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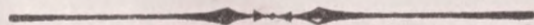
Odd Fellows' Story,

—BY—

J. H. KINKEAD,

Past D. G. M. of Ohio.

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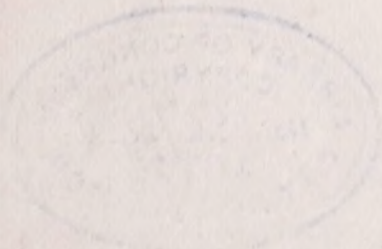
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TO MY FRIEND AND BROTHER,
JOHN GOULD,
OF MAGNOLIA LODGE NO. 83,
WHOSE LONG AND FAITHFUL SERVICE
IN THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY
JUSTLY ENTITLES HIM
TO THE
HIGHEST RANK AS A PHILANTHROPIST,
THIS LITTLE VOLUME
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE
AUTHOR.

NO MONEY.

AN ODD FELLOWS' STORY.

CHAPTER I.

A February thaw was upon the City, and the coal smoke, beaten down by the moist foggy atmosphere, made all out doors seem freshly painted—daubed with a coating of the nasty black. Tall smoke stacks sent down instead of up, their contents of filthy smoke. A mist hung upon the river, and the shrill screaming of harbor tugs indicated their fear of encountering their kind as they fretted and plowed the waters. Darkness comes early on such an evening, especially in a city with such a mantle of sable hanging over it. The street lamps glowed feebly upon the scene, yet without their sickly ray Egyptian darkness would have reigned supreme.

It was an unpleasant evening for males to be abroad, even when amply protected by sound shoe leather and rubber overs; but still more unpleasant for a delicate female with no over-shoes at all. Gliding along Second Street, near Main, and rapidly moving east, might have been seen the figure of a female rather thinly and poorly clad. Yet even her coarse clothing could not hide a certain grace of manner as she lightly pursued her way. She looked neither to the right or left, but held her way with a determination that left no doubt in the mind of the beholder that she was homeward bound. At the crossing of Broadway and Second, she passed two policemen who leaned languidly one on either side of a lamp post. One of the guardians of the night eyed her suspiciously. The other scarcely seemed aware of her existence. One of these policemen (he whose curiosity had been aroused) was a large broad-shouldered man, with a small grey eye and grizzly beard; he might have

been mistaken for a brigadier General of the regular army. Gruff in manner, quick to think, and quick to act, and brave as a lion. Patrolman Jeff Wilson was esteemed one of the best roundsmen in the city. Yet like many policemen called to keep order in a great city, and seeing night after night the wickedness and depravity of fallen mankind, he had come to look upon almost all with with suspicion.

"You never know who to trust till you try 'em," he used to say to his mate, as some new depredation was committed on their beat by a person holding a hitherto supposed good character.

The partner of the first named policeman was known as George Somers. He was a young man of not more than twenty-three years, and had been on the force since his majority. He had a large clear eye that looked you frankly in the face. His countenance was handsome and manly; a fair type of a true American face. His figure was strong and well built, such indeed as would have attracted the attention of curious observers of male beauty; in height, he was five feet eleven; with broad, expansive chest, and a strong arm whose great power was never called into play except in self-defense, when opposed by some refractory rough whose misdoings had brought him under the ban of the law. In manners, George Somers was gentle, almost effeminate; at least so he would have appeared to the casual observer; but those who knew him better were aware that beneath his urbane exterior was a firmness that almost amounted to stubbornness. His mate often accused him of being woman-hearted—but of cowardice, never. He would have faced a revolver in the hands of a desperado, if in the discharge of his

duty; but if his conscience told him he was doing a wrong, he would have been an arrant coward. The Chief knew his force—he knew his men—and in selecting officers for one of the hardest wards in the city, he had fallen upon the two we have named. He doubtless saw in Somers the restraining power that would stay the hasty hand of Jeff Wilson. Many a poor refractory wretch's head was saved from the mace of Wilson by the interposition of Somers.

George Somers was the only child of a widowed mother. His father, who was a machinist, had died when George was a lad of fifteen. The boy was then learning his trade with his father.

A sad bereavement to the mother and son was the death of Mr Somers. He was an affectionate father, a kind, loving husband. By dint of rigid economy, he had succeeded in buying a home, and laying up a few hundred dollars in bank. This sum, with the earnings of the boy, enabled his family to live in comparative comfort. George almost idolized his mother, and she in turn, as most mothers are apt to do, looked upon her offspring as a paragon of human perfection. At eighteen, George laid aside his trade and went to school for three years; indeed he had a great thirst for knowledge. Books were the green fields in which he loved to roam. His intellect required fuel, and he found it in books. His mother's keen perception noted this favorable disposition. She allowed him to follow his own inclinations. She even sat at work hour after hour longing to converse with George and yet hesitating to disturb him. Coming back suddenly from the realms of dreamland he would often throw down the book and apologize for having forgotten her so long. Theirs was a happy home.

At twenty-one George determined to seek some occupation—some means to earn a livelihood. A chance occurred in this wise. On his twenty-first birthday it happened he attended the polls of the ward, for the purpose of casting his first vote for city officers. The situation was so new to him that he stood for some time watch-

ing the stream of men pushing their way up to the judge's stand. While he was thus engaged, an elderly, well-dressed man approached and bidding him good morning asked:

"Have you voted yet, my young friend?"

George acknowledged that he had not.

"I am one of the candidates for Mayor, and should feel obliged if you would favor me with your vote."

George thought a moment and then replied "that he had no preference, that being his maiden vote, and knowing neither of the candidates, and upon reflection, he would cast his suffrage as he desired."

"May I ask your name?"

"Certainly; it is George Somers."

"A son of Henry Somers?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Indeed! I knew your father well."

The elderly man made a memorandum. George crossed the street—fell into line with the able-bodied American citizens, and reached out his ticket as hesitatingly as a bashful girl gives her hand to her over.

The election was over, and the victorious party cried themselves hoarse; and the small politicians went back into their hotels, not to come out again until the heat of another campaign should thaw them into activity. George forgot all about the election until one day, in looking over the police appointments, he was almost thunderstruck to find his own name among the successful ones. His first impression was that there was some mistake, and was intended for some one else, but the same evening a note was received from the Chief of police, officially notifying him of his appointment and requiring him to appear on the following day and be sworn in.

George scarcely knew whether to accept or decline. Finally like thousands of Americans who never expect to make any profession a life work, but only follow the bent of fortune until something better turns up, he accepted. And this is how he became a policeman. He had been two years in this employment, and the chief regarded him as one of the very best men on the force.

But let us turn back to the two men as they stand at the corner of Broadway and Second Streets.

"Who was that hussy that just went by, gliding like a feather," asked Wilson, after the figure of the female had disappeared in the darkness.

"She is not a hussy by any means, Jeff; in fact, she's as nice and decent a girl as lives in this ward. She is poor, it is true, and that is probably why she is out so late at night. Working people are often compelled to be abroad while the rich are sitting around their fires."

"I suppose she is another one of your pets," growled Wilson.

"No, she is no pet of mine; but I sympathize with the hard lot; she and her mother are compelled to suffer. I knew her father when I was serving my apprenticeship in the shops where he worked. I saw him after he was killed—mangled by being caught in the gearing. Knowing them to be honest, honorable and in every way worthy, why should I not sympathize with them?"

Wilson inserted the index finger of his right hand under his chapeau with the evident intention of scraping up an answer.

"Preaching, preaching! Now I don't believe there is half as much morality in this world as some folks do. People are wonderfully given to stealing; and as for lying, I've known church folks that would lie like a rail-road poster and then go to church and look as sanctimonious as owls."

"Still, Wilson, we ought not to condemn all because some do wrong. You know we have bad men on our force—men who disgrace it, they would disgrace a chain gang—but would you not hotly resent the charge that all were villains?"

Wilson saw himself being gradually wound up like a rope over a reel; but like a great many people when they find they are being loored in an argument, he dodged and changed the conversation. He secretly admired George Somers, and would have waded through fire and flood, to have saved him from harm, but then he was a constitutional growler. He growled

because the Mayor did not make him a captain or lieutenant instead of a patrolman; he growled if his wages was not paid to a minute; he growled at the weather—it was too hot or too cold, too dry or too wet. He growled at persons present and persons absent; much more emphatically at the latter than the former. Somers didn't much mind him, as he was rather gentlemanly in his growling with him.

"You have not told me the name of these poor folks," said Wilson after a pause.

"Gibbons is the name they are known by."

"Gibbons; well it seems to me I knew the man once. Was he a rather tall man, with light and large eyes?"

"Yes, that is my recollection of him."

"Did he walk a little lame?"

"Yes."

"Then I knew the man, though I was not acquainted with him. I always took up the idea that he was a little stuck up for a man that had no money."

"There you are mistaken, Mr. Wilson. Gibbons was not proud beyond that which every honest man ought to be to entitle him to self-respect. He was not much of a talker. A machinist has no time to talk when at work, in fact, the noise of flying wheels makes it almost impossible to do so in the shops. Perhaps this may have accounted in a measure for his quietness. But for all that, he was a man of sterling qualities—a splendid mechanic, and always spoke kindly to us apprentices."

"I don't say he was stuck up" returned Wilson doggedly, fearing doubtless that he was being gradually drawn into another argument where he would in all probability get worsted, "but it always looked that way. As long as he minded his own business, I minded mine; so we had little—in fact nothing—to do with each other."

"I am glad you don't entertain any bad feelings toward Mr. Gibbons, for if ever there lived an honest, upright man, he was one. But for the unfortunate accident by which he lost his life, he would have been foreman for the Company to-day.

"Where does his family live?"

"Up in Annear's block. Its a poor old rickety tumble-down house, not fit for a cow-stable. There are several other families living there, and they say old Annear comes for his rent as regular as a quack doctor for his hard-earned fee or—"

"A policeman for his shiners," chuckled Wilson.

"If he doesn't get his money he casts them overboard, though it seems to me they would be about as well protected out of doors as in such an old rookery as that. Why, Wilson, a man ought to be prosecuted for collecting rent for such a place."

"It's all right. If people go and burrow in such a den, they must expect to pay."

"Of course. But landlords might be a little considerate, and by the expenditure of a few hundred dollars, tenants might be made comfortable. Then it wouldn't look like taking something for nothing."

There is no telling how long this conversation might have lasted, but for a yell down toward Front street. Both men picked up their ears. Again the cry of "police," "police" was heard.

"Trouble at the Ragged Edge Saloon," said Wilson. "Let us hurry down there;" and both men ran down to the Saloon above named.

CHAPTER II.

The female whom we noticed passing along Second Street, hastened on until she came in front of a shabby, two-story frame tenement house. At the side of the house an old gate stood, half ajar. The upper hinge was broken, and the gate unable to keep its equilibrium, leaned outward. The female turned in at the gate, and passed through a paved court, where two garbage barrels stood beside each other like twin brothers, and emitted perfumes that would have been a mortal offence to delicate olfactories. Passing around to the rear of the house the female sprang up an old stairway whose only bond of union with the house consisted of two wooden bars somehow set in the walls. The stairs creaked and trembled, even under the

fairy-like feet that sprung up its its wooden steps.

Entering a room near the top of the stair-case, she threw aside her slight wrappings, and Stella Gibbons stood in her mother's presence. A coal-oil lamp upon the mantle shed a bright though not a brilliant light over the room. Stella, as she stood there, looked almost a queen,—with a face far too lovely for her station in life in a city, eyes that were large and mild, and a form that was incomparable.

Many a maiden in the higher walks of life would have given thousands to have exchanged beauty with this humble girl.

As she spoke, her voice was low and soft, and thrilled the hearer as the tones of a harp. When she threw aside her hood her hair became unfastened, and fell down her back in blond ringlets, reaching to her waist. Quickly catching up and replacing the refractory tresses, she asked her mother if Willie had retired.

"Yes, dear, he complained of being weary so I told him he had better retire."

Stella went to the bed where the little sleeper lay, and, looking at him a moment, stooped down and kissed him. The only effect of this expression of sisterly affection on the young sleeper, was to cause him to make a wry face and turn upon his side. Stella smiled, and turned to her mother.

"I think kisses must be sour to sleepers from the manner in which Willie makes faces."

"Come, child, and eat your supper, for I know you must be weary after so long a walk, and the streets are in wretched condition. I will draw the table near the stove. Remove your shoes, and dry your feet."

"Oh, dear mother, my feet are perfectly dry, thanks to my new shoes."

"I am glad you like your shoes, for I feared you would find them too heavy," and Mrs. Gibbons stole a glance at her daughter.

"They are a little clumsy, but then they are so warm and dry. I would rather wear heavy shoes and be laughed at, than wear thin ones and pay the doctor."

"Who has been laughing at you, daughter, for consulting your own comforts?"

Stella was silent, but her cheeks crimsoned just a little.

Mrs. Gibbons saw her daughter's confusion, and said no more, although her mother's heart yearned to know and to sympathize with Stella. "She is beginning to feel the keen edge of the world's biting sarcasm," thought Mrs. Gibbons. "A few years ago and all Eighth Street might have laughed at her and she would not have cared; but now she had grown to early womanhood, and she blushes if all do not praise. Poor as we are, we are not alone in these unpleasant sensations of wounded vanity. The rich feel them greater because their perch is higher and their fall must be greater. The good Lord didn't give us all feelings and understandings alike. He didn't make our minds any more alike than our countenances or our bodies. Some are quick, hot blooded people; others cold, selfish and calculating. People who can hide their real feelings, get along best in the world. Stella is too transparent—a child could read her feelings in her face. She has never received the gloss of polished society that almost stops the pulsation of the heart at the word of command, and forces a calm exterior, while a raging fire is within. This may not be acting nature, but it is often policy. The person who can assume complaisance on all occasions is an actor of no mean merit."

Thus did Mrs. Gibbons's thoughts flow as her daughter sat quietly eating her supper. We can not, like Charles Read, have the tables of our character surrounded by liveried servants, ready to supply them with the practical sense that plans a meal and then cooks and serves it, but we shall let a portion of them be their own groomsmen and ladies' maids, until they can rise a higher level by their own exertions. We are not here to plan for our characters, but merely to chaperone our kind readers among them. We shall remain faithful as a guide and chronicler of passing events, hoping the reader will trust himself implicitly and hopefully to our care.

While Stella Gibbons is quietly eating the frugal allowance before her, let us look around the room. The house was evidently built before the town had put on a metropolitan air and ere people had learned to economize space. The room is a large one, and the ceiling low. There is no carpet on the floor, but its damp appearance and cleanliness bore evidence of recent scrubbing. A window on one side stood opposite a door on the other.—There had once been a fireplace, but it had been walled over. A cooking-stove stood a few feet from where the fireplace had once yawned—the pipe entered a circular flue opening in the wall above. The walls were papered, but time and coal smoke had played sad havoc with the fantastic figure. Two beds occupied different corners of the room, while an old-fashioned bureau stood between. In a corner near the stove a tin-fronted safe played the part of pantry to this humble family. The end of an old trunk peered from beneath one of the beds, as if playing hide and seek. A half dozen Windsor chairs, a table, and a few other articles of common utility, completed the contents in chattels of this humble abode. In addition to this room, Mrs. Gibbons had the use of a small closet, in which were hung a few articles of wearing apparel and was the abiding place of another trunk.

