas Horton."

"At what time?"

"On the night of the tenth of August, one thousand eight hundred and sixty."

"And how did you know it was there?"

"I was visiting Amy Levis, being anxious to see the place where the crime was committed which Markham was investigating. My attention was directed to a withered currant-bush. After I went to bed, I dreamed that the lost box was buried under it. I dug and found it."

"And when did you tell Markham Churr of this?"

"I have never told him."

"What, never told him of this exploit?"

"Not a word."

"You opened the box, or found it open?"

"I opened it."

"And you." said he, coming towards her with his hand clinched and face working with passion; "you purloined the paper which I lost, and so guessed my secret."

"On the contrary, when I packed up the box to send to Markham, I thought I had put every scrap of paper in it which it contained when it came into my posses-

sion. When Markham came back and told me of your rage at its loss, I was much surprised. I searched in my room, and could only find a copy of an old newspaper. I was confident that this was all that could have been lost, but I could not account for your excitement in regard to it. I read it again and again, until I had committed almost every line, even of the advertisements, to memory. I was sure that it contained the key to your life if I could only find it. I knew you could be a dangerous man, and I feared you might sometime get Markham into your power, or seek to do so."

"So you put yourself on my track did you?"

"I tried to read the riddle of your life."

"And while I was pushing your husband's fortune you were trying to find a way to injure me?"

"I was trying to find the weak spot in your armor, so that you should not be able to destroy my husband should he ever be required to thwart your will."

"Well, what did you do?"

"I went to Westbridge, Massachusetts, where the paper was printed."

"And found out what?"

"Nothing that gave me any light."

"I thought as much," said Woodley, with a sigh of relief.

"I learned all I could of everyone who was named in that paper, however."

"Indeed? But that was not much."

"Not much of some. Nothing of others."

"So I thought."

"I learned, in detail, however, the history of one person who was very pointedly mentioned in the paper, and that person was Basil Woodson."

"Ah! what was that history?"

"That he was taken from poverty in his childhood by a good man whose love he won, became his confidential clerk and intended heir; that he falsified his benefactor's accounts and purloined his money to squander it at the gaming-table; that when detected in his crime there was a fierce quarrel between him and his benefactor; that on the night of that day the desk of the merchant was robbed, and the merchant himself left dead in his counting-room with a knife belonging to Basil Woodson buried in his heart—and Basil Woodson himself had disappeared. He was indicted for forgery and murder, but was never apprehended nor tried."

During her recital Woodley had gradually recovered his confidence.

"A very pretty romance! So you guessed that I was none other than Basil Woodson? A shrewd guess, perhaps, but a long way from proof."

"Not at all," she replied, "at that time I had no idea that you were he."

"Then why did you suppose I had the paper in my possession?" he asked.

"I thought you had been attracted by the reward of five thousand dollars offered for his apprehension, and, with your usual tenacity of purpose, had never quite given over the search for him," she answered.

"Then, why did you give me that name just now?"

"Accident threw in my way one of Basil Woodson's letters. I recognized the handwriting, and afterwards procured the books of account kept by him."

"Ah!" gasped Woodley, growing pallid again.

"There could be no doubt as to who wrote them," she continued; yet, lest there should be any doubt, I followed Boaz Woodley backward until the date of the disappearance of Basil Woodson."

"And how long, pray, have you known all this?" asked Woodley, bitterly.

"I have suspected it for a considerable time. I have had proof of it but for a few months," she answered.

"You anticipated trouble over the Trans-Continental?"

"I did."

"Lizzie Churr, you are a wonderful woman! I never appreciated you or your sex before."

"I love my husband," she said, simply, while a warm blush shot over the pallor of her cheek.

"And now you propose—?"

"I propose," said she, interrupting him, "to pay you the money which is your due upon your ordering the shares to be transferred to me and withdrawing your action against my husband."

"And if I do that?" he asked, cautiously.

"If you do that, and do not seek to injure Markham farther, the knowledge I have shall perish with me."

"But your husband?"

"He knows nothing of it."

"Your agent then—your confidant?"

"I have had none."

"What! You do not mean to say you worked it out alone?"

"No, but those who worked under my direction knew only isolated facts. I kept the key in my own hand."

"Why did you do that?"

"Chiefly out of consideration for you. Oh! Colonel Woodley," she said, bursting into tears, "you do not know how this horrible thing has distressed me. I have striven not to believe it. Even now I would to God it were not-true."

"Tush," said Woodley, scornfully, while his brows worked ominously, "you do not mean to say that you have never told anyone else what you have told me to-day?"

"Not a living soul she answered, earnestly.

"Woman, you lie!" he ejaculated.

"Sir!" she cried, proudly, "you know I would not, to save my soul!"

Woodley watched her keenly. A look of sinister triumph stole over his face.

"I believe you," he said, as he came slowly towards her, "and I pity you, too."

"Why?"

"Because," he said, as he grasped her arm, "you have come to play a desperate game with a desperate man. You are a brave woman, but you have outdone yourself."

"What will you do?" she asked, quietly.

"He bent forward and whispered in her ear: "The

secret which you have learned is worth more than the little life I have left. You do not leave this house alive until I have every scrap of evidence you possess upon the subject. What do you say to that?"

"You have me in your power."

"I should think I had! Now, mark me, you are a brave woman. I have always liked you. I admire you now more than ever before. You ought to have been a man, only it would have been a pity to spoil such a woman. Now, listen. I do not believe in your God, or, if I do, have nothing to hope for from Him. So there is no need to take an oath. I have no inducement to lie. Are you listening?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, you will send to have that evidence, every scrap of it, brought here at once, and you will swear upon the Bible never to utter one word of what you know, or—"

He stopped.

"Well?"

"Mrs. Markham Churr will meet with a fatal accident as she is leaving my porch," hissed Woodley.

He tightened his grip upon her arm as he spoke, and glowered upon her in demoniac triumph. She shrank away from him as far as her arm would allow, but it was in horror and disgust, and not from fear.

"And if I should surrender the proofs?" she asked.

"I will crush your husband all the same," he said, "but I will spare you. You may keep your money and your home. I will give you a receipt in full, but the

action shall stand, the pleadings shall remain. Your husband shall be disgraced. What do you say!"

"I cannot deliver the proofs."

"Cannot. You mean you *will* not!"

"I cannot."

"Why?"

"Another has them."

"Who!"

"My husband."

"Your husband!"

"Yes."

"Did you not say he knew nothing of them?"

"Yes, but—"

"But what? Have you lied to me?" he cried, shaking her fiercely. "You had better never have been born than have done that!"

She looked into his eyes, but he could not see a particle of fear in the great gray orbs he tried to fathom with his glance. She took out her watch and opened it, then held it up before Boaz Woodley with her disengaged right hand, and said, quietly:

"Markham knows nothing of what I have told you, but when the clock strikes one he will know it all."

"How is that?" he asked, in surprise.

"Before he left I gave him a package containing a full account of what I had learned and the place of deposit of the proofs, directing him to open and read them at one o'clock to-day unless he should receive a certain message from me in regard to it before that time, in which case he was to retain the package unopened for me."

He looked at the watch. It was then twenty minutes of twelve o'clock.

"Devil!" he cried, flinging her from him with such force that she fell into a chair, while he strode across the room.

He came back with a strange look of agony upon his face, and stood before her.

"Will you send that message?" he asked.

"You know the terms," she answered.

"And I accept them!"

"Then I will send it at once."

"Yes, do not lose a moment."

"You will have the necessary papers ready on my return?"

"Yes, yes," he replied, as he followed her to the door.

"I will be back in half an hour," she cried, as she ran down the path towards the sleigh which awaited her, and was driven rapidly towards the telegraph office.

CHAPTER LI.

THE OVERSTRAINED BOW.

WHEN Lizzie returned, she found Boaz Woodley sitting at the table, with his head resting wearily upon his hands. He seemed hardly to notice her entrance at first. Then, handing her some papers, he said:

"There is a line to the clerk to enter an order of

discontinuance and withdrawal of the pleadings. Here is an assignment of the stock. I don't want the money," he added, as she placed a roll of bills before him. He pushed them towards her, and they fell on the floor.

Lizzie glanced quickly over the papers, and started towards the door. As she turned the knob, he spoke her name. She came back, and stood before him.

"It is seldom," said he, "that a man has outdone me; never a woman until to-day. Strangely enough, I do not hate you. On the contrary, I would give more for your good opinion than that of any other person on earth. I know," he added, in answer to a movement she had made, "that it is quite impossible that I should receive it, after what has passed; but there is one thing in regard to which I wish to set you right. I don't wish to stand worse in your thought than I must necessarily do. I did not kill my benefactor—at least, not intentionally nor directly. This is how it happened (and I speak as truly as if the words were my last): Under the temptation of the gaming-table, I had taken from him, at first, small sums. Afterward, as my passion for play increased its demands, I falsified the books, and took still larger sums. Finally, in the vain hope of making up my losses, I forged my employer's name on bills of exchange forwarded to us by distant customers, and failed to enter them on the books. My conduct was suspected by him, and finally discovered. He called me into the counting-room in the afternoon, and reproached me with my course. I acknowledged my fault. He did not threaten me with punishment, or use any violent language. He took his will

from a drawer in the desk, showed me that it was drawn in my favor, and then destroyed it before my eyes. He said he had loved me too well to submit me to exposure and indictment, but I must leave his house, his employ, and the neighborhood at once. After supper, he went to his counting-room again. I wandered about for a time, and then dropped into the store. I looked through the glass pane in the door of the counting-room, and saw him at his desk. I wanted to go in and speak to him, but could not. I went down into the cellar, and drew myself a glass of rum. I remained there, sitting alone in the darkness, until the clerks had closed the store and gone away. After a time, I thought I heard conversation in the counting-room. Then I heard something like a scuffle; there was a fall, and a cry for help. I think I must have been asleep before this happened, for I was somewhat confused in regard to locality. I shouted at the top of my voice, and started for the ladder which led up into the store. Somehow, I could not find it for quite a while. When I reached the counting-room at length, the sperm candle was burning quietly upon the desk, and my employer was lying on the floor. The stool on which he had been sitting was overturned and at the other side of the narrow room. I bent over him, and found him dead, with a knife in his heart. I drew it out, and held it up to the light. It was my own, which I had left on the desk in the afternoon. I was so horrified, that it dropped from my hands and fell upon the floor. All at once, it flashed upon me that I would be accused of the murder. All the horrible circumstances which pointed to my guilt

rushed through my mind in an instant. I was seized with a sudden and irresistible impulse to fly—to save myself. I had not a cent of money left. All I had stolen had gone to satisfy my greed for play. I took the key of the money-drawer from his vest-pocket, opened it with my bloody hand, transferred its contents to my pocket, and fled. I had no idea where I would go; I only sought safety. The West was the refuge of—of—criminals then. I thought I would be sought for there. So I made my way northward, away up into Vermont, close to the Canada border, where I worked for a farmer for nearly a year. Then I became restless and suspicious. I do not know that I had any grounds to apprehend danger, but I was afraid. About this time, the copy of the paper you found in my box came into my hands. I do not know why I kept it, but I did, and always kept it in that tin cash-box, too. That was why I was so anxious to recover it. I was afraid some one might guess my secret. So I came West till I reached the Reserve, where I stopped, and determined to flee no further. I became friendly with a young lawyer, and concluded to study for the bar. I was soon ready for admission. Not much was required in those days, and I had studied hard. I determined to make a new start under my new name, be strictly honest, and put my past so far away that none could link it with my present life. From the outset I have prospered wonderfully, as you know; but I have always been afraid. Though I was not guilty of my benefactor's death directly, it may be that he put an end to his own life on account of my bad conduct. There was no one

else to do it. The store was closed and locked, and when I left the counting-room I had to unlock it from the inside. I heard of my indictment, and the reward offered for me. I dared not inquire further about the matter. I have been afraid of this fearful thing from that hour. I have done a great deal in the world since, but there has not been a single hour in which the remembrance of that day has not blasted all enjoyment of my subsequent accomplishments. Can you believe this? Can you believe that I am not guilty of blood?"

"I do believe you, and pity you most sincerely," she answered; "and it may be that I shall bring you some consolation if I say to you that your employer neither died by your hand, nor yet by his own on account of your acts. Another confessed, years afterward, the murder for which you fled."

"Is that true?" demanded Woodley, eagerly, springing to his feet.

"It is."

"Thank God!" cried the strong man, while his frame trembled with emotion. "I am free at last! I need not hide now. I need not cower under this name, which I hate, though I have made it honorable among men!"

He strode up and down the room, with the air of one who has thrown aside a burden which taxed his strength to the uttermost. "I am free now! I can resume my own name! I can be a man among men again! Oh, why did I not know of this before?"

Presently he stopped, sank into the chair from which

he had risen, closed his eyes, and leaned his head on his clasped hands. Then he said, with a groan :

“No, no! It cannot be! Fifty years—active years among busy men—cannot be shaken off! I must still be Boaz Woodley! I have made it a name to be proud of, though it is a badge of shame to me! Be it honorable or shameful now, I cannot be rid of it. It is my shirt of Nessus.