Mrs. Gibbons and her daughter earned a living by making dresses for a number of ladies on Ninth street. She was skilful with the needle and gave them better fits than they could get elsewhere—a sure sign of patronage. These ladies formed a set—that is, they attended the same church—attended the same balls, and in fact were supposed to be company for each other, but for nobody else. Their exclusiveness was carried to the point of wringing from Mrs. Gibbons the promise that she would make no dresses, garments or other wearing apparel for any outsiders. They paid well enough, but occasionally a dress was refused and the poor woman had to sacrifice it. She knew that this compact would last no longer than the appearance of a successful rival. She studied hard to keep

abreast of fluttering, fluctuating fashion. Now it was this new, fangled fashion, now that, was rolled in on the whirligig of time. Mrs. Gibbons's shrewdness caused her to form an alliance with a New York mantuamaker who forwarded her the patterns of all new styles as soon as they came from Paris. Thus she kept ahead, knowing full well that fashion, like civilization, travels westward. Her customers were not unfrequently astonished when they broached the subject of a new style to find her thoroughly posted.

They felt flattered, and this was the secret of her success. Her dainty high-bred customers would never have design to seek her miserable quarters—not they. When a new dress was to be made they dispatched a servant, and Mrs. Gibbons went post-haste to the great house, where she took the measure, secured the goods in the rough, bore them away and brought them back a thing fit for the winding sheet of an angel.

What an humble origin some things have! We pass the jeweler's window, and are dazzled at the display of articles of silver and gold. Go down in the cellar and see the smoke-begrimed, and dirty-fisted artisan who fashions them. Look at the snowey paper before you, and think that it may have been made from the cast-off linen of a beggar wreaking with disease. It is the skilful hand that does it all—time and labor, brain and muscle, that works this wonderful transformation.

Stella had just been on an errand to one of the great houses up-town to bear to its fair owner a new dress.

Mrs. Gibbons forebore questioning her daughter ere she had finished her supper, knowing full well that if any extraordinary thing had occurred Stella would have told her at once.—The girl washed the dishes, put them away in the safe, and then placed the lamp on the table ready for work.

"You have not told me how Miss Lucy Moorhead liked her new dress," said Mrs. Gibbons, turning to Stella with an inquisitive glance.

"Oh! mother you know Miss Lucy is

not hard to please like those Englishes and Pattons. If there ever was an angel I think Miss Lucy is one.—She is not sarcastic and does not provoke me like the Jones girls. Sometimes I just feel as if I would like to throw my arms around her sweet face as I do brother Willie's."

"And get yourself ordered away, probably, for such a presumption."

"I know my place, mother. I know, too, there is a wide gulf separating us from those for whom we labor. I shall be discreet, never fear for that. But mother, are these rich people any better than we are—that is, any of them but Miss Lucy?"

"Why do you except Miss Lucy?"

"Because I know she is better than I can ever hope to be;" and Stella looked her mother earnestly in the face as if trying to read her thoughts, but there was no flush, no contracting of the muscles, no tell tale in the eyes—nothing that would indicate what was passing within that brain.

"No, not better than we, in the sense that applies to all mankind; not physically better; perhaps not morally better; but wealth has given them advantages for cultivating their intellects, it has given them time to devote to the higher accomplishments of social life—in a word, money gains them only in the estimation of those who look no father for real merit."

Stella sighed as if a load had been removed from her heart.

"Than they are really no better than we."

"Certainly not."

"How do people get rich?"

"What a question! But it is natural. People get rich by making money and saving it—that is, spending less than they make. Some people make their money by their own exertions; others are born rich. Many of the wealthy young people of today, if they could see their grandfathers and grandmothers of sixty years ago, would see them tending a little shop somewhere, dealing out figs and cakes and cigars, stinting themselves that they might make each dollar beget another; and thus they toiled and saved until they had amassed

a fortune; and just when they should have begun to enjoy it, they died and left it to a thankless posterity."

"Thankless posterity usually manages to make it fly," cried Stella, laughing.

"Yes, yes, my child; one generation saves money and the next one spends it."

"I think I should prefer to be the lucky one, charged with spending the money."

"Perhaps it is better as it is—the rich are not all happy. Envy and hate hides behind stone and brick as well as wooden walls, and pain follows man whithersoever he sets his foot."

"I know that must be true, for Miss Lucy said she had such a headache yesterday all day, and she was at a party the night before."

"Yes, these parties are good headache generators. But what package is that you have?"

"Oh, I forgot; it is a book Miss Lucy loaned me. She said it was very amusing."

"Then, as we haven't much to do, you may read while I work—not too loud, as we should disturb Willie."

Thus admonished Stella undid the wrappings of the book, admired the gilt binding, and began to read in a low but distinct tone. The title of the book was, "Freaks on the Fells, or Three Months Rustication, by R. M. Ballentyne." The book amused both, while it imparted some knowledge of the sports in the Highlands of Scotland. The tone of the book did much to impress upon Stella the truth of what her mother had just said, that joy and happiness do not always find an abiding place under the roof of the wealthy.

Thus did the hours pass on until a bell in a neighboring steeple slowly and solemnly tolled the hour of ten o'clock. Another further off took up the refrain and carried it on, and so it went from tower to tower, until the slowest, laziest clock in town had got in its "ten strike."

"Stella closed the book, and mother and daughter were about to retire, when there came a great noise from the back yard as if some one was falling down the rear stairway, followed by piercing screams from a

female voice. Both the women held their breaths, the younger turning pale and trembling violently. Then there came the clatter of swiftly running feet, as people passing on the street entered the court and hurried around the house to learn the cause.

CHAPTER III.

After a few moments spent, half hesitating what course to pursue, Mrs. Gibbons ventured forth to the top of the stairway to ascertain, if possible, the cause of such an unusual noise.

Around the foot of the stair was gathered a motley group of citizens, male and female. The crowd seemed to be attracted to some one who lay upon the ground. Presently the throng drew back a little, and two men bore an apparently lifeless form up the stairway. The rabble would doubtless have followed, had they not been kept back by the police. As the little procession passed through the hall Mrs. Gibbons saw that it was a poor wretch by the name of Whalen, who had fallen down in a drunken fit, and was to all appearances, in a dying condition.

The ward physician had been sent for, and having arrived, was giving such directions as he deemed most likely to bring Whalen to consciousness. Following close behind, and with the true devotion of woman to fallen man, was Mrs. Whalen, giving vent to her sorrows in the loudest lamentations.

Mrs. Gibbons followed, hoping to be of some service in consoling her neighbor in the hour of sorrow. Alas! what poor comforters are we all in the presence of the grim monster Death when he seizes a human victim!

Whalen had led a long life of debauchery. Often and often had he come home in the mood to mistreat her who was at this moment the sincerest of mourners over his sad fate. With all the ill usage she had received, and with all the scars that, during a long series of years, a brute had inflicted upon her, she would at that moment have laid down her own life that his,

worthless as it was, might be spared. Such is the love of woman.

Mrs. Gibbons sought to still the tempest of sorrow, but as well might she have tried to calm the whirling tornado. The ward physician plied his art, but there's a period in all our lives when death laughs at medicine. That moment in Whalen's life had come. He died.

In a stone-front mansion—all Cincinnati mansions have stone fronts—on Eighth Street lived Elijah Moorhead. The stone steps that carried one up by degrees to his street door were as clean as soap and water and Irish energy could make them. The projecting stone cornice-work at the eaves gave to the building a frowning look—frowning to the poor who passed under its shadows.

The house was a grand pile of brick and stone. Grand as it appeared from the street, when one had passed the well-grained portal, he stood in awe at the grandeur, almost regal splendor, of the interior. When we enter these great palaces of our wealthy citizens, we experience a sensation not unlike that we feel when clambering out upon the roof of the incline railway building on Price's Hill. The sensation is a half giddy one, warning us that we ought to be away. But elegant houses exist for all that, and if we would pursue our story we must enter them, at least whenever duty calls, whether by day or by night.

As you entered the grand parlor you seemed to tread on velvet. Furniture of costly woods and of the latest patterns stood around the room like so many servants, each ready and willing to minister to the comfort of its wealthy owner. The finest lace curtains depended from gilt fastenings above, and swooped down almost to the floor, where their gossamer folds were caught up on burnished hooks, fastened on the casings of the windows. In the center of the room and depending from the high ceiling, was a gorgeous chandelier with pendants of cut glass. The walls were thickly hung with paintings, some of which bore signs of artistic merit, others

being mere daubs, proving plainly that their selection had been made more at random than as the result of a cultivated taste.

We shall not go from room to room and take an inventory of the furniture—Jenkins forbid—but merely remark that the remainder of the house was equally well furnished.

This, then, was the residence of Elijah Moorhead, who, according to a mercantile agency, was "a merchant of correct business habits, good character and standing and good for all contracts."

Elijah Moorhead was a toiler among the bales and boxes. Rising from behind an obscure country counter, he had, as his means accumulated, drifted to a city as the center of trade, and gradually risen to opulence. Ignorant of everything in the world save business, in this he was as shrewd as a fox. The daily press afforded sufficient food for his practical mind, except on Sundays, when he read a few pages in the Bible, or Fox's book of Martyrs, and while perusing the latter he would seem to undergo all pains felt by the victims of inquisitorial zeal.

We call him Elijah, but it would have deeply offended him to be thus familiarly addressed by any man worth less than a hundred thousand dollars. We do so on the principle and with the same utter disregard of consequences that we speak of King George III. as an old tyrant. Elijah was a very pious man—on Sundays. He drove to church in his elegant carriage, and then sent John, the coachman, away with the horses. It never occurred to Elijah that possibly John's soul might need saving as well as his own. He was a warm and zealous friend of the heathen of Asia and Africa, as well as of semi-barbarous Turkey. He viewed all his heathen through a field glass, but saw none with the naked eye. His daughter would sometimes ask him if it were not better to feed a hungry fly at home than to send food to a gnat abroad. He did not think so. His schemes were numerous and very comprehensive, and if a tithe of them had been

carried out, the heathen sons of "Afric's burning sands" would soon have been living in stone front houses, with fountains of ice-water to cool their parched tongues.

He never bestowed a penny on a home beggar; he turned them away with a snarl. If they wanted money, let them go and earn it as he did.

Domestic beggars were a species of vermin that, in his opinion, ought not to be tolerated by the authorities. So intensely did he despise this riff-raff of society, that he gave strict orders to his clerks that none of them should be permitted to pollute the sanctity of his private office. Reader, have you ever known an Elijah Moorhead? You have; so have we. In business matters Elijah was honor itself. People said he was shrewd at a bargain, and we suppose he was; witness his fortune. The click of his watch was but a faint echo of the hard cash that dropped into his coffers. Old Nibs was the book-keeper, and Old Nibs was a machine—a propeller. Elijah was the pilot that guided Nibs. If Elijah frowned, Nibs was as solemn as an owl. Elijah loved tools if their handles were always conveniently near. Nibs was a tool, ergo, he loved Nibs as he loved his own soul. Elijah Moorhead was a constitutional scold—he called it earnestness. He knew whom to scold. He never scolded a valuable man whose services he could not afford to dispense with. Oh no. He usually selected some poor imp who could not get a situation in any other house. But still, with all his little eccentricities, Elijah was not a hard task master. He paid men fairly and promptly for their services, and they in return usually overlooked his scoldings, or attributed them more to the result of a naturally irritable nature, than to a wish to offend. Elijah, having now acquired a great business reputation, turned his longing eyes to the political horizon. Like a vessel becalmed in a low latitude, he was waiting and watching for a breeze that would waft him into political prominence.

He attended ward meetings with a zeal worthy of a professional bummer, and

courted and toadied to those who had influence as politicians. In a word, he played the demagogue most persistently.

Elijah Moorhead's family consisted of a wife and daughter—the former a plain woman of good sense and with sufficient penetration to see and feel that the social circle in which they were now moving, was in advance of her early educational advantages. Mrs. Moorhead, therefore, kept discreetly in the back-ground.

Lucy Moorhead was a young lady of rare beauty and fine accomplishments.

Beautiful by nature, every art had been called to aid in magnifying that loveliness. As Stella Gibbons had intimated, Lucy had a good kind heart, which, added to her good senses, restrained her from saying and doing many things that numerous giddy-headed young ladies of her set said and did. While she loved her father with the devotion of a child, she by no means coincided with his notions on charity. With her the real objects of charity were visible on every hand. She had no difficulty in finding them, for she used only the naked eye and followed the dictates of a true woman's heart. Lucy occasionally resorted to a little stratagem to rid herself of the prattling whining nobodies that buzzed and simpered around her. This ruse was to enter upon a moral lecture of charity, or some kindred topic. By this means she always accomplished the desired result, and the empty-headed gentlemen fled like poltroons at the first discharge in a battle. If there is anything that your mewling babbler cannot withstand it is a moral lecture. Of small talk he is as full as a maggot is of meat, but put him on a common-sense subject and he flounders, plunges, splashes, and finally sinks. Thus had Lucy's eccentric conversation brought her into ill repute with some who were kind enough to bestow upon her the epithet of "the moral lecturer." We shall see presently how much she deserved the title.

Her father, in pursuance of a plan he had laid to obtain the mayoralty of the city, had resolved to hold a reception of the leading politicians and men of influence,

He had therefore printed a large number of invitations, which he brought home to be addressed to the various persons whose presence he desired. He called Lucy into the Library one afternoon and invited her to become his amanensis for an hour. The young lady seated herself at a desk, and with pen in hand waited like a good soldier for orders. Elijah drew a roll containing names from his pocket, and began to read, making comments as he went on.

"Now we are ready. First, address one of these missives to Paul Horntickler, of Ward 1. Mr. H. is a rising young lawyer, and said to be worth something in his own right."

Lucy wrote the address as directed.

"The next is Mr. John Jones, of Ward 2—a rich old fellow—gouty as an alderman. It is said he wraps Ward 2 around his finger."

"And you propose to wrap Mr. Jones around your finger," said Lucy, between the name and address.

"Never mind, dear, write on, for time is precious. Frederick Pille comes next. He is an honest brewer—a beer-maker, of course; but beer represents capital, and capital stands for influence."

"Shall I write the address in German?"

"If you please. What a capital idea! It will be flattering to him to know that we understand his mother tongue. While I think of it, I want you to rub up a little on that "Watch on the Rhine." The Dutch adore it, and if anybody can make a piano talk, it is you."

"O father, I fear you are bringing disgrace on our house by inviting all this motley crew of American, Dutch and Irish—people who have but little in common with each other, save in the idea of dividing the loaves and fishes. What will people say of it all?" and Lucy turned to her father with an inquiring look.

"What can they say—what dare they say?" asked Elijah, reddening.

He reflected.

"Well, I will curtail the list, and make it a little more select than I had intended. Here is policeman George Somers. He is

said to be the most popular man in Ward 5. I must have him up here by all means. By the way, I should like to have his counsel now."

With Elijah Moorhead to think was to act, and he touched a bell. A boy answered the summons.

"Go to No.—, ——— Street, and ask policeman Somers to step down here for a half an hour—not in uniform. Now be off."

The boy hastily departed.

The remainder of the invitations were finished, and made into a package ready for the mail.

Presently the door bell rang

Lucy was leaving the room, but her father asked her to remain.

Mr. Moorhead answered the door in person, and, as he expected, met the policeman, whom he graciously received and invited into his library. He introduced Somers to his daughter. The former bowed low, which the latter acknowledged with a smile and a slight inclination of the head.

"Please be seated, sir," said Mr. Moorhead, pointing to a chair.

The officer sat down—a slight pause followed.

"I have sent for you," Mr. Moorhead began, "to consult in reference to a little entertainment I propose to give to some friends and acquaintances among the politicians of the city. I have frequently heard your shrewdness spoken of, and have not the least doubt of its truth. I shall, I fear, have more than a host can do; therefore I will be compelled to have an aid de camp, as it were, to assist me in the duties of receiving and entertaining the guests. In this dilemma, I have sent for you."

"You do me too great an honor, I fear, Mr. Moorhead, for I am but an humble patrolman," replied George, blushing like a girl, and stealing a sidelong glance at Lucy.

"Nonsense, sir. One man is as good as another, (Elijah made a mental reserva-

tion here,) provided he acts like a gentleman."

"I have no objection to serving you in any capacity, where I can be useful, provided, of course, that I can obtain leave of absence from my official duties."

"Oh! leave that matter to me, sir. I will see the Mayor and obtain leave of absence for you."

"Very well."

"Then I shall consider it settled that you will assist me to receive and entertain our friends. I will assign Lucy as your assistant. I don't suppose, however, that she will be very valuable in that line."

"I am sure, sir," stammered George, "she would do much to hide my awkwardness," and he stole another timid glance at the young lady.

"Oh! certainly, sir; I shall feel quite brave with an officer for a superior commander."

"The officer will not be on patrol duty," ventured Mr. Somers.

"So much the worse, as I fear he will not be authorized to protect me nor give commands in the name of his official standing in the community."

"It does not require brass buttons to make a strong man protect the weak, and as for giving orders, I am sure that I shall have none to give, but should rather obey yours."

At a sign Lucy arose, and with a graceful nod to Mr. Somers, left the room. The two men sat in conversation for a half hour or more—the one broadly hinting at the Mayorality—the other listless in attention. Then George Somers took his departure with a promise to be promptly on hand on the evening of the reception. Once away from the house, Somers stopped on a street corner and leaned against a lamp post (the lamp posts are the props of our police force) and thought.

"For what had he been invited to that great house, and put into such prominence?" If he had kept his wits about him he would not have been compelled to ask himself that simple interrogative.

"Was the beautiful young lady he met

this merchant's daughter?" Then he remembered that she was introduced as such. He tried in vain to recall a face as lovely as Miss Moorhead's. He could think of none. Stella Gibbons was the nearest, but hers was not a beauty that dazzled and took one's breath. It suddenly occurred to Somers that he might attract attention by standing so listlessly in such a public place. So he hastened home, and passed several acquaintances on the way without seeing them, so deeply was his mind engaged.

CHAPTER IV.

The poor need not always be unhappy. Where poverty is not so extreme as to deprive one of the necessaries of life it may be endured even with complacency. A man who in some communities would be considered rich would in others be reckoned only in moderate circumstances. It is, therefore, by comparison that we are rich or poor. Balaam would doubtless have been considered rich in the possession of an ass, if none of his neighbors had been similarly fortunate.

The only satisfaction that riches can ever bestow, is found in the fact that they enable us and those we love to satiate our tastes and appetites. It may be set down, therefore, as a rule that he that hath enough to-day, with a reasonable prospect for the same to-morrow, is rich, while he that is on half rations to-day, and with a prospect of nothing to-morrow is poor. It is contentment, after all, that sweetens the crumbs of the poor, as it is sordid desire for gain that makes moldy the wheaten loaf of the rich. It requires a little philosophy to move evenly on any plane of society. A sweet disposition, an unsullied character, and a clear conscience are the props on which contentment rests her head.

Mrs. Gibbons was a contented woman. She could manage, by dint of hard work and rigid economy, to get enough for herself and children to eat and wear. She was not without hope of something better

in the future. The time might come when she would be enabled to lay by something for a rainy day. Willie was put to school, but that did not cost much. Stella had a very fair education, thanks to the public schools.

One day mother and daughter were busily engaged in sewing, when they heard some one clambering up the stairway; but supposing it to be some of the neighbors, gave little heed. Presently Mrs. Gibbons raised her eyes and beheld a venerable looking man standing in the doorway. His locks were white and his tall form slightly bent with age. There was a look of mild benevolence over-spreading his countenance, like a patch of sunshine on a meadow. As Mrs. Gibbons raised her eyes he seemed to be contemplating the scene before him with the gentle, kindly look of one who reckons all mankind as his friends.

"May I come in?" he asked in a pleasant voice.

"Certainly, sir, and welcome. Stella, place a chair for the gentleman."

The old gentleman accepted the proffered seat, and as he sat down his face showed signs of pain for a moment.

"I am troubled a little with rheumatism in my old days, but I suppose it will not be many years until the disease will stop for want of material to work upon."

There was a slight pause and the stranger seemed to be thinking. He asked—

"Are you Mrs. Gibbons?"

"I am."

"I thought so. My name is Peckover. I am one of the trustees of the Lodge to which your husband belonged."

"Indeed;" and Mrs. Gibbons and Stella opened their eyes.

"I should like to inquire if you have ever been visited by any of my predecessors in office?"

"There has been no one to see us."

"As I expected. I find that the last Board has been very derelict in their duty; but I assure you, Mrs. Gibbons, that I shall try to atone for their shortcomings. It is our duty to visit the widows and orphans of deceased members, and ascertain

their condition, and, if in need, to relieve them."

"We had almost come to the conclusion that since my husband's death the Lodge had forgotten us."

"By no means; but you know that we have a great many kinds of people to deal with. Sometimes men get into places of trust who do not properly discharge their duties; but I hope that you have not suffered by this seeming neglect."

"By no means, sir; thanks to good health, we have been able to earn enough to eat and wear."

"God be praised. But, Mrs. Gibbons, allow me to inquire as to your means of obtaining a support for yourself and family. I do not ask this question from idle curiosity, but with an earnest desire to render you assistance in case it is required."

There was such a calm, benignant expression—such a kindly, fatherly solicitude visible on the countenance of the speaker, that Mrs. Gibbons felt that she could trust him with a secret if she had one.

"We earn our living by sewing for some rich families on Eighth Street. By strict economy, we make ends meet. But oh! Sir, if sickness should come, or those who are now our friends should desert us, I tremble for the result;" and a tear glistened in the good woman's eye at the bare thought of such a dire calamity.

"I hope God may spare you such a trial. But never fear; you have friends who stand ready and willing to assist you as far as they are able. Our Order, whose principles we cherish, commands us to visit the sick, and succor the widow and the fatherless. Friends may turn away when the frown of adversity chills us with its icy breath; but then it is that Odd Fellowship comes like a friend to our aid. You may think me over-enthusiastic, Madam, but had you lived as long as I, and witnessed the daily ministrations of our beloved Order, I think you would agree with me that its charities have not been wasted, nor the years of its existence spent in idleness."

"I doubt not that you are correct, for I

have known instances myself in which great suffering would have occurred but for the assistance given by your Order."

"Mrs. Gibbons, may I ask if you are contented in this house? It seems to me your surroundings are not pleasant."

"They are not, sir; but we have lived in this house so long—my husband died here—that it seems like home. I should not like to leave it."

"Not for a better one?"

"For my children's sake I would; but the old place has become as dear to them as to me, and we don't care to leave it now."

"I wouldn't like to go either," put in Willie.

"Oh! you wouldn't, eh? Come here, my little man," said the old gentleman, smiling and looking fondly on the child.

Willie went up to Mr. Peckover without the least hesitation.

"Now your name, sir?"

Willie hesitated.

"Tell the gentleman your name," commanded Mrs. Gibbons.

"Willie Gibbons."

"Willie Gibbons. Well, that is a very nice name, and you are a very fine-looking boy. I hope we shall be good friends. Have you a pocket-knife?"

"No sir, but mamma is going to buy me one as soon as she can spare the money."

"Well, if you will go with me over to the hardware store after a spell, I'll save your mamma that trouble."

Willie's eyes sparkled for joy.

"Can I go, mamma?"

"If the gentleman wishes."

"Then, my son, that matter is settled;" and turning to Mrs. Gibbons, he said: "I see that you have no sewing-machine."

"No, sir, Stella and I use our fingers."

"You could do more work and much more easily with a machine."

"Oh, yes sir; but machines are expensive. Eighty dollars is a good deal of money for poor people."

"Yes, eighty dollars is a good deal of money; but if spent in labor-saving machines, it is not wasted."

"I have looked forward, hoping and hop-

ing that some piece of good luck would overtake us by which we would be able to buy a machine. But, sir, I fear there is no such good luck in store for us."

"And you, Miss, would you prefer a sewing-machine to a piano?"

Stella blushed slightly at being thus addressed.

"A piano would be a useless piece of furniture to me in a home like this, especially as I do not play. I think I would greatly prefer a machine."

"Spoken like a sensible girl. In these days the greater number of young ladies prefer a piano; in fact, they spend most of their time banging away on the keys, as if their blessed lives depended on their knowing how to play. It wasn't so in my young days; but I suppose it is all right, for if we were to come to a stand-still as a people we would stagnate before long. Well, I must get my crazy old limbs going once more, as I have some business downtown that must be looked after." With many cringes of pain, Mr. Peckover worked himself up to a standing position.

"I shall come quite often if you will allow me, for I feel a deep interest in your welfare."

"We shall be pleased to see you; and shall remember your kind words to us," replied Mrs. Gibbons, rising.

Willie had stationed himself like a sentinel at the door. The promised pocket-knife was engrossing a very liberal share of his thoughts at that moment.

No sooner did Mr. Peckover make the first step toward the door than the child with his hat on, advanced and caught the old gentleman by the hand.

"Why, Willie, you should not be so free with strangers," said his mother, reprovingly.

"No harm done, my son. There, come now, and we will be off." After bidding mother and daughter good-day, the two went out. It was the old, old story of childhood and old age. One all eagerness the other all pain.

Mother and daughter sat and worked in silence for a few moments after Mr. Peck-

over and Willie had gone, then Stella turned to her mother and asked—

“Why did that old man ask so many questions?”

“Because he wishes to learn something of our condition, I suppose.”

“I don't believe people have any right to come here and make such inquiries as he did.”

“But suppose he was asking with a view of assisting us?”

“But he did not assist us.”

“You don't know these secret society people as well as I do. They never tell you what they mean to do, and they often do things that you least expect. Your father used to tell me that it is the boast of his society that they give where it is needed without talking about it publicly.”

“I'll forgive him this time as he has been kind enough to buy Willie a knife; but, mother, how do we know this man is not an impostor?”

Mrs. Gibbons looked a little uneasy, as it had not occurred to her in that light.

“Why, my child, I can see no motive he could have in view.”

“There is no telling. There are so many wicked people in the world, and the poor generally come in for a share of their attention. But suppose that this man was an impostor, has he not taken brother Willie away with him?”

The bare thought that the child might be stolen away, caused Mrs. Gibbons to turn a little paler.

“Put on your bonnet, daughter, and run down on the street and see if you can find Willie, and bring him home.”

Stella needed no second bidding, as her own fears were already excited. In a moment she was gone, her feet pattering lightly on the old staircase as she rushed down into the court below.

CHAPTER V.

How many things do we see on the streets of a city that are passingly strange! They seem unaccountable, yet a word of explanation would make them all plain as

noon-day. We see two ladies hurrying along the street, one weeping and the other dry-eyed. Why does one weep? Is it sorrow? Is it anger? Is it joy? There is mystery!

Again, we see a man plunging along the crowded way, elbowing right and left, and evidently laboring under some terrible mental excitement. There must be a cause that prompts a public display of such strong emotions. Men and women seek to present a calm, self-possessed appearance when passing in review before their fellow-mortals. We are admonished, then, when seeing strange conduct upon the street to judge with charity, and not too quickly condemn the result without knowing the cause.

If any one had seen Stella swooping down like a bird descending from its lofty perch, with an almost frantic look mantling her lovely face, he would have thought her just setting out on a flying visit to Longview Asylum. She did not pause in the court, but hurried into the street, expecting that her worst fears would be instantly confirmed. She cast a hasty glance, first up then down the street. A soot-begrimmed huckster was singing from his wagon in stentorian tones, “Yar—oal—rags, and o' iron!” drowning the noise and confusion of passing vehicles. These noises were as familiar as the strokes of the bell of the steeple clock. Instinctively she hastened, almost ran, down the street. At the first crossing made another slight halt and gave another hasty glance in all directions, not even forgetting to look back over the track she had just traveled. Willie was not in view. She hastened on, the tears starting in her eyes, almost blinding her. On she went for another half square, and, Oh joy! she beheld the child coming leisurely homeward. He was deeply engrossed. He had fished a pine stick out of the gutter, and was engaged in the primitive American pastime—whittling. He saw nothing but that knife, and actually stumbled against a hitching post, so deeply was he absorbed. The joy of Stella found expression in catching up her

brother and kissing him passionately. Willie was surprised at this sudden onslaught, but it was only momentary.

"Sister, just look what a good knife—two blades—both razor-metal. I tell you it cuts splendid;" and to exemplify his words, he carved a deep shaving from the soft pine.

"Come home, Willie, and we will talk about that afterward."

She took her brother's hand in her own, and hurried him on. This put an end to his whittling, but it did not prevent his making a savage thrust at a dog that came nosing about him. Luckily for the dog, he saw the blow coming in time to avoid it by springing away. He was the happiest boy in the world. His return home was greeted with rapture by his anxious mother.

"Oh, mamma, that chap is a jolly old brick, isn't he?"

"My son, come here," taking him on her lap. "Tell me, when did you learn to call gentlemen jolly old bricks?"

"Why, Tom Jones says that is what his daddy is."

"Never let me hear you talk that way again. Say he is a kind-hearted gentleman." Willie repeated. "Now that will do."

Stella felt a little cut up at her unjust suspicions of their visitor, but said nothing. The next day another heavy footstep was heard on the stairway.

Presently a tall, sinewy-looking drayman stood peering into the room. His sleeves were rolled up to his elbows, and his sunburnt arms looked strong enough to have felled either Hercules or a mule with a blow. Taking off his hat, he drew forth a bandana from its crown and mopped his forehead, though it was February, but a warm day for the season.

"D' you do?" said he, nodding.

"Pretty well, sir. What can we do for you?"

He looked at a ticket he held in his hand. "Your name is—is—Mrs. Gibbons?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right. Where shall I put it?"

"Just dump it in at the east grating."

The drayman stared.

"It'll break it up, ma'am."

"Oh, well, it makes no difference. We can't afford to pay to put it in."

"Do I understand you right that you want it dumped into the cellar?"

"You do," replied Mrs. Gibbons, reddening a little under conduct she considered amounting almost to rudeness. And then the opinion of this man and this woman, so far as it affected the other, exactly coincided: each thought the other a fool.

The drayman mused a moment, and then, as if half addressing the woman and half soliloquizing, said:

"It's the first time in my life I ever heard of a sewing machine being dumped into a cellar. I've a notion to take it back to the company."

"A sewing-machine!"

"Certainly."

"Why did you not say a sewing-machine?"

"Because I supposed you knew all about it," replied the drayman, doggedly.

Stella could restrain her mirth no longer, but gave way to a merry laugh. Then the drayman caught up the refrain and guffawed loud and long. Mrs. Gibbons was the last to be seized with the contagion, but she enjoyed the ridiculousness of the situation no less from having been chief actor in it.

"To tell the truth," she said, "I have not bought a sewing-machine; but I had bought a load of coal, and was expecting its delivery."

"I can't help that, ma'am. I have my orders; and here's a letter. It may explain, and while you read it I'll put the machine on my shoulder and bring it up."

Mrs. Gibbons took the letter, and clipped the end of the envelope with the scissors, then unfolded the letter and read it aloud.