“But you will not hate me—you do not hate me, Lizzie, for the way I treated you to-day?” he asked, suddenly dropping his hands and looking up into her face. I am an old man, and I have seldom asked pardon; but I will go upon my knees to gain your forgiveness!”

“Oh! you were driven to desperation,” she said, with a shudder.

“But I should have killed you,” he said, “I know I should, if it would have accomplished my purpose.”

“Then let us thank God that you did not,” she said; and, moved by some sudden impulse of prayer, she threw herself on her knees beside the old man’s chair, and poured forth a flood of hysterical tears and sobs, and half-audible supplications. Strangely enough, she gave no thanks for her own deliverance, but only spoke her gratitude for the watchfulness which had kept him from crime. As she knelt, with her head bowed upon the side of his chair, he pushed her soft brown hair from her temples and gazed half-wonderingly upon her. After a time he said, with a puzzled look on his face :

“I do not understand it!”

“Understand what?”

"How you can forgive."

"Because—because—I think I could forgive one anything who has done so much for my Markham," she answered.

"But I hate him now—that is, I shall after this."

"That cannot remove our gratitude for the past."

"What made him do so?" he said, petulantly.

"Can you not forgive him?"

"Forgive whom?"

"Markham."

"But he should forgive me."

"He has."

"And does not hate me?"

"No."

"But he might have ruined me!"

"Forgive him."

"I—I—I—don't know how," said the old man, gropingly. He seemed to have become all at once weak and aged.

"Colonel Woodley."

"Yes," absently.

"Will you grant me one request?"

"I suppose," he answered, listlessly, "you can make me do whatever you choose now. I am your slave, and must obey whether I wish to or not."

"Call me *daughter* once more," said Lizzie, with quivering lip.

"You do not mean it?"

"Indeed I do," and she pressed her pure, soft lips to his forehead.

"Oh! my daughter," he cried, as he caught her

head between his hands and returned her kiss, while the tears flowed over his cheeks.

Lizzie sprang away with a light laugh, and with glowing cheeks and dancing eyes fled out of the door with a cheery "Good-bye." She thought the sunshine the brightest she had ever seen as she went back to her own home. Then she gave the papers she had received to Frank Horton, who with his wife had been detained by the death of the good old pastor, and was still at the house. He examined them, and then went out to complete the task and telegraph to Markham of Lizzie's final and entire success.

The brave little woman then sought her couch and slept. It was needed after what she had passed through that day, and as a preparation for what still awaited her. She felt that she had saved her husband from disaster and reconciled him to the friend to whom they owed so much of love and duty.

It was nearly dark when the servant came to awaken her and say that Mrs. Hoyt, who kept the house of Boaz Woodley, wished her to come over at once, as Colonel Woodley seemed "queer-like." Hastily dressing, she repaired to the house of the President of the Trans-Continental. As she crossed the street, a telegraph boy brought her this message :

"Spoke and voted against the bill ; but it passed by a considerable majority."

Entering the room, she found that the great head had lost its kingly poise and was fallen upon one side. The eyes whose gaze few could endure looked at her with a listless, stony stare. The very lids refused to

close over their glassy surfaces. The ears were deaf to her beseeching. The limbs were powerless to sustain the massive form; and the hand, which but that morning had bruised her arm with its fierce grasp hung, cold and heavy by his side. Physicians were called, and remedies applied; but all in vain. That stealthy death-in-life, fell apoplexy, had thrown its mysterious spell over the body and mind of Boaz Woodley.

CHAPTER LII.

THE PATH OF DUTY.

LIZZIE took her place at the bedside of the stricken man, as if the name by which he had last called her had bound her to render filial service. Her husband soon joined her, and united in attention to the strange man to whom they owed so much of good, and by whom so much of evil had been planned against them. But they did not think of this; indeed, Markham did not know the worst of it until long afterwards.

The condition of Boaz Woodley's financial affairs, and the magnitude of his interests, were such that it became necessary that some one should be speedily authorized to act for him. Who it should be was a question to which there could be but one answer. Woodley had no relatives. He was known to have declared that he intended to make Markham his executor, and perhaps his chief legatee. A few had been aware

that there had been some difference between them of late, but that was supposed to have been settled; and the Probate Judge, having first satisfied himself, by medical testimony, of the fact that Boaz Woodley was incompetent to manage and control his estate by reason of mental incapacity, appointed Markham Churr to administer the same, under direction of the Court.

So Markham Churr and his wife found a duty of indeterminate duration cast upon them, which they could by no means avoid. There was no reasonable hope of Colonel Woodley's recovery. It was true that he had rallied somewhat from the total prostration which had seized him at first. He had come to manifest a dull consciousness of life. He ate and drank in a sort of apathetic way, as if his doing so were more the result of physical habit than otherwise. He did not speak or try to speak. Sometimes he seemed to know that he was addressed, and for brief intervals his eyes would seem to have the light of intelligence in them. But it was hard to determine whether this were fact or delusion. He lay motionless, unimpressionable.

Lizzie persisted that he could both hear and understand to a certain degree what was said to him; but others thought that her ardent wish alone was father to the thought. She herself half-doubted it, but she was determined not to fail in her duty on that account. She gave up her pleasure, and made his care the business of her life. She read to him, generally from the Bible, slowly and distinctly, that the dull ears might perchance catch some word of life. Sometimes she read the newspapers, thinking that the prisoned soul might yearn

to know something of the world from which it was shut out, but which it could not leave. She treated him always as if he could both see and hear, neglecting no opportunity to give him pleasure or guard him from annoyance or pain. Frank Horton had purchased the house of Lizzie, after vainly endeavoring to persuade her to accept a loan from him to enable her to meet Woodley's demand, and, he and Amy being desirous since his settlement in Lanesville of establishing themselves in their new home in the early spring, the household of Markham Churr was transferred to the home of Boaz Woodley, and the disinherited *protégé* entered as a matter of friendly and filial duty into the full possession and occupancy of the vast estate which he had refused to receive as the price even of silence when tainted with dishonor.

It was at first generally supposed that he was still the heir, but he voluntarily came forward and declared that, while there had been a will in his favor, he had seen it destroyed but a few days previous to the apoplectic stroke, and he had no idea that another had been executed—certainly not in his favor.

Under this state of facts, it was still more apparent to the Court that Markham Churr was the most suitable person to take charge of the estate. The mental incapacity of Colonel Woodley having been duly certified to by a jury of inquest for that purpose impanelled, General Churr was therefore appointed to control and administer the estate during the continuance of said incapacity, according to his best skill and judgment, and under the control of the Court.

In entering upon the discharge of this trust, Markham deemed it advisable first to look into the relations of the estate to the Trans-Continental Railway Company. His late investigations had led him to doubt very seriously the future success of that scheme, and he feared to find that Woodley's confidence in it had caused him to adventure to an extent which would make it almost as hazardous to withdraw as to proceed. Knowing the old man's habit of carefully noting every matter of importance, he began first to study all the memoranda he could find upon the subject. He soon learned the amount of Woodley's interest in the road, and the nature of the directions which had been given to his brokers in regard to the sale of the stocks. He also found an agreement between his ward and certain other parties who were to constitute the great Railway Construction Syndicate of America, dated before the incorporation of that company, and agreeing to take a certain number of shares therein at a certain price per share. The conditions were in all respects identical with the charter which had since been granted, and in accordance with which the Syndicate had organized since Woodley's prostration. Hardly had he learned these facts, when there came almost simultaneously accounts of the sales from the various brokers, and a demand from the Syndicate for a compliance with the terms of the contract.

Upon comparing and combining the accounts of sales of Trans-Continental stock and the purchase of other stocks directed to be made at the same time, Markham was amazed at the sagacity displayed in al-

most the last financial act of the now hopeless paralytic. He had judged rightly that the passage of the bill and the subsequent efforts of the new Syndicate would for a time enhance the stock of the Trans-Continental. As a result of this, the different brokers had sold, on the account of Woodley, several thousand more shares of stock than he had held, at a figure which not only saved the estate from loss, but represented a considerable profit on the outlay, if the excess could only be provided for. He at once telegraphed for the transfer of all the stock standing in the name of Woodley to the purchasers, and then informed the President of the Syndicate that, unless the estate was formally released from the agreement made with the Syndicate, and the brokers' contracts for sales of shares (in excess of what the estate held) taken off his hands and filled by the Syndicate, he must allow it to be made known that Boaz Woodley, late President of that Company, had sold out every share of his stock in the Trans-Continental Railway Company; that he was compelled to this course because he had no other means of filling the sales-contracts, and, as trustee for the estate, he felt it very desirable that, in Colonel Woodley's present condition, the contract with the Syndicate should be annulled.

Now, none knew better than the managers of the Syndicate that the standing of the Trans-Continental as a stock was largely due to the connection of Boaz Woodley with the company. Not only had he been regarded as a most capable financier, but his practical knowledge of railroads was known to be very great, and besides all that, he was universally regarded as one of

those kings of fortune who commanded good luck in whatever he undertook. A public announcement that he had sold would seriously depress the Trans-Continental stock, and the buoyancy of that stock was, for the present, of the utmost importance to the Construction Syndicate. The Executive Committee of that corporation therefore closed with General Churr's offer without discussion, and in a few days the estate of Boaz Woodley was clear of all relations with the Trans-Continental.

Markham felt that he had delivered the estate from great peril, and began to breathe more freely; nor was his contentment at all lessened at discovering that by this operation, into which he had been forced, he himself had realized upon the stock purchased for him by Woodley considerably more than had been paid for it. He now devoted himself entirely to consolidating the estate, making no new ventures, and realizing as rapidly as possible from all investments which he considered doubtful. He considered this to be his duty, in view of the fact that he might at any moment be called upon to turn it over to the heirs of his ward, whose death was likely to occur at an early day.

Little did he dream of what awaited him. The Railway Construction Syndicate of America was his enemy, and he was doomed to feel its power.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE CROWN OF THORNS.

THE time for the biennial convention to nominate a Congressional candidate for the *n*th District drew near. Markham had become so deeply engaged in a duty which he considered paramount to all others that he had determined, upon the meeting of the convention, to withdraw his name from further consideration. He had not as yet made this intention public, but there was more than a month to elapse before the convention, and there seemed no sign of opposition.

Not that his course in Congress had been in all things satisfactory to all his constituents. That would have been impossible. In the first place, there was a considerable number of men, each one of whom would never feel exactly satisfied while any other person than himself occupied the place, and each one of these had a considerable number of friends and followers who expected place and preference when their particular friend and champion should represent the District. These were all opposed to him. Then there were a good many disappointed aspirants for Post-offices, and Collectorships, and Consulates, and all the various forms of Federal patronage and political plunder. These also were opposed to the incumbent.

Then, too, there was the due proportion of those

chronic grumblers who infest the political world. First, the Temperance Reformers, who had learned with sorrow that the Honorable Markham Churr, of the *n*th District, had refused to introduce and advocate a bill providing that every one who should drink ardent spirits, wine, or any fermented or malt liquors, except by prescription of a physician, should be adjudged a lunatic, and have a guardian appointed for his person and estate forthwith. Then, there was the Woman's Rights and Female Emancipation Society, which had sent him numerous petitions and had waited upon his wife to prevail upon her to take part in their plan of human redemption by adopting the costume of the Reformed and Emancipated Female. They reported finding her tricked out in all the abominations of modern fashion; that, after listening to their address, she smilingly told them that they must excuse her, but really, from the examples she had seen, she did not think the Reformed costume either becoming or desirable. For herself, she frankly confessed she liked pretty things, and did not intend to discard them.

Besides these, were the usual number of objections to his course. Some thought he had not been Radical enough; others that he had been too extreme. Some insisted that he should have supported Thad Stevens's plan of reconstruction instead of Mr. Sherman's; while there were not lacking those who thought that neither one contained the elements of severity and retribution which prudence and justice demanded. And so on.

In addition to this, Markham Churr was a political upstart. Neither he nor his backer, Boaz Woodley,

belonged to the tribe of political Levites who were of right entitled to minister at the altars of State. It is true that the principle of hereditary rights is thoroughly exploded in theory in our Republic, but in practice it is different. Who cannot point to families which claim office and place as of divine right, and hold it generation after generation. There is not a State which has not its dynasties of the one party or the other, and every new man who aspires to popular favor or public service, unless he bends to their caprice and becomes their instrument, is looked upon as an outsider.

So that, while there had been no organized opposition to Churr, since his first enthusiastic nomination, the elements of discontent were at hand. If they could be united against him, or in favor of another, it would be possible to unseat him even if he desired to be returned.

One day, in looking over the Republican papers of his District as usual, he was surprised to find in each one of them a somewhat disparaging allusion to himself. It was not much, and nothing definite. Some of them seemed to hint at possible disclosures and others expressed only vague dissatisfaction. They were not at all alike in thought or style. One was only a squib of two lines, another a stickful, and yet another reached to half a column. None of them said anything bad about him, but then they studiously avoided saying anything good. It annoyed him. It was a strange and disagreeable coincidence. Others noticed it too. The next day, the village paper—his own peculiar organ—took up his cause, and gave an eloquent vindication of his course. This seemed to be the spark in the maga-

zine. Instantly, the press of the District was ablaze with the most infamous and disgraceful insinuations.