CINCINNATI, Feb. 24th, 18—

MRS. GIBBONS: Dear Madam— I brought up in our lodge last night the matter of purchasing a sewing-machine for

you, and by a unanimous vote they ordered us to purchase a good one, and send it to you at once. In compliance with that resolution, we send you by the bearer one of an improved pattern, and hope that it will afford you as much pleasure in receiving as it does the members of the lodge in bestowing it upon you. With the regards of the lodge,

I am fraternally yours,

JOHN PECKOVER,

For Trustees of — Lodge.

"This is good news," said Mrs. Gibbons, turning to her daughter. But that impulsive creature laughed and cried in succeeding breaths, and then threw her arms around her mother's neck.

While this little drama was being enacted, Willie was thoughtful. He did not comprehend this sudden embracing of mother and sister, this weeping and laughing. He always cried when he was hurt, and laughed when he was amused. After the first outburst of emotion of mother and daughter had partially subsided, Willie went softly up to his mother, and taking her hands in both his own, said, "Mother, I want to tell you something."

"Well, what is it, my son?"

"You won't get angry, will you?" and he twitched nervously at his mother's fingers.

"No, not at Willie."

"Then I'll tell you what it is. I want to trade my knife to Jeff Thompson for a dog."

"Why?" inquired his mother.

"Because a dog is so much nicer than a knife. Jeff Thompson's dog will bark when you tell him, and do ever so many nice things."

"You would not part with the knife the gentleman gave you, I hope, for such a trifling creature as a dog."

"Dogs are nice things to have, any way, said Willie," as he turned away and looked out of the window.

Stella began to grow nervous. "Why has not the man brought up the machine?" Hers was just such a nervous organization as would make a minute seem an hour when impatience had begun its work. She could wait no longer; she would go, and

perhaps she could see him coming up with the machine on his shoulders, as Atlas carried the globe. She looked down, but she could not see him. She ran down into the court, and then out to the gate, but he was not to be seen even upon the street. Then Stella went sorrowfully back to her mother, bearing the sad tidings that they were doomed to disappointment, after all.

The nondescript that furnished the motive power of the vehicle that conveyed the machine to its destination was a mule of more than ordinary size. Being left by his owner in the street, he stood quietly enjoying the rest that a clean conscience is sure to beget. He flopped his large ears as if to attract attention to their capacity for hearing the feed call. When other horses passed by and put back their ears as if they wanted to give him a nip, his stoicism was not in the least disturbed. He was above noticing taunts from such ill-tempered cousins. Presently a farmer came along with a load of fresh hay, and, as ill luck would have it, stopped his team when directly opposite his muleship, to make some inquiries. The mule nipped a mouthful from the load. It no doubt tasted sweet, and reminded him of his colthood days when he gamboled on the green sward of his country home. Just as it began to look like a permanent feast, the farmer drove on. The mule stepped up to get another parting bite, and doubtless, like people following a temptation, he had no idea of going so far, but actually followed the load of hay down town. Therefore when the drayman came down to get the machine, he was as much astonished at not finding his mule and dray as Stella was at not finding its owner. He did not hesitate a moment, but went rapidly down street, inquiring of every acquaintance he met for the missing chattels. He soon got on the track of the faithless mule, and succeeded in overhauling him, at the distance of three or four squares. The drayman went into a rage, caught the bridle with the left hand, and with his right dealt the poor beast a savage blow.

The mule only winced, but the man

groaned, for he had bruised his fist terribly. This only increased his passion. He sprang on the dray, turned the mule back, and began beating him unmercifully. A policeman warned him to desist or he would lock him up in the station-house. He finally cooled off by the time he got back to his destination. Then he shouldered the machine and bore it up-stairs.

Stella's spirits rose at the sight of the machine as would the mercury in a glass tube if suddenly plunged in boiling water. The machine was actually in view. She could see and feel it. The man set down the machine, and asked some one to sign his bill of lading. Stella signed it, and the man went sulkily away. He felt vexed at that mule. What the reader knows about the delay was ever an unexplained mystery to the mother and daughter; they had no feelings now save those of gratitude. What to them had seemed an unfathomable abyss, a thing in the dim distance, had been crossed as if by magic. They could not comprehend how people with whom they had no acquaintance could feel such a deep interest in their welfare. Women are thinkers, but not reasoners. They go from cause to effect at a single leap. Man gropes his way, stumbling and often falling, but ever pushing on. He is not unlike a hound on the trail. Woman often goes astray, but always returns to some point of certainty, and tries again. When man reaches his conclusion, he finds woman there ahead of him. In a word, she seems to know by intuition what he learns by slow process.

Stella unlocked the machine, and put her dainty foot on the pedals, and set the wheels in motion. She had previously learned to operate one. She lost no time in threading the needle and putting it in operation. Her delight scarcely knew any bounds. They both felt that they were now on the high road to fortune. Ignorance of the future is sometimes bliss in the present.

CHAPTER VI.

Some chapters back we left George Somers on his way from the conference with Elijah Moorhead at his mansion on Eighth street. His heart was fluttering like a schoolboy's who has for the first time been permitted to march on a parallel line (the width of the road separating them) with his fair inamorata in pantalots to a party. He now wanted to find a quiet place where he could sit down and think. That place was his room, and thither he repaired with more than ordinary celerity of movement. Once in his bedroom, he sat down to reflect. He went back to the time when he had been summoned to appear at the mansion of the merchant. He recalled every act of his own—every act, look and word of Moorhead's—with the vividness which only important events of life photograph themselves on the brain. He could have colared a law-breaker and marched him off to the station-house, and forgotten the circumstance before the ink of the record of the prisoner's name had dried on the register; but his facing a pair of beautiful, bewitching eyes was a great event. Somehow he felt that he could sit and look at that charming face and hear the melody of that sweet voice forever, without growing weary. He threw himself on the bed. He should long since have been asleep, for he must needs be on watch all night. It was his duty to watch while most people slept, and sleep while most people watched. Millions of dollars depended on his fidelity—a trust he had never broken; yet if the world had been placed in his keeping, and the keys of the infernal regions in his pocket, he could not have slept. The more he tried to woo the goddess of sleep, the more she refused to be wooed. She is a coy girl—this goddess is. She does not always come at the beck. We pursue—she flies. He tried to listen to the tick, of the old clock on the mantel, hoping that its monotone would send him quietly to the land of sleep. By and by he forgot to count, and then his thoughts went by easy stages into the one all-absorbing

theme of Miss Moorhead. Had they been equals in life, his mind would have been comparatively easy, for he should then have laid siege to the castle at once. But alas! she was rich and he was a poor policeman, destined to deal with thieves and law-breakers, and receive no thanks from any one in return. He dared not hope that he could be anything more to her than a servant. She might smile on him just as she smiled on hundreds of others. It is natural for some people to smile even when there is a sadness at the heart. Again he began the oft-repeated task of counting the vibrations of the lazy pendulum as it wagged to and fro. He missed a number (it was ninety-nine), and then his mind wandered, aimlessly drifting back to the old theme. Suddenly a new train of thoughts flashed upon him, and he sat bolt upright in bed. This was a free country, and men of merit could make positions for themselves. If he was worthy, he could make himself the peer of any man in the land. The way was open—plain as the noonday sun could make it. He would try one of the professions, and earn for himself a name and rank in society. With this consoling thought, he fell asleep.

On the following day Mr. Duforth, an attorney of prominence, received a visitor in the undress of a police officer, who proceeded to unfold a little plan he had matured of studying law.

The attorney propounded a few questions touching his sincerity, and, finding him serious in his attentions, concluded to loan him the necessary books as he should need them. He was constrained to extend this favor to Somers, as he had known him a number of years as a faithful officer and a man of unblemished character. It required less than an hour to fix all preliminaries, and George bore home that ponderous corner-stone of the judicial fabric—Blackstone's Commentaries. It was arranged that he should recite every alternate afternoon, which would enable him to advance rapidly. He went to work like a man in earnest. He divided his time. From six in the morning until noon he

slept; and from one o'clock until six in the evening he studied. Then at seven he went on duty, and remained there until morning. He had a strong constitution, or it would scarcely have carried him through such arduous labors.

But George Somers had by no means forgotten the coming reception. How could he do so? He frequently during the week looked over his wardrobe to examine its contents and settle upon what he should wear. Lady reader—if I should be so fortunate as to have one—do not I, beg you, allow the gentlemen to humbug you with the assertion that all the vanity, all the primping, and all the thinking about dress, originates in your dear little heads. The man that does not desire to be tidy and well dressed, when about to appear before the woman he loves, is scarcely worth being loved in return. There are slouchy slovens roaming around the confines of respectability, whose clothes would look just as well if hung over a flour barrel, yet they are the exception. How these people ever get married is more than we know. We do know that novelists always black-ball them. George Somers was one of those well-proportioned men who would have looked well in almost any attire. His head sat jauntily on his broad shoulders, and he was straight as an arrow,—just such a man as a sensible girl would naturally fall in love with.

Somers had almost counted the hours when it would be necessary to appear at the reception. He had even arranged in his mind what he should say to Miss Lucy on the occasion. But alas! the finely arranged speeches of young lovers, like those of youthful orators, fly when faced by the audience. The day, or rather the evening of the day, on which it was arranged the reception should be held, came at last, and it found our hero dressed in his best suit of broadcloth. He found himself in the vicinity of the Moorehead residence at least half an hour before the time named in the invitation. So he avoided the house, and strolled up Central Avenue to kill time. A brother policeman wanted to

know where he got so much style. George told him he could afford it, and passed on. At the appointed hour he boldly rang the bell, and was received by a servant, who ushered him into the grand parlor. Mr. Moorhead arose and received him graciously.

"Glad to see you on time, Mr. Somers. I like to see men prompt, whether upon a matter of business or of social intercourse."

If Elijah had known how much of George's promptness was due to his daughter's influence, he might not have so warmly commended it.

George thanked him for his very flattering opinion, but was all the while wondering if some change had not been made in the programme by which he would be robbed of the presence of Miss Lucy. He had not long to wait, for there was a slight rustle of silk, and then the young lady swept into the room. He arose and saluted her with a bow, that if not as graceful as that of a dancing master, yet did him credit. Miss Lucy smiled an acknowledgement. George felt that his face was on fire, and his only hope was that if his blushing was noticed it might be attributed to bashfulness.

"I am a little behind time, I fear, dear father; but you must always allow us ladies at least five minutes grace—to put on our gloves."

"Yes, the days of grace once lost me a debt; for the firm failed between the time the draft was due and the end of the three days allowed by law. But we are not here to talk of that sort of business. Now, Mr. Somers, and you my daughter, I desire that you act as my aids-de-camp. Mr. Somers will please stand in the hall and receive the company and present them to me each in turn."

"This will be dry work," thought Somers. "And you, Lucy—well, I guess you had better assist Mr. Somers in the hall."

Glorious words, fitly spoken!

Just at this point there was a pull at the bell.

"There, take your place now," said

Elijah, hurridly running his fingers through his front locks, and patting his back hair gently. He arose and stood waiting the company.

Mr. Somers and Miss Moorhead hastened to their appropriate places. The gentleman opened the door, and admitted Mr. Fred Phille. Frederick was taken by the arm, and before he had time to repeat Yacob Robinson backward, he was ushered into the august presence of the Grand Mogul. The solemn and stately grandeur of the place dazed his sight, but he soon got used to it.

Paul Horntickler, of Ward 1, was the next arrival. He shared a fate similar to that of his German predecessor. Between these arrivals of guests there was opportunity for a little side talk between those who were acting the part of ushers; but the thread of discourse was frequently broken.

Somers ventured to remark "that Mr. Moorhead was doing a great honor to those he was receiving."

"Perfect folly, I fear, Mr Somers. But I certainly cannot agree with him in selecting nationalities so different—" Bell rings; another arrival; and George almost ready to curse the intruder, opens the door and admits him.

Having again been left to themselves, George asks that she will please proceed.

"Well, really I have forgotten what I was speaking about, but something very foolish I know." Their eyes met in a single glance, and then hers modestly sought the floor.

"No, not foolish, Miss Moorhead. You were speaking of your father inviting a promiscuous mass of us, I think."

"Excuse me, sir," the color mounting to her fair cheeks; "I did not mean to include you; for be it understood that you have attained the rank of an aid-de-camp."

"I appreciate the honor of being an aid to so fair a lady."

"Oh, sir, not to me," she replied turning crimson, "but to father. I am only of your own rank."

Bell rings, and this was just what Lucy had been wishing for, that she might re-

gain her composure and drive the blood from her cheeks.

When George came back, Lucy was marble.

"Do you sing, Mr. Somers?" she inquired.

"A little."

"Ah, I am glad you do; for it has been ordained by the powers that I shall entertain the audience with a little music. You can assist me."

"I will try, Miss Moorhead; but I fear my voice will only bring discord."

"I will try you before the present audience, and if you do bring a little discord it will make no difference, as I presume they will not be very critical."

Some time elapsed since the last arrival, it was presumed that all were present. There being a call for music, George escorted Miss Moorhead to the grand piano. The voices of the guests went down to a low hum, and finally hushed entirely as the lady's fingers touched the ivory keys.

"What shall we sing," she whispered. George Somers, in a low tone, suggested that perhaps "Auld Lang Syne" would be as appropriate as anything else, and then the well known words rang out;

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot
And never brought to mind;
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And songs of Auld Lang Syne.
For Auld Lang Syne we meet to-night,
For Auld Lang Syne;
So sing the songs our fathers sang,
In days of Auld Lang Syne," etc.

The first verse brought grand applause, and no wonder. Lucy was not only an excellent musician, but a sweet singer. George Somers was a musician of no inferior merit, while his tenor ought to have entitled him to have a place on Theo. Thomas' staff. Lucy herself was not a little astonished; she had no idea that he was such an excellent singer. Lucy loved music, and she almost forgot to keep up her part in listening to George.

She now whisperingly proposed that George should sing a piece of his own selection. His modesty forbade this selection. Lucy asked him could he sing the

"Star Spangle Banner." He would try if she wished.

"Yes she wished to hear him."

Then she gave him the pitch on the piano, and played the accompaniment. George launched out. He put his very soul into the words. Its effect was electrifying on his hearers. They seemed almost spellbound until the voice had ceased; then came a round of applause.

"Well done, Mr. Somers," whispered Lucy.

George blushed but kept his back to the audience.

Together they sang, "Watch on the Rhine."

This excited the German portion of the visitors, and it was noticed that they were loudest in their praises of the song.

Miss Moorhead arose, and bowed herself out. George Somers accompanied her as far as the hall.

"Mr. Somers, I am under many obligations to you for your kindness, and I am sure father is equally obliged. Good evening, sir;" and she extended her hand. Somers took the proffered little hand, in his own and pressed it tenderly lest he should break it. Their eyes met, and then she turned and glided away.

George stood a moment as if frozen to the spot and then turned and re-entered the grand saloon. Several whispered conversations were being held by little groups about the room. We have room for but one, which is as follows:

First Speaker—"Policeman Somers is sweet on the Governor's girl."

Second Speaker—"Yaw, dat is so, she looks sweet to him."

First Speaker—"The Governor would sour on that match, or I'm much mistaken."

Second Speaker—"Yaw."

The first speaker was in some doubt whether his Teutonic friend meant to assent to the first or last part of his proposition, and so changed the subject.

Supper was announced, and the doors of the spacious dining-rooms were thrown open. The banquet had been prepared

with skill, and the guests did ample justice to it. After the plates had disappeared, Madeira, Port, and Native wines were introduced. The bottles and glasses clicked as they touched. After a sufficient amount of wine had been taken to warm the hearts and limber the tongues of the guests, some one called for a speech from the host. Elijah had waited with palpitating heart for this auspicious moment.

He arose slowly to his feet and looked patronizingly over his guests.

"Fellow Citizens"—a considerable pause—"I thank you from the bottom of my heart for thus calling upon me. I presume it is your wish that I should say something of our city affairs, as many of you are now holding official positions. [Cries of that's the ticket.] There is no doubt some malfeasance among high officials, but in the main I think it can be said that our affairs are reasonably well administered. I have no heart, gentlemen, to hound the man who looks after the interests of his friends. [prolonged applause] We all have our friends and it is but the natural instinct of our hearts to help those who help us. [cheers] Now gentlemen, this is a great city, but we are surrounded by a cordon of fast growing towns—Louisville, Indianapolis, Dayton, Columbus, Portsmouth and Lexington. They are all trying to take away from us our commerce, the result of years of honest toil. But they cannot get this trade if we are true to ourselves. Now, in order that Cincinnati may hold her position as "Queen of the West," we must make internal improvements on a grand scale. If I were Mayor of the city, I should build a railroad from the top of Vine Street hill into Mill Creek valley. I would take dirt enough from the hill to fill up the valley, thus opening up a large scope of territory for building purposes. This would furnish labor for hands as well as for ourselves. The newspapers might snarl a little, [groans] but they do not run Cincinnati by any means. Then we need a more extensive park than we have at present—a place where the poor can breathe

the pure air of heaven and our honest Germans can drink their national beverage in shady groves, and smoke their pipes in peace. [Great applause.] The sewerage of the city needs a thorough overhauling. Many of them put down years ago of soft brick, should be replaced with pure limestone. The river commerce should be encouraged. We want more wharf room. The city should at her own expense build a line of first-class steamers, and run them to Southern ports, thus bringing us trade for millions of dollars worth of our manufactured goods, annually. There are a great many minor things that ought to be corrected. The traffic in skunk-skins, ought to be prohibited.

The throwing of green hides upon the pavement ought to be prohibited. There ought to be a law restraining sewing-machine men and life insurance agents within the boundary of decorum. [Laughter and applause.] But, gentlemen, I shall not occupy your time longer. Again thanking you for your presence, as well as the honor you have done me, I will not detain you longer."

Elijah took his seat after this demagogical speech, and Doctor Peddigoss arose and addressed the assembly thus:

"Gentlemen, I propose Mr. Elijah Moorhead for next mayor of Cincinnati.

"All who are in favor, say aye." The ayes that answered were long drawn and emphatic.

"I wish to say, furthermore, gentlemen"—

"Is Doctor Peddigoss present?" asked a servant coming from the door.

"Yes, what is it?" asked the Doctor turning round.

"Some one at the door wants you to come at once—bad case."

The Doctor was always keenly alive at the cry of a patient, if he had means.

When he came back from the door, he said, "Gentlemen, I must bid you good-night. Some of the riff-raff down in Ward 5 are sick—very sick, so I am told?"

"Who?" asked George Somers.

"Mrs. Gibbons' girl."

"I regret to leave you, gentlemen, but as ward physician I suppose it's my duty;" and after another glass of wine, he buttoned up his coat and went out. Other speeches were made, but we fear they must pass into oblivion by reason of the great length of this chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

Paul Annear was the son of a wealthy real estate owner, and generally did as he pleased, and he usually pleased to be a very bad young man. Old Annear owned among other things, a large number of tenement houses, and he was infinitely more interested in seeing how much rent he could squeeze out of the poor for a shabby hovel than bringing up his son in a way that would make him a good citizen. Left to nurse his own unbridled passions, Paul, now just entering upon his majority, was as graceless a scamp as ever aired his heels in Ward 5.

Nature had endowed him with a passable face, but there was a twitching of the nether lip that indicated insincerity. He could, when he chose, assume the *role* of a gentleman, but, alas! he was more to be feared in that character than when playing the more natural one of a rowdy. He had several times been embroiled in election rows with various results. Sometimes he was terribly beaten, at others he was the conqueror. The police all knew, and some of the more timid ones feared him. To arrest and bring him before the police court amounted to nothing. He always had money to meet his fines, and friends to furnish the influence to keep him out of prison. The prosecuting attorney, that fearless champion of justice was seen by Paul's friends just prior to any important trial, and while his voice was fierce in demanding punishment, his indictment was weak. You need not tell me that blind justice is enthroned on the city seal—her voice is weak in the city courts. The justice on our city's escutcheon has no greater influence in shaping that article in her courts than has the golden balls of the

pawnbroker in exciting feelings of remorse in the bosom of that pitiless falcon. We sometimes get honest, faithful judges, men who want to do right, but there is too much latitude invested in that important tribunal. A poor man is caught up by the police on a frivolous charge (perhaps he has insulted the policeman,) and goes before the court. The poor fellow is not able to employ counsel, and is compelled to seek the advice of those miserable shysters that hang about Ninth street like a gang of hungry wolves dogging the flanks of a retreating army, hoping to fatten on the flesh and blood of the fallen.

The trial comes on—a hasty one; for there is a large docket to be gone through in a limited space of time. The judge has only time to hear but a smattering of the testimony, and then, with an imperial wave of the hand that would have done credit to a Nero, orders the prisoner to the workhouse for six months or a year. Such is the abuse of justice in a city.

This graceless scamp would occasionally take business spells, and assist his father in the collection of his monthly rents. It was during one of these business visits that he had seen Stella Gibbons, for they lived in one of his father's houses. Her beauty excited his passions, and he inwardly resolved to add her to the list of his victims. He sought to pay his addresses to her, but his character was too well known in the ward. Besides this, with a woman's instinct, she divined that his purposes were not honorable. He had tried again and again to secure her company to balls and picnics, but she positively refused to have anything to do with him. Nettled at these repulses, he had set to work to accomplish his infernal purposes by other and more cowardly means. He finally found a hackman who had but recently served a term in the penitentiary for some heinous outrage against an unprotected female. He succeeded, by the free use of money, in bribing this man, McGary, to enter his service.

Young Annear had made himself familiar with Stella's habit of taking goods

to their owners late in the evening, and returning after dusk. He had further noticed that in returning home she usually took one route. He had seen her go forth late on the evening in question, and had dogged her a short distance, but turned into a cross street and sought his confrere in the person of McGary. The hack was brought down, and drawn up near the side walk on Second street at the crossing of the alley that divides the square between Broadway and Sycamore streets. By taking this position they could either turn up or down Second street, or dash through the alley to the public landing. They had waited probably two hours; the pedestrians along the street were few and far between; the business houses were all closed, and the private watchman had made his rounds to see that the doors were all secure. Presently a female figure was seen coming up the street. Both men stood near the door of the hack. The female came still nearer, and Annear saw by the light of a gas lamp that it was his victim. As she was passing the hack he accosted her. She stopped and in the act of turning round he threw a heavy horse-blanket over her head, at the same time seizing her around the waist and attempting to force her into the vehicle. Although frightened almost out of her wits the girl struggled and fought her captors with a spirit that was born of despair. The struggles frightened the horses so badly that the hackman could do nothing more than hold them. The blanket was rapidly doing its work—Stella was being smothered. Her efforts were becoming weaker and weaker, and the villain was congratulating himself on an easy victory when a man suddenly ran out of the alley. Paul heard his approach and dropped the girl to face this new danger. The man, who proved to be the private watchman, seemed to take in the situation at a glance. He caught Paul by the left arm, but the latter dealt him a blow that would have felled an ox. The man fell quivering in every limb. The scoundrel turned to renew his assault upon Stella. Smoth-

ered and exhausted she lay upon the ground as helpless as an infant. Two policemen, having heard the blow that felled the private watchman, were coming on a run—it was patrolman Jeff Wilson and another officer who had been detained in place of George Somers for that evening. Annear turned before gathering up the inanimate form of his victim to calculate his chances. He saw that it would delay him too long to escape. He sprang into the hack, and the driver gave his horses a keen lash; the fire flew from the bowlders as their iron-shod hoofs rasped over them, and away went horses and vehicle at a furious gallop. The policemen cried halt, but their cries were unheeded. Jeff Wilson drew his revolver from his pocket, cocking it as he brought it around, and fired at the flying coach. He missed his mark, or at least there was no evidence that he had harmed anything or anybody. The shot acted like magic; people came running from all directions, and in two minutes there were at least a hundred there all eager to ascertain the cause of the row. There were a dozen stories afloat in the surging crowd in less time than it takes to tell it. Some had it that a woman had fallen from a fourth-story window; another that she had shot at a man and missing him had killed a woman. The stories varied greatly as to detail, but all agreed that the woman was dead; that is the woman lying inanimate on the pavement. The private watchman had got upon his feet, and, although stunned and bewildered, was the first to tear the blanket from the poor girl's face.

"Who is it?" asked Wilson.

"Miss Gibbons. Carry her home at once and I will explain afterwards."

The two policemen gathered up the girl in their arms as they would a child, and bore her home, followed by a large crowd, who came clattering at their heels. They carried the limp form of the girl up to her room, and laid her on a bed, and then drove the crowd away. Mrs. Gibbons was greatly alarmed and almost powerless to lend assistance, but by great effort of the

mind, went to work to ascertain the cause of her daughter's death, for she, with the others, supposed she had passed from earth. The private watchman had run to the office of the nearest physician; but that worthy disciple of Esculapius, on learning who it was, refused to go, saying he did not wish to attend cases for the ward doctor. The watchman then went for the ward physician, but he had gone to Elijah Moorhead's reception. To Moorhead's the watchman betook himself with all haste, and with the result announced at the close of the last chapter. The ward physician, once that he had turned his back on the festive board of his host, made all haste to the house of Mrs. Gibbons. Without ceremony he approached the bedside of his patient, and took her hand in his, and with his fingers gently touched her veins. Mrs. Gibbons watched her countenance with tearful eyes, to gather hope or receive the awful announcement she feared.

Dr. Peddigoss knew how to keep his thoughts to himself, so that the poor woman gained nothing by scanning his face. "Bring me a bucket of water immediately," said the Doctor, turning to Mrs. Gibbons. She complied. He took water and sponged Stella's face and hands. "She should have had medical attention sooner, he muttered. He went out directly, and returned with ice, which he applied. He had the satisfaction of hearing the girl breathe very faintly, and with breath came hope. Doctor Peddigoss administered a little brandy. This seemed to give Stella strength, and presently she opened her eyes, and asked feebly, "Where am I?"

"At home, dear, now be quiet and don't talk," said the doctor soothingly. He sat down by the bedside to watch her symptoms and administer restoratives. Mrs. Gibbons stood at the foot of the bed, watching her child, and longing to do something for her, yet not knowing how to lend any assistance. The doctor saw her manifest anxiety, and read her thoughts.

"She will live," he whispered.

Mrs. Gibbons gave a sigh of relief, "God be praised!" she said in return, and then

again they relapsed into silence. Presently the girl's breath denoted that she had fallen asleep. The doctor took a potion from a paper and emptied it into a glass of water. "If she wakes during the night, give her a teaspoonful until she goes to sleep again." He arose to go. "I will be back again at seven o'clock in the morning. If there should be any unfavorable symptoms send for me as soon as possible. I will ask the policemen to pass here every hour and rap gently on the curb, and if you need my services direct them to call me."

Mrs. Gibbons followed him to the door. "Oh, please, sir, tell me what is the matter with my child?"

Doctor Peddigoss stared.

"Do you not know?"

"No, sir."

"How came she home in bed?"

"The policemen brought her in the condition you found her on your arrival."

"Here is a mystery I must unravel."

"But you have not told me what ails my child."

"She labors under great nervous prostration—she has been smothered."

It was with difficulty that Mrs. Gibbons could repress a scream:

"There, be calm, perhaps we shall be able to learn more about this affair tomorrow. Good night;" and he hurried away.

CHAPTER VIII.

In order that the reader may keep up with the drift of our story, it is necessary that we should again return to the banquet at Elijah Moorhead's that we so unceremoniously quitted but a little while ago.

The announcement of Stella Gibbons's sickness troubled policeman George Somers. He knew the ward in every purlieu—its good spots and its bad spots. He feared there was something wrong. He knew Stella Gibbons and her mother well—knew them as honest people—and his great heart longed to do something to aid them. He cared nothing for the banquet or the

guests there assembled. She who had given zest to the whole performance had long since retired, and the remaining guests were having only a few speeches that smacked more of maudlin brains than of reasonable discussion. He therefore began to puzzle his mind for a means of escape without seeming rude. He felt that an excuse would not be accepted, and yet he had discharged all the duty required of him. Finally he made up his mind to quietly withdraw without saying a word to his host. He knew it was rude, impolite in the highest degree; but he would charge it to sickness; Conscience whispered, "Write a note and send it next day."

Quietly he withdrew to the hall, and finding his hat, softly opened the door and walked down the steps. The cool air of the street felt delicious to his fevered face. Turning as if to see whether he was noticed, his eye caught a light in an upper room, and there at her window sat Miss Lucy Moorhead, her head resting upon her hand. A sadness seemed to have overspread her beautiful countenance as she gazed into vacancy.

"Somers looked but a moment—a single glance—and hurriedly walked away. How much—ah! how much—would he have given to know the thoughts of that sweet girl at this moment! He could not, he dared not, believe she was thinking of him. Perhaps she had been writing a letter to some loved one far away, and had fallen into this meditative mood as girls often do. George Somers was not an exception to the average of ardent lovers, who imagine young ladies think of every one else but themselves. Vain delusion! One sex is just as thoughtful as the other, of the loved and absent. Love is no respecter of persons. He plies his art continually among the young. But if the fair god of love could be consulted he would doubtless open his mouth and whisper—Woman knows by instinct when she is loved, but man must be told." With a breast brim-full of contending emotions, George Somers reached Ward 5. His first duty was to find his partner, Jeff Wilson. Coming

up with that grizzly old patrolman, he exclaimed, "Well, Wilson, what's on the wing to-night?"

"Enough, to be sure. A scoundrel, or rather a pair of them, tried to force a girl into a hack and carry her off as a hawk would a chicken!" He then proceeded to tell in his own rough way what the reader already knows.

"And you think you neither killed or crippled the brute?" asked Somers.

"No, I was too nervous from running—my aim was unsteady."

"What a pity. But let me once lay my clutches on the rascal"—and Somers ground his teeth. "Did you say," he continued. "that you had suspicions as to who this precious cut-throat was?"

"Yes, but I couldn't put up my hand to it."

"What do you think?"

"I believe Paul Annear."

"That fellow had better keep off this beat; he has given us trouble enough already. Human nature won't bear much more; at least mine won't."

"That's it—they as can't be reached with law can be reached with bullets."

"I don't mean that I would kill any man wantonly or without just cause; but he has several times come near taking my life and I think there ought to be some limit to human endurance. But I must go up and see how this poor girl is before I go home."

"Why do you take so much interest in these Gibbons's?"

George whispered something in his partner's ear as if he feared the very walls would hear.

"Oh, I see it all now. What an old fool I've been anyhow. God bless you, George. Now go up and see how they are getting on, and I will be around in an hour or two." George went and tapped lightly on Mrs. Gibbons's door. A faint voice inside inquired who was there. George gave his name, and stated that he did not wish admittance, but only called to inquire after Miss Gibbons and to know if she needed anything. Mrs. Gibbons had

not retired, so she opened the door directly, and told George that her daughter was resting as quietly as could be expected. The policeman bid her good-night and hurried home.