At first he could not understand it. When the source of its virulence became finally apparent to his mind, he had no proof to sustain his suspicion and could make no use of it for attack or defence. Nothing could have been more skilfully planned than this assault. The *Clarion Bugle*, which began it, inquired: "Whether it was not about time that the frenzy of the war should cease to control nominations. The fact that a man had been a good soldier did not argue *prima facie* that he had any peculiar qualifications for civic office, but rather the reverse. The present incumbent had no doubt been an excellent soldier, and had manifested considerable zeal in his present position, but it seemed as if the exigencies of the time demanded from the voters of the *n*th District a Representative of experience, maturity and character."

The *Beaver Express* followed, admitting, as it stated, "the extraordinary ability which General Churr had shown, both as an officer and a parliamentary leader, and the exceptional success with which he had advocated many most important measures; yet there was something more important to the voters of the *n*th District than the mere *ability* of its Representative. What that was, it would leave for them to determine."

The *Mesopotamia Owl*, the chronic jester of the District press, declared it to be "one of the things that nobody knows, you know: How General Churr came to be nominated for the — Congress."

The *Turnbull Herald* regretted " * * * that

the sudden acquisition of wealth by the present very able Representative of the District, whose course it had in the main very gladly sustained, gave something of color to the injurious aspersions afloat in regard to the use he had made of his position as a legislator."

The *Kuka Beacon* averred that "the spectacle of a young man utterly without means at the time of his admission to the bar, of unknown parentage and obscure antecedents, becoming in a few years a man of wealth, a member of Congress, the owner of a splendid establishment, and noted for the style in which he lived even in Washington, without ever having had a case in any court, or any other apparent means of acquiring a competency beyond his pay as an army officer and a Congressman, was one of the most remarkable instances of successful economy which even our land of marvelous opportunities had yet produced."

Then the fire began to spread, and the *Reflector*, published at the State capital, noticed the matter thus: "The papers of the *n*th District are beginning to inquire how their Representative came by the vast sums of money which he has expended and the property he has acquired in the last few years. It is stated that he was utterly without property in 1861, and has never been known to have any other means of support than his pay as a soldier and an officer and a member of Congress. He is said now to have one of the finest residences and the very finest turnout in his District, and is known to have lived in Washington in a style which very few could afford. It is time that public servants were called to account, and General Churr had better

‘rise and explain,’ and that quickly, or when the convention meets he will not be heard of.”

For a week or two, the newspapers, not only of his State and District, teemed with these vague intimations, which it was equally dangerous to notice or neglect. It is wonderful how soon a man’s friends, or those who call themselves friends, can drop away from him. Before this fusilade began, Markham thought himself, and in truth was, the most popular man in his District. His straightforward, manly course, together with his evident desire to do credit to his constituents in all respects, had won the favor and regard both of his political supporters and opponents. The breath of calumny changed all this as if by magic. His townspeople and neighbors began to regard him with coolness. When he went upon the streets, he noticed curious glances and half-concealed sneers directed towards him. He could put his hand upon his heart and honestly declare that he was guilty of no wrong. He could not remember one dishonorable act of his life. No falsehood had ever crossed his lips. Towards man and woman his life had been upright and sincere. Yet he could not help manifesting his annoyance at this attack. The suspicion of his neighbors cut him most deeply. A few friends stood by him, but they seemed to be powerless to stem the tide of detraction which was flowing in upon him. One friend he had who was not content to believe in his uprightness, but strove to demonstrate it to others—the Rev. Frank W. Horten. But this was looked upon as the mere partiality of friendship.

Among the curious evidences of his depreciated

character was the fact that a class of men whom he had never associated with began to greet him familiarly. Men of damaged reputation, who lived by fraud and chicanery—moral “dead-beats”—claimed his acquaintance, with a sort of glee. The misery which “loves company” reached out its hand to him, and clapped him on the shoulder.

But he had not yet drained the cup of bitterness to the dregs. The next blow was given in one of the great New York dailies, and was copied in every paper in the District—almost every paper in the country :

“A WASHINGTON RUMOR.

“It is currently reported in Washington that a certain member of Congress, whose name we do not give, though it is freely repeated there, who was a special *protégé* of one of the largest stockholders of the Trans-Continental Railway Co., had been given by his patron a certain number of shares of stock in the road about the time of the first organization of the company. It was entirely a personal gift to the young man, to whom he was greatly attached, and whom he intended to make his heir. Unfortunately, the M. C. considered it as intended to secure his support for the road, and when a bill came up for an amendment of the charter and extending the privileges of the corporation, he demanded a farther *bonus* in consideration of his service in helping to secure its passage. Upon this being made known to the officers of the company, it was met by a prompt refusal. Thereupon the young Congressman threatened to oppose the bill and defeat its passage. His patron

(who is reported, by the way, to sustain also a much closer relation toward him) remonstrated with him, and offered to give him his entire interest in the road if he would not persist in his foolish demand. It was in vain, however. The M. C. declared that he did not want his patron's stock, probably thinking himself sure of it at no distant day, but a *bonus* from the company for his service, and this he would have or he would oppose the bill. Disgusted and chagrined at his conduct, the patron left the city before the vote upon the bill, and had barely reached home when the shame and excitement which he had undergone produced apoplexy, and he now is a hopeless and unconscious paralytic. The M. C. remained and fulfilled his threat. He was *the only member who spoke against the bill*. When he had concluded an angry and senseless fanfaronade of about an hour, to the surprise and disgust of all who heard him, the vote was taken, and was overwhelmingly in favor of the bill. Several said they voted for it purposely to rebuke his treachery and folly. If he had succeeded in defeating the bill it would have utterly ruined his patron, whose estate we understand he now controls and will probably soon enjoy. It is looked upon by all as the most desperate piece of political buccaneering ever attempted in Congress."

Another struck a still tenderer chord by openly proclaiming:

"We never heard of the name of Churr until the affair of the Aychitula Bank, at which time Boaz Woodley dug up the present Representative and made him a sort of detective. We believe the man who committed

the robbery is now his closest friend, and almost his only defender. The name 'Churr' is a queer one, and would seem to give color to the rumor now afloat in regard to the relation which this unknown youth actually sustained to his apparent patron."

There was a pause for a few days, but Markham saw that the poison was acting. Then came another attack. It was suggested that:

"The heirs of Colonel Woodley should look after their interests. It is not probable that the Colonel will ever again be able to manage his estate, and the power of transformation which the present trustee has already exhibited should put them on their guard."

The sale of the bonds of the Trans-Continental afforded subject-matter for still another: "The first act of the trustee of Colonel Woodley's estate, as we are informed, was to sell out all the shares held by him in the Trans-Continental. He probably did this for the purpose of injuring the road, whose officers had refused to accede to his terms when the bill for the new charter was pending. The continued advance of that stock has shown not only the folly of his act in that view, but his incapacity as a financier. Since the sale, the stock has advanced nearly seven per cent., which upon eight thousand shares would be quite an appreciable gain to even the vast estate of Colonel Woodley."

Upon the publication of this, the newspaper in his own village, which had heretofore staunchly maintained his cause, showed signs of falling off. It stated that: "While it could not be doubted that General Churr, on account of his intimate relations with Colonel Woodley,

was by far the fittest man in the community to have charge of his estate, yet it must be confessed that if the facts in regard to the sale of the Trans-Continental stock were as reported it would seem that he had made a serious blunder and give some color to the rumors in circulation against him."

This publication was made by the editor without consultation with Markham. His last public ally had fallen away from him.

The time for the convention approached, and the current of feeling against him had only grown deeper and stronger. There was a fierce fight between rival candidates for his place, but no one mentioned his name in connection with it. He seemed to have become in the political world what Boaz Woodley was in the world of matter, a helpless paralytic. He was not dead. Everyone still recognized his existence, sometimes acted upon it for his torture; but, so far as influence or power was concerned, he might as well not have been alive. His influence was neither desired nor feared by anyone. He was the man who *had* been; the dead lion whom the live dogs did not respect.

An action was brought against him to secure his removal as trustee by one who pretended to be an heir of the paralytic, and to be fearful that the trustee would squander the estate. Almost simultaneously with this came an order from the Probate Judge directing him to appear and give bond in the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, with good security, for the faithful discharge of his trust as guardian of the estate of Boaz Woodley, recently adjudged to be *non compos mentis*.

CHAPTER LIV.

A DEBT OF HONOR.

MARKHAM had borne all that had hitherto befallen him with a sort of dogged amazement. He could not believe it possible that he had been hurled in one moment from the summit of popularity to the depths of infamy, without fault and without error. Some of the charges were too foolish to be controverted; others were of such a character that no amount of refutation could diminish their effect. He saw that the Trans-Continental Railway Company, or, rather, the Construction Syndicate, who were to profit by its existence, were taking their revenge upon him for opposing the charter, and, as they no doubt supposed, withdrawing the estate of Boaz Woodley from its complications. It had resolved upon his ruin, and had initiated the crusade against him with the utmost skill. This gave him the key at once of the simultaneous attack upon him by the entire press. The Construction Syndicate had found means to control every newspaper they desired, in order to excite a popular prejudice against him. Fearing that he might turn upon them with the whole power of the vast estate which he held in trust, they had now brought forward this pretended heir of Boaz Woodley, and had compelled the Judge of Probate to require Markham to give a bond, in order

that they might be able to check, by legal means, the impulse of self-protection on his part. He recognized the necessity for immediate action upon his part, though he could not determine upon any clear line of conduct. He was inclined to resign the control of the estate, but if he did so, he might have to relinquish also the care of the invalid. The stricken man had become so accustomed to the presence of Lizzie at his bedside, that if she were absent but for a few minutes longer than usual he seemed to grow restless and uneasy. This fact, more than any other, had tended to convince Lizzie of his consciousness and she had been scrupulously careful so to regulate her periods of absence that he should never miss her at a time when he had been accustomed to have her attentions. The care of this silent, prisoned soul had even stolen her attentions from her husband, so that she had hardly appreciated the storm which was raging around him until he came to consult her about resigning his trust. She listened to all he could tell her about the past few weeks, and felt that the time had come when he should know all that could in any manner affect his conduct towards the sick man to whom he stood in so many and such strange relations. So they sat together during the long summer morning, and she told him all that had occurred between herself and Boaz Woodley, and all that she had learned of that strange life. When it was over, and he had kissed her and called her his wonderful little wife, he said, without a cadence of regret or sorrow in his voice:

“I cannot undertake to defend myself from these charges without rendering the discovery of Colonel

Woodley's secret almost certain, and we owe him too much to endanger that. Do you not think so, Lizzie?"

She did think so, but she could not command her voice to approve the self-sacrifice of her husband. She knew that he was offering his life for his friend; that his gratitude to the dull, speechless man who was in the room beyond had led him to sacrifice his ambition in the past and his hope in the future. She knew that if these shameless charges were not triumphantly refuted, and at once, that he would lose not only the nomination—that was nothing—but all that it stood for—a good name among men. The charges would soon come to be regarded as facts, and her husband would be branded for all time as corrupt, faithless and weak. Yet she knew he was right, and her answer to his question was a kiss upon his forehead.

The next day he prepared a statement of his receipts and disbursements as trustee of the estate of Boaz Woodley, and filed it with the Judge of Probate, with a statement of his reasons for changing some investments, and a request that he might be relieved from the care of the estate as soon as a proper person could be appointed to succeed him. He stated, however, that on account of the friendly relations between himself and his wife and their afflicted friend, he desired to be allowed to remain in charge of his person and to care for him, either upon such allowance as the Court might direct, or at his own expense.

This report excited unbounded curiosity among every class of citizens. Friends and foes were alike nonplussed.

"Where," asked one, "is the account of the matter of the railroad bonds? They are not mentioned at all."

"The report is evidently very skillfully drawn," answered Lawyer Latham, sententiously.

"At any rate," said his interlocutor, "I hope General Churr will come out all right, and I can't help believing that he will. That report seems to be a very manly one, and it would make a great many people feel cheap if it should turn out to be so."

The Hon. Mr. Latham could not resist the impression himself, but he had no intention of allowing it to become general until after the nomination, at least, and, perchance, not till after the election, if it was in his power to prevent it.

So, the next day, he brought an action against Markham in behalf of one who claimed to be an heir of Boaz Woodley, whom he averred was a sister of said Boaz. He alleged in his petition that the said Churr had greatly damaged the estate of said Woodley by a sale or exchange of bonds of the Trans-Continental Company, of which Woodley was known to possess a large number, and thereby reduced the inheritance of the petitioner should the said Woodley die intestate, as there was every reason to believe that he would. He further averred, upon information and belief, that a sum of fifteen thousand dollars, lately deposited by said Churr, in the name of his wife, Elizabeth Churr, in the National Bank of Aychitula, was not in fact the property of his said wife, but the proceeds of certain sales which said Churr had made of the property of his ward, Boaz Woodley. He therefore, having made Mrs. Churr

a party to the proceeding, prayed for an attachment against this fund, and for a full account of the estate of said Woodley while under the management of said Churr. Upon the filing of the petition, a proper bond having been given, the attachment was granted, of course, and served upon the cashier of the bank as well as the parties defendant.