The following morning a daily journal with the usual accuracy which characterizes the midnight researches of sleepy reporters made the following announcement.

A MYSTERIOUS AFFAIR.

People living in the vicinity of Columbia and Broadway were startled last evening by hearing a shot fired and seeing a hack driven furiously down the street.

A large crowd soon gathered to ascertain the cause of the firing. A female was found on the pavement, having fainted doubtless from fright.

The policeman seemed to know her, and at once took her home. It is surmised that she was in the act of leaving home—going doubtless to marry some interdicted lover. Owing to the lateness of the hour our reporter was unable to get the names of the parties to this love affair; but it seems altogether a little mysterious.

Oh! reliable family journal! your mystery is as mysterious as the hash of our boarding house. That innocent reporter should have gone and clothed himself in lamb-skins.

Stella awoke on the following morning, weak but much better. She arose and made her toilet. In the afternoon she was sitting looking out at the window. Her mother spoke to her in a soft tone:

"My darling, if you feel strong enough, do tell me about the trouble last night. I have heard something of it from the policeman, but then I am burning to hear your own story."

Stella shuddered.

"I almost hesitate to talk about it. Well, as I was coming up Columbia street a man caught hold of me—first throwing a blanket over my head. He tried to force me into a hack, but I struggled and fought the best I could. I felt that I was being smothered. My strength began to fail, and—oh! horror. I found myself powerless in the arms of the villain. I only had time to say, "God help me," and then became unconscious. God must have helped me, or I should not be here now."

"Did you know this villain?" asked Mrs. Gibbons, manifesting much agitation.

"I do."

"Who?"

"Perhaps, dear mother, it would be better you should never know."

"Has it come to this, that my daughter has secrets that she withholds from her mother?" Stella buried her face in her hands and sobbed.

Tears always softened Mrs. Gibbons. "I did not speak harshly, my daughter, nor wish to wound your feelings; but surely a daughter ought to have no secrets hidden from a mother's eye."

Stella arose and put her arms around her mother's neck.

"Forgive me, mother. You know I love you and Willie as I love none else on earth. I only hesitated to tell you, lest you should do something rash."

"We are too dependent to do anything rashly; but I hope that I have not descended so low as to sacrifice my daughter's honor."

"If I had to beg from door to door, I could not and would not do that."

"Be calm, dear mother; no harm has been done. Promise me, then, that if I tell you the name of the man who so shamefully assaulted me that you will do nothing; say nothing about it, but let the matter drop."

"That is a rash promise to wring from a parent, but if you will reveal the name on no conditions, then I must consent to your terms."

"You would know his name—it is Paul Annear."

The announcement staggered the poor woman. The tears filled her eyes.

"Can it be possible that a man with such brilliant prospects—with such an inheritance as will soon fall into his hands, could stoop to play the mean and contemptible part of assaulting a poor working-girl."

"It is but too true, mother; but George Somers has given me a pistol, and if he tries it again I am to shoot him."

"You shoot him? I fear you are too

timid to defend yourself. But beware how you handle firearms; they are not safe companions for any one, especially a girl that knows nothing of their use."

"Oh yes, George showed me how to use it, but I don't believe I shall ever need it. Paul Annear is aware that I recognized him, and I don't believe he will ever come near me again."

Poor girl, she did not know what a heartless villain she had to deal with—a man void of honor he sought to bring the pure and innocent to his own level.

Stella and her mother decided that if the insult was not repeated, it would be better to let the matter drop.

CHAPTER IX.

On Plum Street, below Third, once stood a large brick house three stories in height.

The front presented the appearance of being the residence of some well-to-do mechanic or tradesman. It has passed from one owner to another until, finally dropped from the sheriff's hammer into the possession of old man Annear, and was at once entered on his rent-roll.

He was so unfortunate as to get it full of tenants of ill-repute, and in a city a bad name clings to a house as it does to a person, until in time no respectable tenant will occupy it. A woman by the name of McKoy had, at the time we write, the house in full possession. This woman, leased the entire house, and then sub-let the rooms to such as chose to occupy them, thereby reaping a handsome profit. She was fully as avaricious as old man Annear, but she had no difficulty in renting her rooms as she never required those wordy little nothings called "references."

If her tenants only paid their rent in advance, and did not so behave themselves as to attract the police, she was satisfied.

When people had business to transact with McKoy, she invited them into what she was pleased, to designate as her private office. This was a small room, rather tastily furnished, at the rear of the house.

Mrs. McKoy was one evening sitting in her office, when a servant announced that there was a gentleman at the door that wished to see her on business.

This ancient damsel at once conceived the idea that the visitor must be some one desiring to secure a room, and so she mentally went over all the vacant space there was in the house, while the visitor was being shown in.

The visitor was Paul Annear. He smirked, and bowed politely.

"Have a seat, sir," said the muscular landlady, pointing to a chair.

Paul accepted the proffered seat.

"My name is Annear," replied Paul, in answer to an inquisitive glance.

"The son of the landlord?"

"The same, madam."

"I believe my rent is all square is it not?" asked McKoy.

"I know nothing about the rent. The old man looks after those matters. It is my duty to help him spend it."

"Ah! but in what way can I serve you Mr. Annear?" and her flabby face warmed with a faint smile.

"I have come to ask your services in a private affair in which I propose to engage. I have heard that you are shrewd and trustworthy."

"No flattery, sir; I am long past that age. Come down to business at once."

"Be patient, then, and I will tell you all about it." Annear lowered his voice and looked about him.

"These walls have no ears, so proceed."

"First, then, promise me that whether we come to an understanding or not, that this conversation shall be kept secret."

"I never gabble; so you can go on with your story."

Well, then, to be brief, it is a love affair of mine. The young lady refuses to be my wife or even permit my attentions, and I propose to put her where she can not refuse to hear me."

"You wish to make her a prisoner."

"Exactly. I would like to rent a room in this house, and enlist your services as a guard."

"Are you aware that you may be laying down a plan that may land you and my self in the penitentiary."

This was like pouring cold water down his back, but he was not to be put off in that way.

"I have money, madam, to pay for your service; and as for the law, I don't care for that," and he snapped his thumb and finger contemptuously.

"You have money, eh? Well, I always had a fondness for money, young man. I like to look upon it—like to handle it, and know that it is my own."

Paul thrust his hand into his pocket, drew forth three twenty dollar gold pieces, and tossed them into Madam McKoy's lap.

"There is the first installment. When the young lady is locked up in this house, I will double the amount; and after that, I will pay you twenty dollars a week so long as she remains."

Mc Koy took up the coins and carefully inspected them, to see that they were genuine. Apparently satisfied, she asked Annear to go with her and take a look at the upper portion of the house, and see whether they could find a room suited for the purpose of a prison. "But hold," she said, "you will want no one in the house but me, I suppose?"

"You know best what our safety demands."

"This will make an additional expense. I can't have my whole house standing idle without being paid rent for it."

"Well, then, I'll pay the rent; so lead the way."

The two went up into the third story, and, hunting about, found a room at last that Annear said, by careful preparation, would answer the purpose of a temporary prison.

"As for the additional work," said Paul, "I will attend to that in person. But how soon can you have the house empty?"

"Well, let me see, this is the 24th, say on the first of the month. I will have them all packed off bag and baggage."

"That will be soon enough; but you

must hit upon some plan to catch this bird."

"What is her name?"

"Stella Gibbons."

"And her address, and occupation?"

"She lives with her mother at No.— East Columbia Street. They sew for a livelihood." Madam McKoy made a minute in her memorandum book. "I think I can manage it," she said. "Very well," said Paul. He then took his departure.

CHAPTER X.

After Lucy Moorhead sought her own room on the evening of her father's reception, her feelings were such as she had never before experienced.

Seating herself languidly in an easy chair, she permitted her thoughts to follow their own bent. She had often met and entertained in her own parlor the youth of what was termed fashionable society. She had been courted and flattered by these sprigs of aristocracy; but, strange as it may appear, it was reserved for plain, unpretending Somers to cause that young heart to palpitate as it had never done before. Every fortress, we suppose, has some points more vulnerable than others, and the same may be said of the human heart. The average human mind—the gateway to the heart—has its foibles, its unfortified, and therefore vulnerable spots, and it is only necessary to touch the former to open the door of the latter. We impart this bit of information, for the guidance of a large and respectable class of young and unexperienced men who are trying to storm the castle of their ladies' hearts, but continually find themselves floundering in the outer moat with the drawbridge always up. They never seem to prosper or get on in love matters. Eternally asking the advice of friends, and never taking it—playing hot and cold—trying to evoke sympathy, they usually end by arousing contempt.

My dear young friend, accept the advice of an old stager—hunt around the castle until you find a weak place in the fortification; then lay siege with might and main

and you will succeed. George Somers had blundered into Miss Moorhead's heart just as a man would blunder into a house by falling through a hatchway, while feeling his way along in the dark. He just dropped in by accident.

Lucy's weakness was music; she loved it with the devotion of a Beethoven.

The man that could sing, had a place in her heart, or at least brought a strong letter of recommendation. She was by no means silly enough to allow her partiality for music to obscure her better judgment in other important essentials that go to make the man; yet, all other things being equal, she would give preference to the one that loved this noble art.

When a young lady finds her thoughts frequently recurring to a gentleman that is absent, it may be set down that he has made an impression "that if taken at the tide, leads on."

Lucy could not look with indifference on a young man of such magnificent form, of such intellectual vigor, and such fine conversational powers, as that possessed by George Somers, without feeling for him a sort of womanly partiality. The difference in their social positions had never occurred to her, as she was accustomed to treat all her father's guests with proper respect.

One day Lucy had sent for Stella Gibbons, to give some directions concerning a dress that her mother was making for her.

She had been accustomed to treat Stella as an equal in private, though in public there was a wide difference between them.

The two girls sat alone in what was known as the family room.

The conversation had flagged for a time, and Lucy asked Stella "if she knew a policeman by the name of Somers—George she thought, was his given name."

"Oh, very well," replied Stella, her face flushing up at the question.

Lucy keenly noted the color mount to the girl's cheeks.

"I believe he does his duty well as an officer," suggested Lucy, affecting great indifference, though watching Stella, as

the Scotch say, out of the tail of her eyes.

"Yes, Miss Lucy; there is no better officer, and he is so kind and such a clever gentleman that everybody in our ward but the bad people likes Mr. Somers."

"You are very complimentary," smiled Lucy; "he is doubtless a lover of yours."

"Oh, no, indeed," and the blood gathered in Stella's face until it was scarlet. "I like Mr. Somers just as everybody likes him. I am sure you would, if you but knew him."

Lucy blushed slightly, but she was too skillful a general to manifest an outward sign of weakness at a shot from a lady.

She saved her blushes for wordy duels fought with the male sex.

"What would you say if I told you that I had met with this wonderful package of human perfection?"

"Where and when?" asked Stella, so quickly that even a novice in human nature would have discovered a hidden motive behind the question.

"Here in this house, as our guest," returned Lucy, a little proudly.

Stella sat half stupified for a moment, but she rallied.

"Indeed? I am pleased to know that Mr. Somers is thought of sufficient importance to be a guest at your house. He deserves it."

Lucy looked out of the window to conceal her confusion. She had been fairly caught for once.

Having regained her composure she asked Stella some questions concerning George's family, of his mother, and where they lived.

Stella told her all she knew, and that was not a great deal, to be sure.

Lucy appeared to take a marked interest in the story, which lost nothing as it came from the poor girl's partial tongue. Everything that Mr. Somers had said or done was just what ought to be said and done. In Stella's estimation, his word ought to be law. If he told people they had lived long enough, then they ought to go at once, and, plunging into the river,

end their mortal career. It was her opinion that he had no peer among the male population of Cincinnati.

Lucy, more skilled in human nature, determined to test the girl's fidelity by taking the other tack and saying unpleasant things of Mr. Somers.

"I think you will agree with me, Stella, in saying that Mr. Somers is not very handsome."

"I think he is very handsome—such bright eyes; and oh, such splendid whiskers!"

"But splendid whiskers and bright eyes do not go to make the man, after all."

"Very true, but we were only talking about appearances."

"Yes, I forgot that it was good looks that we were discussing. Well, admitting that Mr. Somers is passable so far as good looks are concerned, do you think him a fine conversationalist?"

"Yes, I do, Miss Lucy. He talks good sense, and doesn't cover a grain of wheat with a bushel of chaff, as the books say."

"You don't pretend to tell me that he is an educated man?"

"Oh, of course not; but he has education enough for a policeman."

"I dare say; but a policeman's is not a great calling is it?"

"I think it is. If I were a man I would be a policeman."

"Why?"

"Because—because—well, people would be afraid to do wrong when I was about."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Lucy. "Why, Stella, if Satan were roaming around the world and visible to the naked eye, don't you think people would be afraid to do wrong when he was in sight, just as they are afraid of your policeman?"

"Stella did not see the point intended to be conveyed nor the force of the argument. She mistook Lucy's words as an insinuation against her hero, and as the tears came in her eyes, she caught up her package to go home.

Lucy divined it all at a glance, and laying her white hand on the girl's arm, said: "Stella, forgive me. I was only

jesting, and will be more careful in future.

Lucy looked so earnest that Stella's anger fled directly, and she replied, softly:

"It is I that need forgiveness. I am too quick tempered in judging of others."

Love's golden chain was welded by a kind word and a little concession.

People who give away to sudden fits of anger are usually not bad-hearted. There is a little flurry of the passion, and then the goading of remorse drives them to the extreme of great penitence. They seek to be overgood to atone for being overbad.

Stella soon took her departure, and Lucy retired to her room to think, as she always did when her soul was stirred by any extraordinary emotion. Deprived of a sister into whose ear she could pour her petty troubles and vexations, she cared not to annoy her father and mother with matters of this description. Her meditations on this occasion ran as follows: "Was it possible that George Somers was in love with this poor sewing-girl? Or had he previously been in love and jilted her? Could he be mean enough to do that? Perhaps he had once blushed in Stella's presence as he now reddened in her own. Doubtless he had whispered soft words in her ready ear until she worshipped him, was his slave, and then left her at sight of what he deemed more profitable game. Lucy was prone to judge all mankind by the moths that habitually fluttered around her, talking little nothings, just because their brains thought little nothings. Lucy gathered her sweet lips together firmly, as a new idea seemed to enter her brain. She would play the coquette with this handsome policeman, and teach him that jilting was a game that could be played by her own sex as well as his. The reader will understand that she was going on the hypothesis that he had jilted Stella Gibbons—a state of affairs scarcely warranted by the surface indications.

"There, now," she exclaimed, half aloud, as the resolution seemed to find permanent lodging in her brain. She looked out at the window, and her attention became

uddenly rivited on some object in the street. It was Stella Gibbons.

She had gone down the street a little way, and was now returning. When opposite the window, she met George Somers. He touched his hat politely to Stella; but she was not to be put off with such a highly military salute, but extended her hand, which he accepted courtously. They stood conversing for perhaps five minutes—Stella earnestly, George half listlessly. Lucy noted each sign and gesture. She observed that Stella blushed occasionally, though George's face never once changed its color. He seems anxious to go, and she half detaining him. Lucy suddenly thought how rudely she was acting in watching these people in this way, and had laid her hand on the curtain to shut out the scene, when George incidentally cast his eyes upward and saw her.

He touched his hat politely and Lucy smiled—then closed the window.