No sooner was this done, than Thomas Horton came over, and, after a long consultation with Markham, persuaded him to resume, or rather continue, the management of the estate, he agreeing to make up for him whatever bond the Judge of Probate might require.

These events excited no little comment. No one seemed exactly able to account for them; but, on the whole, it appeared to be the general belief that the matter was being carried too far, and was becoming a malicious prosecution.

"Why don't he speak out?" was the general inquiry among those who discussed the matter. But Markham held his peace.

Meantime, the day of the convention rapidly approached, and the impression grew that on that day he would break his strange silence, and the hope was freely expressed that he would refute his traducers and utterly demolish his enemies. Still, the days passed on, and he made no sign. So, at last, he was not considered as in the field, and other names were brought forward, and the merits of other aspirants discussed. Each county had its favorite, with the odds slightly in favor of Mr. Latham, whose age and long service to the party were thought to entitle him to especial consideration.

This feeling he had expected to enhance by the suit he had brought against the present incumbent, hoping to appear thereby as a sort of unofficial vindicator of public purity—a self-constituted censor of morals.

But Latham's competitors by no means lost heart at his apparent lead in the race; they trusted to his proverbial ill-luck, and did not fail to seize upon this suit against the trustee of Boaz Woodley as a means of impairing his chances. This made the discussion of Markham's conduct more impartial than it had hitherto been, since the other candidates, in pursuit of their plan of attack upon Latham, were bound to take the most favorable view of the present incumbent. There was a mystery, too, about Markham's very silence which attracted the admiration even of his assailants. He avoided no one, but passed about the streets in the discharge of his business as polite and placid as if he were not the center and object of a curiosity which was gnawing the heart of everyone of his fellow-citizens. Some of his most intimate friends had made bold to remonstrate with him for the course he was pursuing, expressing great confidence in his integrity, in the defensibility of his position, and the almost certainty of success if he would but make the fight. Thanking them for their confidence, he said that he owed a duty, as he considered it, to another, which made it impossible to enter upon the defence of his conduct at this time.

"Do we understand, then," said the spokesman, "that you are no longer a candidate for nomination?"

"By no means, sir," answered Markham. "I should consider it a confession of guilt to withdraw my name

from competition before the convention. The people of the District have seen fit to honor me, and I have served them. They have a right to pass upon my public acts, and approve or disapprove of them by renominating me or refusing to do so. I know in this instance it is not my public acts of which they will judge. As a Representative, I opposed the amendment of the charter of the Trans-Continental. A large portion of the voters of the District approve this act, itself, and all of them will in time. It is alleged, however, that I did it from an unworthy motive. I cannot show the falsity of this without betraying the secrets of one who is no longer able to speak for himself. I do not claim any merit for this, nor will I shrink from any unpleasantness it may bring. I confess I do not expect the nomination, nor am I surprised that so few stand by me. Only the closest personal intimacy and the strongest trust could resist such a skillfully-combined attack as has been made upon me when it is left unanswered."

So his friends withdrew no wiser than when they came, and wondering at the frank and cordial smile which had illuminated the face of their Representative.

On the Saturday before the convention was to meet, Frank Horton, after a long conference with his father, went over to make a final attempt to change the decision of his friend, and induce him, even at that late hour, to undertake his own defence, or at least give his friends the data, and let them do it for him: but in vain.

"It is your own fault, my friend, that you find me so unyielding?" said he, smiling. "I learned from your lips the lesson which has guided me ever since and

made me dare to do what I conceive to be right. 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.'"

"But this is no matter of right or wrong," said Horton.

"Very true; but you do not know how weighty a secret pertaining to the honor of one to whom I owe so much would be disclosed by any defence I might make," responded Markham.

"Yes, I do," said Horton. "I know the man in yonder is not Boaz Woodley!" He pointed toward the open door leading to Woodley's bedroom as he spoke.

"Hush!" said Markham, quickly.

"Oh! you know he cannot hear," said Horton, petulantly, "and there is no probability that he ever will again. Is it right you should blast your whole life just to preserve an *alias* which was probably adopted in pique or sport, for a man who will probably never hear any name this side of the grave?"

"But how did you learn this?"

"No matter. Not from you or yours; I pledge you that. I think you and Lizzie would rather die than disclose it."

"I have no fancy for dying," said Markham; "but I hope we would."

"Well, if you are so stubborn about it," said Frank, "will you permit me to use it for your benefit?"

"I have no right to prohibit your using the knowledge you have gained without my aid; but I expressly request, as a personal favor, that you will not do so during the life of my afflicted friend."

"But he is the same as dead now," persisted Horton.

"I am not sure that I would cast a faint shadow even on his memory in order to explain my own conduct."

"I do think," persisted the young minister, "that you are carrying this spirit to great extremes."

"Such favors as I have received from that man can hardly be too well requited."

"I see it is useless to reason with you," said Frank, with a smile, "and I must say I admire your pluck and your loyalty to your old friend. At the same time, I cannot but think you are carrying it to great lengths. He would never have sacrificed a tithe of that for you."

"Probably not," said Markham, as he remembered his last interview with Boaz Woodley. "Yet I am in debt to him for great favors and disinterested kindness, and I owe him something more than bare justice. We owe him love. To us he has been as a father—an exacting father, in some later respects, it may be true; but none the less paternal and devoted in the main. I should ill requite his kindness and ill deserve your confidence, my friend, if I should consent to profit by a disclosure of his shame."

"I suppose you are right," said Horton, and he extended his hand, while the tears stood in his eyes. "I am afraid," he added, laughingly, "I shall be sorry for having called your attention to that text if you throw it up at me so often."

"And I," said Markham, "can never thank you enough for doing so. Do you know," and his voice grew tremulous, "I hardly think I should have found strength to resist Colonel Woodley's importunities and follow my conscience but for that text?"

“Is it so?” cried Horton. “I thank God for that knowledge.”

“Yes; I have learned the secret of trust in God, and I date my first step toward an active faith in Christ from that sermon.”

“How God reproaches our weakness and want of faith in Him,” said the humble and repentant minister. “If I had asked for the dearest and most precious seal of my ministry which I could possibly desire, it would have been that I might be the means of helping you to that light. Yet I had never made it a subject of prayer. Since your trouble began I have often prayed for you as a friend, and asked that you might have grace to bear your misfortunes and trials. Yet I had never once asked that He would give me your soul, but complained that He did not give me others, for I was beginning to doubt and murmur because I could see no visible fruits of my labors here. And now I find that He had given me this, which I would prize above all others, before I had asked for it. And this is the reason you stand by this stricken man so faithfully: you feel bound to render good for evil?”

“I do not know,” said Markham, in wondering doubtfulness. “I only know that while it is possible to conceal his sad secret I will never permit its revelation—whether he is alive or dead—for any advantage I may derive from its disclosure.”

There was a sound like a groan from the adjoining room. It was that portion of the day when Lizzie usually sought for exercise, while her charge slept. The door into the library had been left open, and Markham

and Horton rushed at once to the bedside. Boaz Woodley, instead of lying outstretched at length, as he had done for more than six months, was huddled in a heap in the middle of the bed, quite off the pillow, uttering strange, shivering moans. They laid him back upon the pillow with some difficulty as Lizzie entered, and she, at a glance detecting a change, sent for the physician.

CHAPTER LV.

A PUZZLED SOVEREIGN.

TUESDAY came, and with it the Convention. Ever since Monday morning the patriots who represented the conflicting interests of those who were willing to be sacrificed had been gathering in the little village. The one hotel had opposing hosts encamped in its two wings, while the commodious law-office of an enthusiastic supporter of Mr. Latham was the headquarters of his faction. As early as the noon of Monday it was apparent that the strength of the three rivals was so nearly equal that there could not be a selection, unless by some serious defection from the followers of the one or the other, until one should withdraw. Each one, it was thought, could elect or defeat whichever rival he might choose, but could not be elected without the aid of one of the others. Mr. Latham could not yield. He must win this time or never. This was admitted by all. It was claimed by his friends that he had been

cheated out of the nomination, when it was first given to General Churr, through the envious machinations of Boaz Woodley. The others were younger men, who could better afford to wait, though no more kindly inclined to such an experiment.

During the afternoon of Monday there arrived, as one of the delegates, Curtis Field, Esq., from Pymatuning, grown portly and sleek since the days when he worked in Deacon Andrus's meadow. Industry, integrity and frugality had brought to him their inevitable result—wealth and consideration among his neighbors. He had been successful in his ventures, too, and now there were few more substantial men in the county than he. One of the most successful cheese-factories was controlled by his stock; he had one of the finest farms and best herds on the Reserve, with a good reserve of his own in the National Bank of Lanesville. He was a man of mark in his part of the district, and was much courted by the rival candidates. Thus far he was uncommitted to any. He was going to Lanesville, he said, to support the best man when he found him, and his neighbors had confidence in his judgment and sent him untrammelled. He held one-fifth the strength of the county, and was besides well known and much regarded by the other delegates for his strong native sense, inflexible integrity and keen wit. He was a valuable man to any one whose cause he might espouse, and dangerous to any whom he might oppose. Prosperity had exercised its usual refining influence upon him, and as he had risen in the world he had conformed to its customs and im-

proved his manners by a careful observation of others, without in the least losing his individuality. Experience and wealth had modified his rude wit and tempered his shrewd sense without in any degree lessening the keenness of the one or detracting from the strength of the other. He was the same warm-hearted Curtis Field, with the same manly love of truth and pluck.

He was at once seized upon by friends of the three aspirants, each anxious to secure his support for his favorite, or at least extort from him a declaration of neutrality. In the course of a couple of hours he had visited each of the three, and had been received by them all with the gushing anxiousness which marks the expectant candidate when conferring with the delegate who has in his hands the power to make or unmake his opportunity. The shrewd farmer, in these interviews, showed himself quite the equal of any of his interrogators in diplomatic skill, and managed to leave each one with the comfortable feeling that he could rely upon the Pymatuning delegate to do him as little harm as possible, if he did not actually support his claims.

After this he went to call on Markham Churr. The welcome he received both from Markham and his wife was of the warmest, for Lizzie had long since learned to prize this staunchest of her husband's early friends.

"So you've come to live at the Colonel's and take care of him since his stroke," he said. "How is he?"

Upon being informed that his situation since Saturday had been very puzzling to the attendant physician, who could hardly decide whether his symptoms pointed to recovery or speedy dissolution, he remarked:

“Wal, Markham, I wish he was well now. I hope you’ll excuse me for not calling you General, but you so bring back the little boy I was fond of that I can’t think of any other name for you than Markham.”

“And I am sure,” said Lizzie, “we should both be offended if you did.”

“Wal, now, I don’t know about that. A man likes to have all his titles, especially when he has earned them as well as your husband has. I must admit, though, that he is as little inclined to forgit his old friends as anyone I ever saw. I used to git right jealous of the man that’s in yonder, though. You know, I had a sort of pride in Markham, as if I was part owner of him, till the old Colonel took him up, and after that I never could get a chance to help him on a step. It comes hard for a man to see a boy goin’ alone whom he has been used to leadin’, even if he knows it’s for the boy’s good and his own advantage.”

“The Colonel has been a very good friend to me,” said Markham.

“That he has,” said Field. “I remember being down to Chattanooga when he had that road on his hands, and I thought he couldn’t have a minute’s time to think of anything else; but no sooner did he find that I had knowed you than he took me to his quarters, and I found he couldn’t say enough for you even then. I told him then all about your young days, and one night after we had been talking about you he jumped up as if he had been stung. ‘Field,’ said he, ‘I’ve got an idea.’ He looked so fierce and earnest all at once that I was most afraid he’d had so many of them that his mind had got

a little unhinged. However, I plucked up courage to tell him that I didn't think that was anything uncommon *for him*. 'H'm—maybe not,' said he, kind o' dry-like; 'but it is about him, Markham.' 'Wal!' says I, 'it seems to me he ought to thank you for havin' had such ideas afore.' 'That may be, too, says he; 'but this is a new one. I've half a mind to tell it to you.' 'As you choose, Colonel,' says I, a little stiff I expect; for I didn't quite like his tone. 'Don't be offended,' he said, politely. 'I'm not used to talkin' out my plans, and hardly know how to go about it. Can you keep a secret?' and he looked at me as if he could see clean through me with them blazing eyes under the great gray brows. 'Fust-rate,' says I, 'as long as I'm seven hundred miles away from the ole woman.' 'You'll do,' says he, laughing. 'Now, let me tell you. There's to be a Congressman elected up in our deestriect next fall.' Then he looked as if he expected to see me git out of my chair in surprise. But I sot still, as calm as a May morning, and said: 'Wal, I've heard bigger pieces of news afore.' 'The devil!' said he—I beg your pardon, Madam; but that's just what he said—'The devil! but who do you think is to be the candidate?'