"George Somers does not love Stella, though he may respect her," thought Lucy; "but I have already begun my work," and then she went down and played on the piano as if to soothe her feelings and reconcile her conscience to the resolution she had formed of coquetting with a policeman.

Meanwhile Stella walked slowly homeward. She was thinking, thinking. Her heart was lead.

She had made a discovery that filled her soul with bitterness. Her dearest, best friend was in love with George Somers, and he, poor soul, would be sure to return the compliment.

What right had Lucy, who could get any one she chose, fall in love with George Somers? Stella's eyes filled with tears as she hurried along on her way homeward. It is true that George Somers never whispered one word of love to Stella Gibbons, but had always treated her kindly—the nobleness of his nature causing him to lean toward those who were poor. This poor girl, unskilled in the ways of the world, had followed the natural instinct of her own heart and fallen in love with the po-

liceman, Hers was the childish offering of a pure heart—a love that would have endured forever and forever.

Reaching her own humble abode, she endeavored to look cheerful that she might not give those she loved cause for sorrow.

She had never so longed to be rich as now. Their room looked so tame in comparison with the splendor of the houses she visited. She was like a life convict, doomed to view the beautiful, but never enjoy it.

Why were they so poor while others were rich? She longed to have some one into whose ear she could pour her troubles; but a foolish sense of delicacy prevented her going to that dear mother, whose heart is ever open to her own offspring.

Mrs. Gibbons seemed in more buoyant spirits than usual, although almost always cheerful.

"I have good news she said," after Stella had laid off her hat.

"Ah, what is it?" asked Stella.

"Here is a letter asking me to send you for some work. It comes from a new customer, and she writes that she has a good deal of sewing to let out. But you can read the letter for yourself;" and she drew the missive from her pocket, and handed it to her daughter to read.

CHAPTER XI.

Stella took the letter from her mother's hand, and opening it, perused its contents. As this note may fill up a gap in our story, we give it in full, leaving out the date and number of the street. The reason for leaving out the number is obvious; for, while we are at liberty to detail incidents as they occur, we have no right to damage a man's private property. It is perhaps well that houses have no tongues, or they would tell strange stories sometimes. But to the letter. It ran as follows:

"MRS. GIBBONS:—A friend of mine has been speaking in high terms of your skill as a mantua-maker. Now I wish to have a new silk made in the latest style. Will you, therefore, oblige me by sending some trusty person for the material at, say ten o'clock to-morrow.

"I will give the person sent full instruo

tions as to the style I shall want it made. Please send promptly at ten o'clock, as I shall dine out at one.

"Respectfully.

"ANNA BOYCE.

"— Elm street."

Stella read the letter over a second time, and then returned it to her mother.

"As I am not to go for the dress until to-morrow, it will be time enough to think of this matter then;" and she sat down to work at the sewing-machine. The girl was not in a humor to sing. A cloud had crossed her path in the person of Lucy Moorhead. Yes, that paragon of human perfection, that ideal of true womanhood, stood between her and George Somers. How could she hope to win in such a race? But she must wait in silence, and let events shape themselves so that she could solve the problem of her future destiny. Poor girl, the ways of the lowly are often beset with thorns.

On the following morning Stella seemed to have regained her flagging spirits to some extent, or at least had buried her troubles in the deep recesses of her own bosom.

Mr. Peckover called to see how they were getting along, and took Willie up kindly and dandled him on his knee. He seldom came now without bringing the child some token of his regard. His great heart went out to the little orphan, son of his dead brother. Willie venerated Mr. Peckover; he loved him with the unselfishness of childhood, and was always in great glee when the old man came on his visitations. He told his mother one day, very confidentially, that he liked Mr. Peckover better than he did the boys.

Mr. Peckover stated that he was going as far as East Columbia on some business, and requested that Willie accompany him in his buggy, promising to return him safely in a couple of hours. The child ran to his mother, and looked pleadingly up in her face for consent.

She hesitated a moment, and then gave her consent, on condition that it would not be too much trouble.

This delighted the child, and he re-

quested his sister to "slick him up a little," which she did. Willie had never ridden in a buggy. He had occasionally hung on to the coupling pole of some farm wagon, but his mother had one day espied him at this and forbidden it in future. But now he was to be ridden in a buggy. How he would look down on the small fry of his acquaintance. The few minutes that Mr. Peckover remained were magnified, by Willie's impatience, into hours.

The old gentleman had scarcely begun to descend the stairway ere Willie had safely ensconced himself in the buggy, and wondered why the old gentleman moved so slowly. They finally got away and went whirling up the street.

Now that Mrs. Gibbons had greater confidence in Mr. Peckover, she had no fears that the child was being stolen.

It was half past nine o'clock, and as Stella was to meet Madam Boyce at ten, she thought it was high time that she was on the way. She put on her hat, and went out directly. She walked down Second, or Columbia, as it was then called, to its intersection with Elm street. This latter street she pursued northward, keeping her eye upon the numbers, in order to find the one corresponding with the number named in the note. At last she found it painted on a square bit of tin over the door. She was about to ring the door bell, when her eye caught sight of a small scrap of paper pinned to the upper panel of the door. It read "To Let."

Confused at being thus misled she turned to go home, when a small ragged boy, with the filth of the gutter coating his hands, approached and accosted her:

"Are you Miss Gibbons?" he asked.

Stella nodded assent.

"A lady told me to tell you she had moved to No.—Plum street."

"When did she remove?"

"Dunno, Miss, but that's what she told me to tell you."

Thanking the boy for information, she went over to Plum street, and began again to hunt the numbers. At last she stood before a large brick house, rather forbid-

ding in its outward appearance. Accustomed to go whithersoever she had business Stella pulled the bell-handle and heard a faint jingling in the rear of the building. At last, after waiting a few seconds, the summons was answered by a rather muscular, middle aged woman, whom the reader will doubtless recognize as Jane McKoy, although, as we have seen, she signed her name Anna Boyce. The reader will also see that the naming of one locality in her note when another was meant was a part of a well-laid scheme to entrap the girl, and at the same time throw off pursuit.

The woman met Stella with a smile, and invited her kindly to enter the house, with the grim satisfaction of the spider that invited the silly fly to walk into his parlor. Stella's heart warmed at the sound of kind words. She took to people who spoke gently. Alas, she was unsophisticated in the ways of the world, she did not know then, that the deepest-dyed villians masked their treacherous batteries behind a smile, and the ferocity of a tiger is hidden under the soft purring of the cat. What sign of shrewdness was it to betray a poor innocent girl into a prison, all unsuspecting as she was? You or I might have been decoyed to dungeon or death as easily.

Madam McKoy invited the girl into her office with a patronizing air. After both were seated, the former said, after consulting a memorandum: "You are Miss Gibbons."

"Yes, Madam."

"You are the daughter of the dress-maker on Columbia street, if I mistake not?"

"I am."

"Your name—given name, I mean."

"Stella,"

"A very pretty one, indeed. Well, Miss Stella, I hope we shall be very good friends."

"Thank you, madam. I shall try to deserve your friendship."

"Spoken like a true lady."

Jingle, jingle, lingle, lingle, went the little door bell.

A shade of anger flashed across the

countenance of Madam McKoy, but she was too artful a general to show trepidation at the first alarm. "Excuse me a moment, please," she said, rising; "the butcher has come, I suppose, and if I didn't go to the door, he would stand there and ring all day." Madam McKoy went out and closed the door behind her. In a few moments she returned. "Only a peddler. What a nuisance! But to business. I have sent for you, Miss Gibbons, as my note of yesterday explained, to have a new silk dress made. You know we ladies must all be up to the fashion." Stella nodded assent. "You come prepared to take the measure, I suppose?"

"Oh yes, Madam; mother sends me to take nearly all the measures."

"Very well. We will retire to my bedroom, up stairs where there will be no interference." As they went up the stairway there was an echo to their footsteps, that signified emptiness. Stella wondered at this, and, seeing no one about, began to ask herself why such a large house should be so nearly vacant. The Madam, as if anticipating her thoughts, whether by accident or shrewdness we know not, remarked "that she intended to rent out her house as soon as she could find good paying tenants to share it with her." This apparently settled the girl's curiosity. At last they stood in front of a door, and Madam McKoy took a bunch of keys, and, selecting one, inserted it in the key hole, threw back the bolt, opened the door, and invited Stella to walk in. No sooner had the girl entered, than the door was closed with a slam by the Madam, who still stood in the hall. The next moment the bolt was shot into the catch, and the key quickly withdrawn.

Stella, all unsuspecting of foul play, stood wondering for a moment, then, as a horrible suspicion flashed upon her, she stood speechless and trembling with fear, for half a minute. She heard the Madam walking away, and this must have aroused her, for she spoke very loudly "Mrs. Boyce, you have looked me up." She still remembered the name signed to the note.

The footsteps grew fainter and fainter. Aroused to desperation, she screamed after the woman.

"Oh, why have you locked the door? Please, oh please let me out!" No response; and the footsteps could no longer be heard. Stella turned to look about her. The room was rather small and meanly furnished. A bed in one corner, and a Windsor chair, besides a small stand, was all the furniture it contained. There was no light from heaven.

The only window was heavily padded and barred. A feeble gas-jet shed a somber ray of light, that only added gloom instead of dispelling it. She ran to the window, and clutched the boards that ran laterally across it, and pulled at them until the blood burst from her finger-ends. She could neither loosen nor even shake one, so strong was its fastening. She met no better success at the door, and at last stood panting in the center of the room, like a bird that had been suddenly caught in its native air and thrust into a cage. She tried to think; and after a minute, as some terrible truth flashed upon her, she uttered one wild, piercing, heart-rending scream, born of utter despair, and fell fainting on the bed. The callous-hearted wretch who had betrayed her sought her office, and heaved a sigh that the first act of the drama was over. But with this degree of satisfaction, she was not perfectly easy. The law was the skeleton that began to intrude itself into her presence. Once in St. Louis she had been brought within its iron jaws, and only escaped a long imprisonment by a legal technicality. Ever since then she had half feared the law. Mrs. McKoy took the gold coins out of her pocket and poured them into her lap. How fresh and new they looked in their golden hues. The name of a miser's country never appears to such advantage as when encircling the coins in his possession. M. Koy was a miser.

CHAPTER XII.

We trust that the reader will bear this important fact in mind, that this is not a

political story, but there are certain abuses that we would seek to reform. The manner of nominating men for official positions of honor and trust, is faulty indeed. The influencing of voters by the free use of money is an abuse of freedom that is without excuse. The public press, which ought to be the guardian of public morals, the leader of a pure and noble sentiment, often descends to the ditch to throw its slime upon a party opponent. Think of this great moral engine being turned into a cesspool in which a man's character is thrown and tossed about, as you would roll a bundle of pure wool in a dye kettle. Imagine the feelings of the man who has guarded his character with a jealous care all his life, sitting down some morning to read what a villainous thing he is anyway. He has all the days of his life been trying to swindle the public, according to these veritable moral engines. The newspapers propose to regulate public morals, but who is to regulate the newspapers? we ask. There are so many of these crying abuses that we despair of seeing them remedied; so we suppose they will have to be endured.

Elijah Moorhead having become a candidate for nomination by his party, the opposition papers opened on him like a pack of hungry hounds. They impugned his motives; they traduced his character, and endeavored by every corrupt means to turn the working classes against him, because he had money, and in their zeal they even announced that he expected the influence of his Masonic and Odd Fellow brethren to nominate and elect him, as if these bodies could be used for political purposes. Elijah responded next day in a brief card that he was neither a Mason or an Odd Fellow. But what did it matter? In all these bitter partisan warfares, it is easier to charge than defend. Your enemy hurls innuendo, and you have no sooner nailed one falsehood than another is thrown in your teeth.

The grand field-day had come, when it would be necessary for the party to select a standard-bearer to carry them through

the municipal campaign. Each candidate had his henchmen, and each henchman had his little retinue of ward bummers. Did you ever read the Legend of Montrose? You did. Well, there was no pi-broch to call these latter day clans together as when the Earl of Montrose was gathering his rude Highlanders to descend to the valley in which lay his hereditary enemies; but the call was none the less heeded. Men of the smallest parts are, under the exigency of a primary meeting, magnified into statesmen. Candidates toady to them and they are somebody until the election is over, and then they sink back to their old places, out of sight and out of mind. The convention of delegates—a mob, we should rather say, assembled to give expression to public sentiment—God preserve the sentiment that issues from such a mouth-piece! A large hall was filled to repletion with a mass of human beings drawn from every possible avenue of society, drinking, smoking, swearing, and without the semblance of order. A respectable citizen was called to preside.

He took the rostrum, with a placid smile wreathing his mouth. He made a few complimentary remarks, this remarkable citizen did, thanking this highly intelligent assembly for the honor they had done him. Thanks of this kind must be taken with the same allowance that we make for the highly flattering beginning and ending of letters.

The chairman then began the task of bringing order out of chaos. Delegations were moved hither and thither by sweating, panting sergeants-at-arms. The confusion increased. Many were standing with hats on. The chairman pounded with his gavel and gesticulated wildly with his arms. "Order, order," at the top of his voice, which began to crack under the powerful strain, when somebody sprang to his feet and nominated Simon Snooks, making a few remarks as to what S. S. had done for the city, besides paying his poll-tax. All that could be heard at the reporters' stand was an occasional ut-

terance of the name of Snooks. No one knew when the speaker had done, and the knowledge of what he said was from eyesight. Being favored by an elevated position, the chairman watched the speaker's gestures, and when they ceased he rightly concluded that he had ended.

Then some one sprang up and nominated Elijah Moorhead, and repeated the same routine of screaming, yelling, howling and gesticulating until his wind gave out. The balloting began amid the wildest confusion; tobacco smoke rolled up from this seething caldron, and gathered at the high ceiling, and hung over the noisy crowd like a drapery. Men in the rear climbed upon chairs to see those in front. In one corner there was a fight between two Irishmen, who were separated by the police, but not arrested.

The tellers at last announced the vote: Snooks, 176 votes; Moorhead, 175; then a loud yell of triumph from Snooks' friends and a corresponding depression on the Moorhead side. Somebody got the floor and proposed (for the good of the party) to make the vote unanimous. A yell of assent greeted this proposition. Loud calls for Snooks brought that worthy from behind the curtains, where he had been waiting in anticipation of being called upon. The crowd was hushed. Snooks was the coming man, and as each had an ax to grind, they must listen reverently to what he had to say. Each man had mentally resolved to cheer Snooks. The chairman gave the crowd the cue, and they cheered with a will. Snooks strutted the rostrum with all the pride of a bull perambulating a cow-pasture. He reared and roared and swelled and blowed, and then he told a snake story that made every one laugh—not that the story was very funny, but not to laugh under the circumstances would have exhibited a lukewarm disposition toward the noble cause.

Elijah Moorhead had been hidden behind the curtain, and it was with feelings of the deepest mortification that he heard his rival called out. He knew the game was all over so far as he was concerned.

and so he quietly slipped out by the back-stairs and left the building.

When, therefore, the crowd called for Elijah to come forward and ratify, he was not to be found. Then every one said what a narrow escape they had made in refusing to nominate him for the Mayoralty.

CHAPTER XIII.