"Then I thought he was 'lectioneerin' for himself, and was tryin' to get me committed for him; so I said, as cool as a cucumber, 'Wal, Colonel Woodley, I think it's more likely to be you than me.' 'Bah!' he said, so hot I almost thought he would have spit on me. 'It will be Markham Churr!'

"Then I did git up, sure enough. 'Markham Churr!' I said, as soon as I could get breath. 'That's

what I said,' says he, with a smile. 'But how's it to be done?' I asked. 'Never mind,' says he; 'I'll 'tend to that, and Markham shall never know a word of it till he reads it in the papers.'

"He rubbed his hands, and seemed for all the world like a father who had just thought up a good thing to surprise a favorite son with. He did it, too. I was there and saw it done. Ah, he was a great man and a good friend of yours, Markham," said Field, a little embarrassed, as he saw both of his listeners so much affected at his recital.

"You may well say so," responded Markham.

"Yes," said Field, "and that was one reason I wished him well just now. I don't want to seem inquisitive; but I would like to ask why you are lettin' these fellows cut you out of your seat in Congress without so much as lifting a finger to hold it?"

"And I will answer your inquiry just as far as my duty to one who cannot speak for himself will permit," said Markham. "You must have heard," he continued, "that there was a serious misunderstanding between Colonel Woodley and myself in the last—well, the last days of his consciousness."

"About that new charter for the Trans-Continental?"

"Yes."

"They say that was the cause of his attack."

"No doubt the excitement caused by it inclined him to it; but I have good reason to know there was a much better cause for its occurrence.

"I'm glad of that. He wanted you to support the bill, I believe?"

"Yes."

"I'm glad you didn't; for, with all due respect to him, I think it's a fraud."

"No doubt; and that was why I opposed it; but he had set his heart on it, and chiefly, I think, for the sake of Lizzie and myself, whom he was accustomed to call his children, and to whom he intended to leave his property."

"I heard he destroyed the will in your favor."

"That is true."

"And everything will go to his natural heirs?"

"I have learned within a short time that he will leave a will, executed, I believe, a long time ago."

"In your favor?"

"I know nothing of its contents, but suppose not."

"I'm sorry. Did you really think the Trans-Continental was bad, or did you sell out Woodley's stock for spite?"

"I did not sell it!"

"What! Not sell it?"

"I did not; and for the very good reason that he had sold every share before I became his trustee."

"You don't mean that," said Field, springing up.

"Indeed I do," said Markham. "You know Colonel Woodley's handwriting, I presume?"

"As well as my own, which is pretty hard to mistake," answered Field.

"Well, look at that letter. He wrote five such to different brokers but a few hours before he was stricken."

"You don't tell me! And you have sat still and let

these fellows howl all this time without saying a word!"

"Yes."

"But that fifteen thousand?"

"Colonel Woodley sued me for money advanced to purchase stocks for my benefit. Lizzie sold our house, paid off the debt, and took the stock for which the money had been advanced. I sold the stock and deposited the money in her name."

"And there ain't anything wrong about it at all," queried Field, in surprise, "the bill, nor the stock, nor nothin'."

"Of course not," answered Markham, with a smile.

"And you mean to say," said Field, that you are just as straight, and square and honest as you was the day you went out from my house to go to college, and left me and the old woman takin' on as if we'd had a funeral in the house?"

"Just the same, as far as I know," answered Markham, seriously.

"Wal," said Field, "I'm bound to believe you, because your wife 'is nodding amen to what you say, and I know she wouldn't back the whitest lie that ever was whispered, and I'm sure she would have found it out if there was anything crooked about you; but do you know this is confounded embarrassin'?"

"Really," laughed Markham, "I cannot see why?"

"Wal, you see, I come up here determined to have you renominated. In fact the ole woman as good as told I needn't come back unless I did, and you know what that means to one with as little hair left on his head as

I have. I had my plan all arranged and was all ready to go to work on the ground that the bill was a fraud, and, whatever your motive, you'd done right in opposin' it; and you'd sold out the stock on your best judgment. I'm nigh certain this would have carried, for they're in a pretty little fight now, which won't grow any milder by to-morrow. But now that you tell me you are all square and haint backslid at all, I don't know what to do. I shall have to change my plans. Can't you give me one of them letters to show around? Then I can explain the rest, and I believe if you'll show yourself at the Court-House, and make a good rousing speech, we'll shove you through, if you *are* honest!"

"I am sorry I cannot do as you wish," said Markham, laughing heartily.

"Cannot! cannot deny these charges and cram them down the throats of the liars with these proofs? Why, I thought that was your game, and was thinkin' it might be a sharp one," said Field. "Why can't you?"

"Because it would lead to disclosures by no means creditable to Colonel Woodley."

"So you are going to let yourself be beaten for Congress rather than let folks know he was a scamp," said Field, pettishly. "Then why did you let me know it was not as I had guessed it to be?"

"Because I wanted you to know that the honest boy you were so kind to had remained an honest man "

"Thank you—but—but—I b'leve I'd rather have taken that on trust and had my hands loose. You've made me want you nominated more than ever, and tied me up so I don't see how I can bring it about."

"I would rather have your good opinion than be returned to Congress, Mr. Field."

"I believe you would, my boy," said Field, as he rose and extended his hand, "and I'm proud of it, but somehow I'd rather see you back in the House, and I'm bound I will, if possible."

He went back to the hotel to arrange his plan of action, and from that time Markham Churr became a factor which it would have been dangerous to overlook in the Convention of the *n*th District, though he had but one vote as yet which could be counted on with certainty.

CHAPTER LVI.

IN ANIMO DISPONENDO.

THE condition of Boaz Woodley after the day when Markham and Frank had found him fallen forward upon the bed was a mystery to the physicians who were in attendance upon him. A constant restlessness, an almost uninterrupted groaning, with an evident appearance of great anxiety, characterized his condition. He would hardly permit either Markham or Lizzie to be absent from the room for an instant, and only seemed perfectly content when each was holding one of his nerveless hands and watching his yearning gaze. All through the night and the following day these strange symptoms continued. It became evident

to all that his mind was active and some of his senses at work. Many attempts were made to communicate with him, but as he lacked all power to respond with any certainty they were futile. Towards Monday noon, it was evident that he was becoming exhausted with continued excitement, and opiates were administered to prevent further loss of strength. When he fell under the influence of the medicines, Markham and Lizzie were released from their attendance at his bedside, but remained in the library so as to be within call should there be any change. It was here that they saw Curtis Field. On Tuesday morning the invalid was more quiet and peaceful than he had been for several days. After the early breakfast, Lizzie sat down, as was her custom, to read the Scripture to her silent charge—her voiceless auditor, as she was now fully convinced that he was. She had read to him so long that it is not to be wondered at if her reading had become mechanical. And yet perhaps it was well for that darkened soul that she had never lost faith in the possibility of good resulting from it. She had read and re-read whole chapters as slowly and deliberately as a child spells out its alphabet—time and time again, until they had become so fixed in her memory that she repeated them without the aid of the volume before her, and frequently without being conscious of the words she uttered. This was the case on the morning in question. The peculiar circumstances which surrounded her husband drew her mind from the invalid, whose hand she held as she repeated unconsciously some of the most precious of God's promises to his children. She was suddenly

startled by a voice which she did not at all recognize, so strained and unnatural was it, coming from the couch:

“Mar—kham!”

Glancing at the pillow, she met the gaze of Boaz Woodley, calm and earnest, fixed upon her in tender entreaty.

“Hor—ton,” he said, speaking again, with difficulty, enunciating the syllables slowly, and with a harsh, expressionless tone, while the muscles of his face twitched and quivered with exertion.

“Haste,” he added, in the same almost inarticulate monotone.

She rushed into the library, where were Markham, Frank Horton, Curtis Field, and the kindly Doctor who had so effectually seconded the efforts of Colonel Woodley at Markham’s first nomination.

“Come! come!” she cried, with lips pallid and trembling. All knew that something had befallen the invalid, and followed her hastily into the sick-room. The massive head, with its crown of steel-gray hair, lay motionless on the pillow, but underneath the shaggy brows the clear gray eyes moved calmly from one to another, with a look of unmistakable recognition. Lizzie had hurried back to the bedside, and was now holding a hand of the invalid and bathing it with tears and kisses.

“Thomas—Thomas—Horton,” said the old man, with more ease and distinctness than he had yet spoken.

Understanding that he wished to see his father, Frank Horton said:

“I will bring him in a moment,” and turned to leave the room.

"Haste," said the sick man, earnestly.

The professional instincts of the good Doctor and his warm feeling for the invalid led him to forget for a moment that it was not his own patient lying there. He stepped forward and, taking his disengaged hand, asked briskly, as he slipped his finger on the wrist and watched keenly the eyes which were turned towards him:

"Do you know me, Colonel Woodley?" An assenting motion of the lids replied, and, after an instant, he said, with difficulty: "Doc—tor Mer—rill."

"You wonder why I am here, I suppose," said the Doctor, still watching him closely.

There came a rush of inarticulate sounds from the sick man's lips, then his eyes were set with determination and his mouth closed firmly for an instant, and he said, "Markham," more distinctly than before.

"Yes," said the Doctor, nodding quickly. "They are trying to beat him now he has not you to stand up for him."

"Markham," he said again, turning his eyes upon him. Markham took the hand Lizzie was holding, and his voice was husky as he said:

"Don't, Colonel Woodley, you will exhaust yourself."

"Must—now. Markham—Lizzie," he added, looking from one to the other, "Forgive!"

"Oh!" cried Lizzie, through her tears, "we have nothing to forgive."

"And if we had," said Markham, huskily, "it is forgotten."

"Markham," said he again.

"Yes," replied Markham, clasping the hand he held with the other also.

"Doctor," said the sick man, fixing his eyes upon the kindly face that bent over him with a keen, cool, professional scrutiny.

"Yes, Colonel, I understand," said the Doctor, leaning forward and watching every look and expression.

"F—f—field," said Woodley, turning his eyes upon that worthy, who stood at the foot of the bed.

"Yes," said Curtis, with a start; "I'm here, Colonel, and glad you know me. Sorry to see you so—so—"

"Hush," whispered the Doctor, with upraised finger.

"Markham," and he turned his eyes upon him again and then upon the Doctor and Field in succession, and continued: "Honest man! Honest man!"

"You mean," said the Doctor, catching his purpose with quick intelligence, "to say that General Churr is an honest man, and that all charges to the contrary are false."

"Yes; false!"

Markham's head bent over the hand he held, and tears fell upon it.

While this scene was in progress, Frank Horton and his father came into the room with noiseless steps, and the elder pressed forward to the bedside.

"Thomas."

"Yes, sir," said the faithful old cashier, leaning over the bedside. "How do you do, my dear sir?"

"Sh—" said the Doctor; and added, under his breath, in the cashier's ear, "watch his face closely, so as to know what he says, and do as he wishes."

"Horton."

"Yes."

"My—will."

"I have it here," and he drew forth a parchment from the inner pocket of his coat, opened and held it up before the invalid's face. He seemed to scan it an instant, and then said:

"Yes—write."

"On the will?" asked Horton, taking out his pencil.

"Y—y—yes—with—a—pen."

While a stand was being prepared with pen and ink, the Doctor stepped to a table on which were some vials, asked a question or two of Lizzie, poured out a little from one, added a few drops from another, and, approaching the bed, said:

"This will give you strength for a short time; but whatever you wish to do must be done at once. Do you understand?"

"Yes."

He swallowed the draught eagerly, and the Doctor asked:

"Shall we withdraw, Colonel?"

"No—stay," he answered, "all."

The Doctor and Markham raised him up on the pillows, and turned his face toward where Thomas Horton sat, pen in hand, alert to catch his words.

"Cod—i—cil," said the sick man."

"To the foregoing will I make and attach the following codicil?" asked Horton."

"Yes."

The cashier wrote the words quickly, and looked up.

“One — half — Lizzie,” said Woodley, glancing toward her. “Daugh—ter.”

“In fee?” asked Horton.

“Yes.”

“I give and bequeath unto Elizabeth Churr, my adopted daughter, and wife of Markham Churr, one half of my estate, both real and personal, to her and her heirs forever,” repeated Horton, as he wrote.

“Yes,” assented Woodley; “and other—half—Markham—if—heirs—not—found.”

“And if the heirs of Enoch Hatch above named cannot be found, or if he have no lawful heirs of his body descended now alive, then I give and bequeath the other moiety and residue of my estate, both real and personal, to Markham Churr and his heirs forever. Is that what you mean?” asked Horton.

“Yes, yes—write,” said Woodley, with impatience.

It was written and read over to him.

“Executors,” he said.

“I constitute and appoint,” said Horton, “who?”

“Frank Worthington Horton,” said Woodley, gazing at him. Frank started and fell upon his knees by the bedside. “God bless you for your trust,” he said, and bowed his head.

“Frank Worthington Horton, executor of this my last will and testament.”

“Yes—yes—that is right.”

It was all read over to him, and again assented to, and the name was added, and the dull hand was made to touch the pen. The instincts of his profession were still strong upon him, and he said, with much effort:

“ Doctor—Field—my will—attest.”

They attached their names as witnesses, and when that was done, the sick man sank back with a sigh, exclaiming :

“ That—is—all !”

The Doctor touched his pulse.

“ It is almost over,” he said, solemnly.

After a moment the dying man opened his eyes, and looked around.

“ Mark—ham ; Liz—zie,” he said, wearily.

They knelt beside him, each taking a hand.

“ Read—read—daugh—ter ; the val—ley—and—the shadow.”

In trembling tones, choked with tears, Lizzie repeated the psalm which has comforted so many a passing soul. The watchers who stood around the bedside heard the clock upon the mantel strike the hour of eleven. A smile came over the wan and rugged features as the psalm concluded. A murmured word, which those who stood nearest thought was “ Rest,” floated from his lips, and all was over. The Doctor reached forward, and with tender touch closed the heavy lids ; a half-unconscious prayer came from the lips of the kneeling minister, and earth had bidden farewell to as rugged a soul as ever habited in a tenement of clay.

As they turned away from the bedside, the bell of the Court-House rang for the assembling of the convention.

CHAPTER LVII.

A COUNCIL OF STATE.

FROM the chamber of death, the Doctor, the Hortons—father and son—and Curtis Field went forth to the court of King Caucus. When they entered the building, the convention was already organized, committees had been chosen, and a supporter of the claims of Mr. Latham had just moved that the convention proceed to the nomination of a candidate to represent the *n*th District in the Forty-second Congress. The motion was carried, and the mover, taking the floor, nominated, in a speech of considerable ability, the Hon. Mr. Latham, taking occasion, in the course of his remarks, to reflect with considerable bitterness upon the present incumbent, and to contrast Mr. Latham's excellencies with the other's imperfections. As he concluded, the bell of the neighboring church began to toll. Its solemn tones swelled through the open windows—at first slowly, and after a time in quicker strokes, telling the years of the departed, according to the custom of that region. A whisper ran through the audience that it was the passing bell which marked the exit of Boaz Woodley's soul. All sat in respectful silence, counting the strokes. When the seventieth year had been struck, and the last echo had died away, leaving a solemn hush throughout the crowded room, Curtis

Field arose, and, being recognized by the chairman, proceeded to address the meeting:

“Mr. Chairman: The notes of that bell seem to say to me that I’ve got a duty to perform at this meetin’—a duty which I came here to do, but could not have done, in any way that I can see, if I hadn’t first heard that bell, or been otherwise certified of the death of him we have so long known as Boaz Woodley. At the same time, there’s nobody here sorrier than I that he’s gone. He was one of them men we sometimes meet that we can’t help admirin’, even if we don’t in all things approve. He was an arnest man, one that meant business, was Colonel Woodley. [Cries of “That’s so!”] Yes, gentlemen, he meant business in everything, great and small, that he undertook. There was no triflin’ with him, and, for that matter, no jokin’, either, that I could ever see. I remember how the eddicated lawyers, like Mr. Latham, used to jest and philander over a matter till we juror’s didn’t half-know which from t’other, and then Boaz Woodley would get up and set us right in a few minutes’ plain talk that cut to the marrer like a cleaver with a razor-edge. [“That’s so!” “Good for you!” “Go on!”] We know he meant business in politics. Durin’ the easy-goin’ times, while there didn’t seem no need for everybody to take a hand—who ever see him in a political meetin’? I never did. I can remember seein’ Mr. Latham’s head in the caucuses of one party or another ever sence the time when it used to be as black as it is white now, and I was a skeered boy in the gallery. But I never seed Boaz Woodley in sech a place till the time come, for a spell, when there

wa'n't no parties; and then, right here, on the steps of this court-house, I heard him make his first political speech. You heard it, too—and you—and you,” looking round, and pointing to various delegates. “*Didn't* he mean business then? I remember just what he said: ‘My friends: There is no son of my loins to represent me in the service of my country; my wife is dead. So far as I know, my blood runs in the veins of no other human bein’. I am alone and old; and, because I can give no other life to aid my country in her hour of peril, I have offered my own. It has been accepted. Whatever Boaz Woodley can find to do to save this country he will do it. And if any of you choose to go with me—you, your sons, or your brothers—he will not forget to do all that he can for their comfort and safety. I don't claim to be a soldier, but something more than soldiers are needed in war, and I shall try and find my place of duty, and do what is placed before me.’ [Cries of “He did it, too!”]

“That he did. He meant business. In the hospital where your sons lay wounded; in the field, though he was no soldier; and in charge of that long line of railroad which no one else could manage, Boaz Woodley did his duty, and did it well. I remember how he closed his speech. ‘If I forget to do these things,’ said he, ‘let me be counted a braggart and a liar, and let no man afterwards vally Boaz Woodley's word.’ Did anyone ever know Boaz Woodley to go back on his word? [Cries of “Never! never!”]

“That's my recollection, gentlemen, and I'm glad that you agree with me. Now, I hain't got nothin' agin

the man named by my friend on the right, only I don't think that a man who took out his part of the fightin' in makin' speeches to get others to go into the war has arned the highest place in the gift of the party that fought that war. ["That's so!"] I'd rather take some young feller that left an arm or a leg down in Virginia or Tennessee, even with perhaps not quite so big a stock of brains. In short, I think we've got plenty of men who've arned this seat a sight better than Mr. Latham.

"But, Mr. Chairman, I'm not a-goin' to beat around the bush. I've knowed General Churr ever since he was born, almost, and I knowed his father and his mother afore him. The newspapers has tried to slur him of late, but Curtis Field knew his father, his mother, his grandfather and his grandmother, afore he was born. And I say, here, that the man that says or hints a word agin' his birth is a liar and a rascal! [Applause.] Markham Churr was one that meant business, too; and when his ole grandfather abused him so he could'n stand it any longer, he run away—a little chap, not mor'n ten or twelve—with nothin' to his name but a yaller dog! He made his own way—through the 'cademy and college, and God knows what else, and made himself a man. And when Boaz Woodley took him up and give him a lawyer's job—right there under Lawyer Latham's nose—'t'want for any favor, but because he *knowed he'd do it.*"

"He knew that Mr. Latham wouldn't undertake such a business," interrupted a representative of that gentleman.

"That *may* be," said Field, with a queer look, "but

I never heerd that he had any great reputation for refusin' fees. [Laughter.] But I'm a-talking about Markham Churr; and when the war came, the young man wa'n't back'ard about goin', at only eight dollars a month. It's true he got up, but there ain't a man here that won't say he arned all he got. [Cries of "That's so!"]

"Wal—I was proud when we sent Markham Churr of Pymatuning to Congress, 'cause I knowed he was a man. He's been there three times, and I was about of a mind to say to him: Now, don't overdo the matter! Don't force yourself on the people! Let some of the other boys have a chance now. And I happen to know that was what he wanted to do; when all at once came out all these charges agin him which my young friend has alluded to. Now, I'm a mighty peaceable man till somebody pitches into me; and then I can't git fight enough. So the minit I heard of these false charges I was tooth and toe-nail for General Churr *agin!* [Cheers and hisses!] Now, don't try that, I aint but one, and only a plain farmer, but I haint been afraid of anything that hissed sence I was big enough to drive geese to water! [Laughter, and cries of "Go on!"] Thank ye, gentlemen! This is a free country; jest as free for a man's friends as his enemies—if he's got any! [Laughter.] Now, what's the charges against General Churr? Not that he voted agin the Trans-Continental Railroad's new charter! That vote's ginerally counted pretty near right, now. Anyhow, the thing looks so near like a swindle that a man couldn't be blamed for shootin' it for one, so far as I can see! But it is

claimed that he *would* have voted for it *if he had got his price!* Now, if that is so, he ought to be kicked out and rid on a rail by this convention, too! But he didn't never do it; never! [Great excitement. Cries of "Proof!" "What's he kept so still about it for?"] I'm glad you asked that! Who would have been hurt most if he had defeated the bill? ["Boaz Woodley!"] Of course, and he would have been the man who had most right to complain if he had floun from his bargain, wouldn't he?"

One of Mr. Latham's supporters interrupted him to say that he was probably not aware that one of the last acts of Woodley's consciousness was to sue General Churr.

"I was well aware of that," said Field, "and it proves jest what I was going to say, that he was mad at General Churr for takin' the course he did. But if Markham Churr had sold out Boaz Woodley by demandin' mor'n the price agreed on for his support of that bill, do you suppose Boaz Woodley would ever have forgiven him, either in this world or the next? [Cries of "Never; no, never!"] Wal, now, let me tell you. General Churr told me all about this matter, and then said. You must not use it, because inquiry into the facts will bring a serious reflection upon Colonel Woodley, which he ain't in no condition to explain.' So I was bound by a promise not to speak. But, gentlemen, that tollin' bell lets me loose. This mornin' I see what seemed to me a miracle, wrought to save a good man's name from stain. Before Colonel Woodley died, a few of us was standin' by his bed,

and General Churr and his wife was kneelin' by it, when the lips that hain't framed a word in six months opened, and said to Doctor Merrill and me—callin' us both by name first, so there should be no mistake: 'Markham Churr's an honest man—an honest man.' And then he made his will, and left a handsome fortune to the man he would always have hated, if what they say is true!

"Mr. Chairman," he concluded, "I nominate Markham Churr, of Lanesville."

There was a moment's silence, and then a burst of doubtful applause.

The representative of Mr. Latham was on his feet in an instant, and remarked, with cutting emphasis:

"Colonel Woodley was probably not aware how General Churr had cheated his heirs during his long unconsciousness. He was in no condition to make a will, and his relatives will soon dispose both of the will and his present trustee and pretended legatee."

"You remember, gentlemen," resumed Field, hardly deigning to notice his assailant, "that Boaz Woodley told you in 1861 that he had neither chick nor child, nor drop of kindred blood in livin' veins. So if Mr. Latham has found any heirs, I 'spect he's found some that the man that has just died never heerd of, and, as like's not, they'll turn out to be the heirs of the wrong man after all. Strange as it may seem, gentlemen," he added, with solemn severity, "the man we have called Boaz Woodley since our boyhood had no right to that name, except that of long use. He was the son of an only daughter who died at his birth, unmarried. So he said in his will, made many years ago, all but the codicil

added this morning; and by that will he left his property, I'm told, not to any kith or kin—for he had none—but to some one that he owed goodwill to in his young days. If you want any further information, I refer you to his executor, the Rev. Frank W. Horton—who is here present.”

Thus called, Mr. Horton went forward, and, in a few words, confirmed the statements which Field had made. He did not at this time feel justified in speaking with particularity of the will of Colonel Woodley, of which he was named executor. He would say, though, that one-half the estate was devised to the heirs of a person, not a relative, to whom he was understood to have been under obligation for some favor in his early life. If the heirs of this party fail to claim the legacy within a time stated, it is to go to General Churr, by the terms of the codicil—the other moiety being bequeathed to Mrs. Churr in fee. This showed the estimate which Colonel Woodley had of the man who now represents us. If he had nothing to complain of, certainly others should not attack General Churr on his behalf. As to General Churr's relations to the charter of the Trans-Continental Railway and Colonel Woodley as President of it, he would say that he had himself personal knowledge of them to a considerable extent, and knew that the coldness which at one time existed between them had proceeded entirely from the stubborn and unexpected refusal of the Representative to support the bill for any price or under any circumstances whatever, and that simply because he could not do it with a clear conscience. That the legacies embraced in the

codicil had been stated in his presence, by Colonel Woodley, to have been made in distinct acknowledgment of his own error, and for the express purpose of vindicating the character of General Churr from the vile aspersions which had been cast upon it.

"He probably did not know that Churr had sold out all his Trans-Continental stock!" shouted a follower of Latham.

"Do *you* know it?" asked Horton, coolly.

"Why, it has been current rumor for months! Everybody knows it!" answered the interlocutor.

"Then everybody knows what is not a fact," was the firm reply. "From personal knowledge, I aver that Markham Churr has not sold a share of stock belonging to the estate of Mr. Woodley since it came into his hands."

"What, pray, has become of the stock, then?"

"Mr. Woodley himself sold every share of it before he was attacked!"

"Then, why," said a petulant inquirer, "has General Churr kept still so long?"

"Because," answered Horton, "he knew that any examination into his affairs would reveal matters not creditable to one who had been his friend, and who was not then able to explain or justify them; he forgot Colonel Woodley's later enmity, and was willing to sacrifice his own future to screen the past of his friend!"

[Cries of "Good! Good!"]

The excitable Doctor Merrill was on a seat again in an instant, swinging his hat, and calling for three cheers for General Churr; which were given with that peculiar

heartiness which men feel when they do a kindness to one they have wronged.

Then one of the younger candidates, who had come in, and saw how the tide was setting, thought it well to make a virtue of necessity, and, with great enthusiasm, moved that General Markham Churr be nominated by acclamation. This was done, and the convention adjourned—King Caucus having a second time most unexpectedly decided in favor of the right man.

CHAPTER LVIII.

IN THE SHADE OF THE CYPRESS.

THE sermon which the young minister preached at the funeral of the strange man whose executor he had been named was from the same text which he had chosen when he first occupied the pulpit at Lanesville. Yet those who heard it said it was not at all like the one which he had then delivered. Instead of being surcharged with hope and the confidence of faith which believes because of divine assurance, this was full of the humble, tearful gladness which speaks of faith assured by fulfillment. He did not eulogize the dead. He was not there, he said, to praise or blame, but to show, so far as he might, the glory and truth of his Master. So he pointed to the life, which had been crowned at its close by an act of forgiveness; showed the danger of judging by appearances or rumor, and that the true rule, the criterion by which God judged,

and which He only could fully apply, was that of the Holy Volume—"as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." The lesson which he would teach was universal charity—the charity which trusts that God will find somewhat of good in every living soul when he comes to apply to it the test of infinite and final truth. He softened the sad mystery of the life which had ended, until those who heard him would as soon have mutilated the form before them as to have pried unkindly into the dead man's past. Whatever the secret of his life, they were content to let it remain such, except so far as he had chosen to reveal it. They could not help but wonder, but from that day it was a wonder tempered with compassion. For the first time, perhaps, since he had removed to Lanesville from the little border town of Beaver Dam—being then a man of mature years and large estate—Boaz Woodley was regarded by the people of the town with something like tenderness—that day when they laid him away under the full-leafed maples in the village cemetery, beside his simple-hearted wife and weakling son.

And no sooner were the clods pressed down upon his marble lips, than many tongues seemed to be loosed by the fact of death to testify of kindly acts done in his life—done in a strange, harsh way, without show of sympathy, or hope or possibility of reward; even, as it seemed, with a disregard of gratitude and an aversion to thanks.

The will of Boaz Woodley was offered for probate. Its contents were peculiar:

"I, known as Boaz Woodley, being of sound and disposing mind, do hereby make and publish my last will

and testament, in manner and form as follows; and, in so doing, do first declare that I am the only child of an only child, who died at my birth, being still a *feme sole*, and that I have no living children. So that there are none whom the law might favor in any attempt to overthrow this testament. I give and bequeath all of my estate to the heirs of the body of Enoch Hatch, formerly of the town of Westbridge, in the State of Massachusetts, if any from him descended shall come forward or be discovered within three years from and after the qualification of an executor hereof. In default of such heirs of the said Enoch Hatch, or in case they shall not come forward and claim this legacy within the time above limited, I give and bequeath said estate to the following persons as trustees for the purposes hereinafter set forth, to wit: to my executor during his life, and his successors, to be appointed from time to time by the Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Beaver, jointly with the Probate Judge of said County, and his successors in office, and the Sheriff of said County and his successors in office, the said trustees to hold said estate and administer said trust jointly under the direction of the Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in said County *in perpetuum*. That the purpose of said trust shall be, to have said estate so invested as to be most secure and require the least attention, and to devote the income thereof to the aid and assistance of such persons as may, through poverty or sudden temptation, or the allurements of youthful vice, be led to the commission of crime; and who, in the judgment of such trustees, may be induced by such aid to lead exemplary and use-

ful lives thereafter. I desire that the administration of this trust may be conducted with all possible secrecy, so that the parties thus aided may be induced to lead upright lives in the hope that past offences may be forgotten or concealed.

“If I should not hereafter appoint an executor, by a codicil hereto, it is my desire that the accompanying sealed packet shall be delivered to the Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of said County, and that, after having read the same, he shall nominate and appoint a fit person to be executor hereof, and that the person thus selected be my executor, and that said packet be delivered to him, and after reading the same, that he cause it to be burned in the presence of said Judge.

“Should I appoint an executor hereafter by codicil, it is my desire that he should carefully read the sealed packet deposited herewith, in the presence of the Probate Judge of said County, at the time of his qualification as executor, and immediately cause the same to be burned in the presence of said Judge, that this fact be entered of record on the minutes of said Probate Court, and that the contents of said packet be not divulged to anyone, except to the trustees of said fund so far as may be necessary to guide them in the administration of their trust.

“In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this 18th day of July, A. D., 1861, in the presence of Thomas Horton and Frederick Wilson, who have signed as witnesses thereof at my request, in my presence, and in the presence of each other.

“BOAZ WOODLEY.”

Then followed the codicil which has already been recited, and which was proven by the witnesses thereto.

There being no contest, the executor was qualified. A considerable crowd gathered to hear the will read, and to witness the contest which had been predicted. Mr. Latham was not present, nor his client. One or two lawyers who had dropped in looked over the will carefully after it was read, but made no objection to it. That such remarkable provisions should excite curiosity and comment was very natural. So when Frank Horton withdrew into the inner apartment of the office, to read the sealed packet which his father, with much formality, surrendered to him after his qualification, the crowd of idlers gathered around the old man and induced him to tell what he knew of this remarkable will—a narrative which he prolonged by adulatory comment of its author, the hero whom the gentle old cashier had worshiped for so many years. He was the President of the bank now, but he never thought of himself as the successor of the great man whom he had followed in everything, and had never ceased to be as subservient to his will while alive as he was faithful to his memory when dead.

“He was a hard man to try to cheat or outwit in any manner,” said the old cashier, “and as long as a man could stand up and fight, I don’t believe any one ever delighted more in knocking him down than Mr. Woodley. But when a man was down, and he got a notion that he wanted help, and deserved it, he had the best tact of helping that I ever met with.”

“Yes, he was mighty still about it,” continued Hor-

ton, in reply to a remark by a bystander. "He seemed to be rather ashamed to have anyone know he did that sort of thing. I've known him many a time as a lawyer to close a mortgage for a client, and then let the man who had been sold out have money to redeem on easier terms than the original debt; of course he took good security. And another thing; he had no sort of pity for a man who did not *try*. In fact, I don't think he had any pity. He had only admiration for pluck. If a man wanted to get on, and was willing to work, he couldn't keep from helping him. On the whole, I think he did more good with less fuss, and got less credit for it than any man who ever lived among us."

"But why," asked one, "did he leave all his property to the heirs of this man Hatch?"

"Well, really," said the old man, with an amused smile, "I don't know. Mr. Woodley was a man that always had sufficient reason for everything he did. That is, I take it he had, though I never knew a man who was brave enough to ask him for one."

Just then Frank Horton and the Probate Judge returned. The executor had a look of quiet solemnity upon his face, while the official's bore an expression of puzzled indecision.

Walking to the stove, which was full of papers, having been used as a convenient substitute for a wastebasket, Frank opened the door, and said:

"Now, Mr. Probate Judge, I demand, formally, in the presence of these witnesses, that you enter it upon your minutes, that, having perused this parcel, I destroyed the same by burning it in your presence, ac-

ording to the provisions of the will. Will some one let me have a match?"

Half a dozen were proffered by the bystanders.

"I call you all to witness that I now destroy the packet that I was required to burn, no one else having perused it."

Thereupon he threw the paper into the flames, and stood by until it was consumed.

"I do not approve of your doing it," said the Judge, "but will make a record of the fact."

CHAPTER LIX.

HETTY'S INHERITANCE.

MARKHAM, Lizzie, and Amy were in the library when Frank and his father returned from the court-house after proving the will. The Doctor and Curtis Field came with them (being in attendance as witnesses to the codicil) to offer their congratulations to Markham and Lizzie on their good fortune.

"Well," said Amy, poutingly, to her husband, "I suppose we weaker vessels can be allowed to know what was in the will, beyond the codicil, now that it is public property."

"I thought you might wish to know, and so brought it, and will read it, if agreeable to all."

"Agreeable!" said Amy. "You know we are just dying to hear it. Pray do not keep us in suspense."

For reply Frank read the will.

"And where is the parcel referred to?" asked Amy, when the reading was done.

"Burned, as the will directs," answered Frank.

"But you read it first?"

"Of course."

"What was in it? Tell us, that's a dear."

"Nothing that need be told, except some directions as to finding the heirs of Enoch Hatch."

"What! must you go rambling up and down the world after them?"

"It is so directed in the will, dear, and I am the executor."

"Oh! that is too bad. How long will it take?"

"Three years is the time limited."

"Oh, pshaw! I did not mean that. How long do you think you will be gone? I wish you had not accepted the trust."

"Then I should have missed the pleasure of putting Markham and Lizzie in possession of the fortune they so well deserve."

"Oh, well, just pay them off, and never mind the Massachusetts folks. They may be in California, or the uttermost parts of the earth, by this time."

"It would not be strange; but I am determined to hunt them up if they are on the face of the earth. The sealed package gave me something of a clue."

"Oh, well, we may as well shut up the house and start off, then; for 'whither thou goest I will go.' I'll have you understand, sir, that I waited too long for my husband to give him an indefinite leave of absence!"

"I should not wonder," interrupted Lizzie, "if I were able to help you in this matter, Frank."

"Of course you can," said Amy. "How stupid of us not to know that you were a perfect witch at discovering hidden treasures!"

"It is not treasures we want this time, but people to claim them—heirs-at-law," said Frank.

"No matter—no matter," persisted Amy. "She knows—I am sure of it. Don't you, Lizzie?"

"I certainly do think that I know who is the sole remaining heir of the Enoch Hatch mentioned in the will," said Lizzie. Everybody started in surprise.

"There, there!" laughed Amy, catching her husband's hand as he started towards Lizzie. "Don't break the spell! She is a witch. I told you so; but you must not have her burned until she has told you where to find the heir. I suppose you happen to know that, too, good Mother Witch?"

"Yes," answered Lizzie, laughing back at the sparkling young matron. "I think I can go as far as that, and tell your husband where the heir may be found. Just to satisfy your jealous fear of your new toy," she added, pinching her friend's cheek.

"Please, Lizzie," said Markham, "do not jest. Do you not see how much in earnest Frank is?"

"Not more so than I am, dear," she replied.

"Please tell us then," said Frank.

"Certainly," answered Lizzie. "The heir of Enoch Hatch is in this room!"

"In this room!" cried everyone, with a start. "In this room! Who can it be?"

"Please, madam," said Curtis Field, with mock solemnity, "if you are going to name me, just give me a wink, so I can be prepared to receive the announcement properly. I am afraid it would be too much if it should come all at once. It will be just my luck. I never had a chance in a raffle without winning. Let's see. What's the chances? One to seven! Oh! I'm sure to win. Feel my pulse, Doctor. I surely must have had a grandmother!"

Everybody laughed at this outburst.

"You are certainly jesting now," said Markham, looking at his wife with an amused smile.

"Yes," said Frank, ruefully; "I am afraid you ladies are making fun of me."

"Indeed, I am not," said Lizzie, earnestly. "In all seriousness, the heir of Enoch Hatch is in this room, and his name is"—there was a moment's silence, everyone looking into his neighbor's eyes with incredulous anxiety, except Markham, who, lounging over the arm of his chair, looked up at his wife and Frank with an amused smile—"Markham Churr!" said Lizzie.

"What!" cried Markham, springing to his feet, and blushing furiously. "You—you—don't—mean—"

"Bravo! Bravo!" cried the Doctor.

"Didn't I tell you she was a witch!" exclaimed Amy.

Curtis Field reached forth his hand, and, shaking Lizzie's, said, gravely:

"I cannot tell you, madam, how obliged I am. I don't think I could have stood it. Not nigh as well as the General, anyhow. Blushes never did show to good advantage on my face!"

There was an amused smile on all faces at this, except Markham's, who did not seem to hear it, but stood gazing at his wife in mute astonishment.

"It cannot be, Lizzie," he said, almost piteously.

"But it is, dear. Your grandmother, Cordie Hatch, was the only daughter of the man named in the will!"

"How do you know that," asked Horton?

"I've always heard that her name was Cordie," said Field. "In fact, I've heard the Deacon call her so, and I'm pretty sure I've seen the name marked on one thing and another round the house. I 'spect you're right, though I'd never have thought of it."

"If you will all be seated and excuse me for a moment," said Lizzie, "I will bring you proofs, which, if not legally sufficient, will still convince you beyond a doubt of the truth of my statement."

She left the room, and in a few moments returned with the little tin trunk which had contained her husband's treasures when the garret of his grandfather's house was his city of refuge. They all gathered around her as, seating herself on an ottoman at her husband's side, she laid the box on his knee, and, opening it, took out a small red morocco pocket-book, having a metallic clasp whose workmanship attested its age.

"You can tell them what this is, Markham, better than I," she said, tenderly.

"Yes," said he, taking it in his hand; "this was my mother's, and her mother's before her, I have been told. I can remember seeing my father gaze at it fondly as it lay before him while he talked to me of my mother. I always kept it in this little trunk, which was a place

of deposit for whatever was peculiarly precious to me after his death."

"And you, Mr. Field," said Lizzie; "have you ever seen it before?"

"That I have," said Curtis, examining it attentively. "When we found that boy's den in the Deacon's garret, this little tin trunk was there, with a brass padlock on it. I was going to take it away, when the Deacon made some objection; but his wife put in and said they did not want any of the critter's trash left around there, and I might take it and welcome. The Deacon gave in to her at once, though he wasn't apt to yield to anybody else's notions. I took it home, and found the key, with some other trinkets, in an old leather purse, and opened the box to see if there was anything in it of value. This pocket-book was in it then—that is, I take it to be the same, and if it is it's got 'Hetty Andrus' written mighty pretty along the back of it, here on the inside, evidently by Markham's father, old Jacob Churr, according to what I have seen of his handwritin' in the town records."

Lizzie opened the pocket-book and found the name written as described. Then she began her narrative: "One day when you were in the army," she said to her husband, "and I was feeling so sad and lonely because of your absence and the danger you were in, I took out this old trunk to look over the little trinkets it contained. I loved to do that then. It seemed as if it brought me nearer to you to look over these things which were the treasures of your boyhood. I was examining the pocket-book, and wondering what your

mother was like, asking and answering in my fancy all the foolish questions which a loving woman will devise when she dreams of one who is absent. Then I looked at the name written in the back of it, and concluded, as Mr. Field has said, that it was written by your father, since it corresponded with the entries in his hand in the little Bible here. You know I am always curious and observing about handwriting. I don't know how it came about, but I then turned over the lappel of one of the little pockets in it, and found some other writing. Here it is:" She turned up the lappel, and on the white under side was written: "*Cordie Hatch, from B. W.*" "This led me to look closer, and I found that this lappel covered a division of the pocket-book which had been carefully sewed up. You can see where the stitches were. I ripped it open, and found in it a letter to 'Cordie Hatch,' signed 'B. W.'" She drew it forth, and read:

"TO MISS CORDIE HATCH:—Of course you will forget me after what has happened. It cannot be otherwise. Yet I could not go out of your world without one word of farewell and explanation. I do not mean to excuse myself. I am bad enough, God knows, but not as bad as I am charged with being. I have done wrong—much of it—but of that which I am accused, I know nothing! nothing—as Heaven is my witness! Farewell! I shall never come into your world again. I shall go to the ends of the earth and be forgotten—though I cannot forget. Your unworthy, B. W."

"So, I thought, Master Markham, your grandmother, the gentle Cordie Hatch, had a lover before she gave

her hand to Deacon Andrus, and that lover evidently had her heart in his keeping, or she would not have kept his farewell letter so carefully. Oh, I wove quite a romance out of this brown sheet and the faded lines traced upon it. Quite a romance about your grandmother, my dear. There seemed then something familiar about the handwriting, but I could not decide just where I had seen it. So I put the letter back, and laid the pocket-book away with your other childish treasures, having been much comforted with my waking dream of my husband's boyhood and his grandmother's sweetheart. I had always been apprehensive, as some of you may know," continued Lizzie, turning to her other listeners, "with regard to Markham's relations with Boaz Woodley. I was afraid he might get in the strong man's power, and then Mr. Woodley's designs might clash with Markham's sense of independence or duty. It was hard to suspect one so kind and devoted in his friendship, but he was so strong and so bent on the accomplishment of his great projects that he would not hesitate, I feared, to become as bitter an enemy as he had been faithful friend. Not that his attachment to us was not earnest and genuine, but he had never known such a thing as opposition from any except those he counted enemies, until the two terms had become interchangeable in his mind. Whoever opposed him, I was certain he would hate with all the power of his wonderfully strong nature. I had before become satisfied that there was a secret of some discreditable character connected with Mr. Woodley's early life, but could form no idea of its specific nature. When the

matter of the Trans-Continental Railroad came up, I foresaw that it might become the occasion of the conflict which I dreaded between my husband and a friend who had become almost as dear to us as if he had been a father. He had made our house his home ever since the war, and I was generally considered at the capital as his daughter by adoption. His purse and his heart seemed ever open to us, as they had never been to any others.

“I tried to induce Markham not to have anything to do with this railroad matter. I could not tell him my fears, and his trust in Colonel Woodley was so implicit that he was blind to all danger. Indeed, he was so absorbed in his legislation that he had no time to attend to his own interests. I was very much troubled about it, for I knew that Colonel Woodley had been carried away by the vastness of the scheme and the seductions of success to assent to what he would not otherwise have approved, because he ceased to talk with me about it. From the very moment that the amendment of the charter and the organization of the Construction Syndicate was decided upon, he never spoke to me of his pet scheme. He had been full of it before, and I had been his confidant and private secretary. I knew then that they were contemplating some wrong which I did not believe Markham would approve, come what might.

“While I was thus troubled, it flashed upon my mind that this letter was in the handwriting of Boaz Woodley. I at once came home from Washington, in spite of Markham’s entreaty, to make sure of my surmise. There

could be no doubt about it. The peculiarities of his handwriting were all there—younger, less experienced, but still the same. No other could have written it.”

The cashier had taken out his spectacles and carefully adjusted them during her last sentences.

“Will you let me see that letter?” he asked. “I have seen a good bit of Boaz Woodley’s writing in my day—not as long ago as this must have been written, of course, but I doubt very much if a scrap that ever passed under his hand could go through mine without being identified.

“Yes,” he continued, after a careful scrutiny, “this is undoubtedly his—a little boyish and raw, but his, nevertheless.

“And this, too,” said he, examining the inscription in the pocket-book. “He must have been in love with your grandmother, Markham.”

“I ran away to Massachusetts,” continued Lizzie, “without leave or license from anyone—Markham never knew it till this minute—to see what more I could learn; for I did not know what arguments I might need to address to the strong, ruthless man to induce him to let go the hold Markham might have given him upon his reputation.”

“And what did you learn there?” asked Frank, anxiously.

Lizzie cast a quick glance at him, and answered:

“I found that Cordie Hatch was the orphaned daughter of Enoch Hatch, who had lived with her bachelor uncle, Norman Hatch, several years prior to his death; and that Norman Hatch had adopted the

writer of this letter in his childhood, had afterward made him his confidential clerk, and it was expected would also make him his heir, or at least an equal heir with the niece, Cordie, of whom he was the open and accepted lover.

“It seems his life was not all that it should have been, and, on account of some irregularities, he left there suddenly, and was not heard from afterward.

“I obtained a full description of him from two or three old people, who remembered him very distinctly, and even secured the books of Norman Hatch, which were in his handwriting. Mr. Hatch died about the time he disappeared, and, a few months afterwards, Cordie married Deacon Andrus.”

“She could not have thought much of her old lover!” said Amy, indignantly.

“She had no hope of his return,” said Lizzie, with some confusion.

“And did Colonel Woodley know of your knowledge of these facts?” asked Frank.

“Yes,” answered Lizzie. “Soon after my return occurred the crisis which I feared. Mr. Woodley’s love of power and success came in conflict with Markham’s sense of duty and manly independence. As I feared, Colonel Woodley could not forgive him for refusing to accede to his wishes, and threatened to ruin him if he persisted—which he thought himself quite able to do by reason of the confidence Markham had reposed in him in regard to the investment of his surplus funds.”

“And was it that which caused his anger towards your husband?” asked Frank.

"I think he forgave him the day he learned it," answered Lizzie, evasively.

"But what surprises me," said the cashier, "is that he did not know what had become of his old sweetheart, and that they had never heard from him after he left. Boaz Woodley was not a man to forget one whom he loved or hated, and his name has not been an unknown one for many years."

"My friends," said Lizzie, with much agitation, "I had hoped to conceal the whole truth from everybody, for the sake of this man, who was so kind to us—Markham and me; but I see that I have told so much that I must tell more. I know you will keep it secret, as I have done hitherto. The name 'Boaz Woodley' has been for many years borne by a man whose name in youth, and when he lived with Norman Hatch, was *Basil Woodson*. He went away because he had purloined his employer's money to play at cards with, had quarreled with him, was accused of his murder, and indicted for it—though of this crime he was innocent. It was afterwards confessed by another."

"And you told Boaz Woodley you had discovered these things?" asked Markham.

"I did," was the low reply, as her head sank upon his shoulder.

"You are a brave woman," said the Doctor, warmly.

"That is what he said," she answered, simply.

"Yes," said Field; "I shouldn't have bid high for that job myself."

"If the name of one you loved was at stake you would not have shrunk, I am sure," answered Lizzie.

"Perhaps not," said Field, dubiously.

"I suppose that's the very reason he was so fond of you," said Amy.

"He always did like pluck, of all things," said the cashier.

"He knew that I loved and pitied him, in spite of all," said Lizzie.

"This explains," said the cashier, thoughtfully "the secret of this strange will. He knew that Cordie Hatch was the only direct heir of her father, and the intended heir of her uncle. He had not only wronged her as a lover, but had taken away her inheritance. He desired to make restitution."

"May it not also explain," said the Doctor, "the violent fancy which he took to the General when they first met? I think I have understood that he took a sudden and altogether unusual liking to him the very day of their first meeting?"

"He was always my friend afterwards," answered Markham.

"Whether you inherited the attributes and characteristics which attracted this strong nature from his first and probably only love, is a very interesting, even if quite insoluble, inquiry," said the Doctor, thoughtfully.

"Wal, General," said Field, "I must be goin' now. You know it's a smart step to the old place in Greenfield, and I must be there before milkin' time, 'cause the old lady's gettin' kind of stuck-up of late years, and don't look after things when I'm gone nigh as well as she used to. I s'pose she thinks there ain't so much need on't, which is true; but the boys is comin' on, and

I like to see that they do things right and in season."

"I congratulate ye on your good luck—both on ye," he continued, giving a hand to each. "Seein' it couldn't be *my* grandmother that was Woodley's sweet-heart, I'm glad it was yours. If you and your wife ain't both akin to Boaz Woodley, you ought to be. That's my judgment. Though I don't think it's fair for you to inherit two fortunes in one day, General, while you've got such a wife to help you out of scrapes."

"Nor do I," said Markham, seriously. "And if, as seems probable, I should receive the half of this estate as the heir of Enoch Hatch, I propose, with the consent of my wife, to devote it to the purpose indicated in the will in default of heirs being found."

"There is no doubt about your heirship," said Frank Horton. "The sealed packet contained a statement that Cordie Hatch was the sole heir of Enoch Hatch; that my testator was adopted by Norman, the brother of Enoch, and that his true name was Basil Woodson. I shall therefore decline to take from your hands the estate unless it be necessary to prevent difficulty between the legatees in its division."

"But I shall need your help, Frank, in administering one-half of it for the benefit of those remoter heirs for whom it was designed."

"I understand, after what we have heard," said Frank, solemnly, "why I was selected by Colonel Woodley to be his executor. He thought me especially fitted to deal with those shattered natures he desired to amend. I see that there is a great field here, to which it almost seems as if his dying lips had called me. I

shall be glad to aid you, Markham, in your noble purpose." The two men, their eyes brimming over, clasped each other's hands as he ceased speaking.

The impulsive Amy, looking up at Lizzie, and smiling through her tears, said naïvely: "Don't you think we ought to say: 'It is good for us to be here?'" And a kiss on the forehead was the only reply.

"One would think we were all legatees," said Field, looking around quizzically on the tearful group and wiping his own eyes.

"And so," said Markham, "I think we are, to this extent, at least, that we jointly are given the secret which fretted his soul for fifty years, and for his sake should keep it sacredly."

"You have enforced that duty by example," said the Doctor.

Frank Horton closed his executorship, having fulfilled all the instructions of the will, and Lanesville speculated for nine days upon the remarkable coincidence which made Markham Churr and his wife the joint heirs of the estate of Boaz Woodley. Never were the provisions of a will more cordially endorsed by all. There seemed to be a feeling that Markham Churr had been hardly dealt with, and an inclination to rejoice in his good fortune prevailed in consequence. When the election came on, he was chosen by the largest majority ever cast for a candidate even in the *n*th District, and returned to his seat only to find that his old enemy, the Construction Syndicate, had in the interim been killed by its own "bulls" and "bears."

CHAPTER LX.

REVERSIONARY LEGATEES.

AS months went by, the determination which Markham Churr had expressed, to devote his portion of the estate of Boaz Woodley to the purpose for which the testator had designed it, gathered force, and ere long assumed form. By an act of the Legislature, an association was incorporated, having for its object the relief, aid, and reformation of the victims of crime. One-half the fortune of Boaz Woodley, supplemented by a moiety of the proceeds of the oil territory which Frank Horton had bought, constituted the fund with which it was at first endowed. Good men and women added their names to its list of members, till in almost every city is found its representative; and its silent work of voluntary beneficence is felt in many a restored home. Of the work of this association, Frank Horton is the hand and heart. Not by public assembly, nor in the light of stained windows, with the clangor of the organ or the voice of singing men and singing women, does he proclaim the Master's message of love; but to the sullen darkness of shattered lives he brings the legacy of one whose evil was overruled for good, the light of a charity which "thinketh no evil," but "suffereth long, and is kind." Silently as the dew of heaven, guided by the watchful eyes and tender hearts of faithful co-workers,

he brings aid and cheer which helps the repentant soul to hide the past and tread its noxious weeds under the heel of earnest purpose, while he reaches forth a skillful hand to nurture the fruit of right living which a hopeful future offers. The seal of this noble charity is an embossed medallion, enclosing the counterfeit presentment of Boaz Woodley's strong head and sturdy shoulders, entwined with the words: "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Man may not gather figs of thistles, but of the thorniest life the Master's hand may garner grapes of sweetest flavor.

THE END.

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