We left Stella Gibbons a prisoner and well-nigh lifeless in a house on Plum street. It seems strange that she could be a prisoner in a private house in Cincinnati within a stone-throw of the great center where the pulse of trade throbbed and beat continuously; but so it was in this case, and so it may occur again and again. There are human vultures swarming in every city, ready upon a moment's notice to pounce upon and blight innocence and beauty, and turn a young life into the road that leads to shame and death. Yet these living monsters are not shunned by respectable society as they should be. The libertine basks in the sunniest smiles of Cincinnati's fairest daughters, instead of being driven forth with the brand of Cain upon his brow. Young ladies, what can you promise yourselves from marrying such men? Good husbands! Ah! We have known some poor girls who took unto themselves such husbands. Go out to Spring Grove, and read their epitaphs. "Sacred to the memory of —, who died —" The papers, speaking for the family, said she died of consumption. The papers were made to lie, because shame and mortification held back the real cause. Poor girl! she died of a broken heart. Heaven, unable longer to hear her cries, drew her away from the remorseless villain, who had turned her existence into a burning hell. Who would think of branding Mr. Potherick or Mr. Botherick of murdering their wives? These men are members of our Board of Trade, and when important committees are to be organized they are sure to be placed on them.

After Stella revived somewhat, she again went on a tour of inspection about the room; but she could find no means of escape. Her prison was impregnable from within, and stood some two lots distant from any others, either north or south of it, and as her prison was located in the rear of the house, she had little hope of making her cries heard on the street. And then how easy it would be to explain her calls for help by the simple assertion that she was some insane person or some old lodger suffering with delirium tremens. She paused in her weary search for an avenue of escape. "Why had she been cast into this gloomy dungeon? Why tear one who was of so little consequence to the world at large from those she loved so dearly, and bury her in this horrible place? What crime had she committed? Whom had she wronged in word or deed that she must be robbed of her liberty?" She put her hand to her throbbing, aching brow, and tried to reason. Her life, for the past year, was reviewed, act by act, as the penitent tells off his beads. She stopped suddenly in the rehearsal of her life-history. The blood fled her cheeks, and, with dazed sight, she became so rigid that she might have been mistaken for a block of marble, but for the tremor of horror that shook her frame. She had divined the cause at last. It was the work of that fiend, Paul Annear. Oh, silly, silly fly! how had she fluttered into the web he had woven to trap her unwary feet? Necessity has wrought heroes in all ages of the world. Self-defense has strengthened the heart and arm of poor, timorous mortals, and made them fighting heroes. The flying buck, when brought to bay, is a dangerous antagonist. The most arrant coward has often defended himself with desperation when forced into a corner with all avenues of escape closed against him. Stella was a girl of spirit, and determined to defend her honor with her life, if it came to that. She paced the room back and forth, trying to settle upon some plan of defense. The law and her friends could do nothing for her, for how should they

know where she was? She felt sure that those who had gone to such lengths to secure her, had left no trail by which she could be traced into the recesses of this old house? While thus racking her brain for some means of escape, she involuntarily put her hand in her pocket and drew out the little revolver. She gave a scream of joy at the sight of the weapon. She quickly brought it to her lips and kissed it with the reverence of a saint kissing the crucifix. She spoke aloud:

"Oh, you little darling! Why did I not see you before? This is the gift of George Somers. Why, he is a prophet. 'Take it,' he said, 'and if that villain troubles you again, use it.' These were his very words;" and she raised and lowered the hammer softly in order not to explode the cartridge. But could she take a human life? That was a terrible thing to do; but then she would sooner kill than lose her honor. Stella knelt down in the somber-hued room, and poured out her soul to God to give her strength and courage to face her enemies who sought to accomplish her ruin. She arose, feeling stronger. Her path of duty seemed clearer now. She would wait until her enemy developed his suspected purpose, and then she had but one resource left. While thus meditating she heard some one approaching, and she quickly thrust the pistol into her pocket out of sight. A key was thrust into the lock, and the rusty bolt squeaked as it backed away from the catch; the door swung slowly open, and Paul Annear walked into the room. He bowed and smiled blandly. Stella did not return his salutation; she was ice.

"I find," he said, by way of opening a conversation, "that you have changed your residence; so I thought I might venture to pay you a visit."

Stella made no reply.

"Can I serve you in any way?"

"First tell me, sir, why I am cast into his prison? Whom have I offended?"

"Me."

"How?"

"By refusing to allow me to keep your company."

"And is not a girl permitted to choose her own company, pray?"

"Not with me; I know better than some young ladies I could name."

"Who appointed you my guardian?"

"Self-appointed, Miss. When you refused to see me I made up my mind to place you in a position where refusal would be impossible. I made one attempt to capture you; it was a miserable failure, I am sorry to say. This time I have been more successful. Why? Because I set a woman to catch a woman. Her wits were sharper than mine."

The villain stood before the young girl with all the impudence and cold calculation of a cobra about to devour a hare.

Stella changed her tone somewhat.

"Oh, sir," she said, "if you have any respect for innocence, pray release me from this horrid place."

As Stella changed from self-possessed dignity to an air of entreaty, Paul Annear as suddenly changed from hater to swag-ger.

"Let you out, Miss? It would be a nice idea to let you out after all the money it has cost me to get you caged. Ha! ha! ha! that would be a good joke!"

"You are an unfeeling wretch; a man devoid of all honor. Well was it for me that I refused your company. As well might I have consorted with a scorpion. My honor and fair name would have been as safe in the hands of the meanest wretch that lies in the penitentiary."

"Well, Miss Gibbons, that is deuced eloquent—quite tragic. You should go on the stage, by all means."

"If you do not release me from this place I may begin playing tragedy in earnest."

"Do. I ring up the curtain. Now begin."

"Will you stand aside and permit me to pass out?"

"No."

"I ask again, will you permit me to leave this place?"

"Very tragic, my pretty one. Pray, go on."

Stella drew her revolver, cocked it, and advancing within three feet of Paul, she almost thrust its muzzle into his face. This was an act in the tragedy he had not looked for.

He turned pale, and the poor girl's eyes emitted sparks of fire.

"Now, sir, turn and lead the way to the street. The moment you speak or look back, I will send this bullet into your brain.

Paul hesitated.

"I will not ask you again."

Paul saw she was in deadly earnest, and fearing she would kill him in her passion, he turned tremblingly away.

Stella followed him step by step, as he slowly marched down stairs. He was burning with rage, yet his fears of death caused him to keep right on. He sought to lead her into the office of his accomplice, but she was too shrewd for him, and directed him another way. At last they reached the front door. Stella ordered him to open it wide, which he did, and then she marched him into the street.

As ill luck would have it, just as they reached the pavement, two policemen happened to be passing the house. Seeing a man issuing from a house closely followed by a woman, with a pistol at his head, they at once suspected a row. The first act of the policemen, therefore, was to seize and disarm the girl. "Policemen, do your duty and take her to the station-house," said Paul Annear, now finding his tongue after the first act was over. These policemen think so little of themselves, and are so accustomed to be told what to do, that one of them seized her arm on either side and bore her away.

Stella begged to be released, vowing her innocence at every step as they dragged her along, until one of the officers with the brutality that usually characterizes the force, ordered her to "shut up and come along."

People stopped as they passed, to see who this woman was that the beaks had in their clutches. A swarm of newsboys

and other gammon, like a pack of young wolves, followed along or flanked the procession. At each street-crossing, more idle, curious children fell into the crowd, until by the time they reached Ninth street the procession was more than a square long. Whooping, whistling and yelling they came, and all because one poor girl was being taken to prison.

The policemen took Stella down a flight of a half dozen stone steps and ushered her into the office of the prison, where a lieutenant presided behind the desk.

The lieutenant looked sharply at the prisoner and asked:

"What's your name, Miss or Madam, as the case may be?"

"Stella."

He wrote it.

"What charge, Billingsly?"

"Carrying concealed weapons and threatening."

"That will do; lock her up."

The officer led Stella away, and two minutes thereafter Paul Annear came up smiling blandly to the lieutenant whom he knew.

"Have you got that little virago locked up, lieutenant?"

"The one that I just sent back?"

"Yes."

"Safe enough."

"She was about to blow my top-knot off awhile ago."

"Oh, hol my lark it was your girl, was it?" and the lieutenant winked knowingly.

Paul laughed, but said nothing.

"A duced good-looking little gal, my boy. Where did you pick her up?"

"Oh, down town." indifferently; "but I see she has her name registered Stella. That is not her name, it is Annette Lee."

"Is that so—the hussey (begging your pardon sir;) I must scratch out Stella, and put in the other name."

He wrote Annette Lee.

The two sat down and talked over the event, Paul taking great pains to color it so that Stella would appear a very naughty girl. He sought to leave the impression on the mind of the lieutenant that he was

not only a badly used individual, but said in conclusion, it is one of those lover's quarrels, that, I am sorry to say, will sometimes get before the public or into the courts."

Then the lieutenant asked him "if he was going to allow the big Judge to send the girl out to the city work-house to cool down for awhile."

"Not if she comes down," replied the villain, with great *sang froid*.

"Better make up with her, my boy; that's the best way," suggested the lieutenant.

"I'll study on it, over to-night—can't say what conclusion I may come to by ten o'clock to-morrow."

"Well, come round in time for court in the morning; the big Judge may want your testimony in the case, as she is new on him. These old vags don't need any testimony. He knows every one of them; but in these new cases he must hear some evidence as a matter of form, you know."

"All right, I'll be on hand;" and Paul took his departure; burning with rage and vowing vengeance on this poor defenceless girl, whose only crime was in having sufficient spirit to thwart his wicked scheme.

CHAPTER XIV.

Reader did you ever visit a station-house—one of those prisons where law-breakers are temporarily incarcerated during the interval of the sessions of the Police Court.

Before Cincinnati had taken into her corporate limits all the villages that joined her, there were three or four of these stations more noted than the rest. There was Ninth Street, in the same building in which the Police Court is yet held; Hammond Street Station, on a little dingy alley that runs from Third to Fourth between Main and Sycamore; Third Street Station, away down in the West End, and Bremen Street Station, north of the canal. These are the old timers. Into these stations are nightly gathered the depraved and vicious who are always restive and

difficult to control. Here, too, are gathered the trembling sot and wife-whipper, the petty thief and the filthy vagabond—they are all here. The station at night is often a bedlam, more hideous than a mad-house, more indecent than a bawdy-house. Caged like wild animals, they vent their impotent rage against iron bars and barren walls, and heap foul-mouthed oaths upon imaginary foes.

The feelings of our poor innocent heroine can better be imagined than described, being, without cause, cast into this foul place. Trembling with fear and mortified beyond measure she was thrust into one of the cells with as little ceremony as though she had committed a murder.

Her senses were benumbed by the scenes through which she had been hastily dragged, and not until the door was locked did she realize that she was twice a prisoner in the same day. She had, by a bold stroke, fought her way out of one prison to be instantly swallowed up in another. But there was a vast difference, she thought, between being the prisoner of Paul Arnear and the prisoner of the city. She crouched into a corner of her cell, weeping as if her poor heart would break at the terrible injustice that had been done her. In this awful moment reason scarce exerted its sway, so great was the agony she felt at the degradation of the position in which she was so unhappily placed.

In the cell adjoining to that occupied by Stella Gibbons was a poor vagrant woman crazed with liquor. Sometimes this woman would talk of home and friends, and purr as if trying to soothe a child; then she would change as if reviving some heartless lover who had cast her off for one more beautiful. "Ah, John," she said, "there was a time when you thought me handsome, at least so you said, and then deserted me because you saw a fairer face; ha! ha! ha! you didn't make much by the change, ye villain. Ye stepped between me and those I loved, but what did you make by it? Poor wretch, your soul may be in eternal torments as mine is, so

I'll pray for ye;" and the unfortunate creature offered up a petition half curses and half supplication. Her sobs could be heard, and then she would rise and point to some imaginary demon slowly issuing from the wall of her cell. "There you are again, curse you; you've been following me around for a long time, and I suppose you will follow me to the very gates of—but you shan't have me, accursed fiend! Oh, no, not yet, not yet; there, he is gone again, an old woman's tongue is too much for him. Oh, God; if I only had but one drop of liquor, it would stop this gnawing at my soul. Better that I were dead than endure all this."

Stella grew faint at hearing such dreadful ravings, and she felt that if long compelled to hear such sounds her reason would desert her.

On the side opposite the drunken woman was another female vagrant, who was only slightly tipsy. Her feelings took a jolly turn. She sat on the floor of her cell, with her arms clasped tightly around her knees, rocking her body back and forth, singing an improvised ditty, always ending with:

"We'll all get drunk and go out to the work'us,

Out to the work'us,

Out to the work'us."

Then she would order the noisy woman to "shut up, as she spoiled her singing so she could scarcely keep the tune."

Amid all this bedlam of confusion, multiplied and intensified by the narrow limits which forbade the sounds losing themselves in the distance, Stella's thoughts sought that dear, humble home she had never loved so well before as now when she could not approach it. She was once disposed to fret at its very plainness; but what would she not give now to be under its protecting roof?

What were the sorrows of that dear, kind mother, or that fair-haired brother, at her unexplained absence? She knew their hearts must be breaking, as was hers, at the parting. Where was George Somers, that good friend in time of need;

would he, could he, do anything to rescue her from her peril? Where was that good old Odd Fellow, Mr. Peckover, who had taken such a deep and paternal interest in their welfare? Would he desert them at the first gust of real distress? Oh, no, she could not believe it. He was too firm, too noble to turn his back in the real hour of need. Thus she soliloquized and occasionally wept to give relief to her heart, as water runs over the top of an overflow vessel. Her head ached and she grew dizzy at times.

Late in the night the half-crazed woman sank into a drunken sleep, emitting a snore little less obnoxious to Stella's sensitive nerves than her idiotic gabble. The atmosphere was replete with the fumes of bad whisky. Half a score of noxious vapors struggled for the ascendancy, rendering the place undescribably foul. The rooms might have been ventilated as to allow these odious smells to escape and their places be supplied by pure wholesome air; but who cares for the comfort of prisoners? There safe keeping is the main point. As Stella lay panting in her cell, the chime in the cathedral tower broke forth into a half merry, half solemn tune—playing each note on the silvery bells—then a pause and silence for a little while. Then the ponderous hammer gave twelve mighty strokes to warn the city that another day with all its joys and sorrows had joined the innumerable fears of the past. The smaller bells took up the refrain and struck twelve o'clock.

A cock in the neighboring court, that had been spared the pot by reason of his old age and poverty of flesh, unable to forget his early habits, flapped his wings and crowed lustily. He listened attentively, but there came no response from any vain rival, and so he relapsed into silence and sleep, like the banished Turk, to dream of the harem over which he had once presided with such pomp and power.

One of the keepers of the prison now made his rounds to see that all was right; not that he feared that any one had escaped, but people nowadays had got such

a mania for committing suicide, that it was well enough to be on the lookout. Apparently satisfied with a hasty glance through the grating of each cell, he retired to the front office, doubtless glad to leave the noxious odors of the place behind. Stella could not sleep, but hoping to rest her weary limbs and aching head, she lay down on the miserable substitute for a bed with which her cell was supplied. She did not lie long, when, some horrible idea seeming to force itself upon her, she caught up the filthy covering and dragged it to the bars that she might get a better light. It was literally alive with vermin. She could see the insects as they moved on the quilt.

With a groan she cast the miserable rag from her in disgust. She again crouched down near the door, and cried piteously.

In her happier days she had often gone with her little brother to the Bethel. She loved to go there. Her superior intelligence had won the esteem of the Superintendent, and she became a teacher.

Often had some little member of her class come to her with her little petty troubles, and as often had she tried to soothe her and direct her attention to the Savior who said "Come all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Now she had need of that consolation.

Stella dropped upon her knees, and poured out her soul in earnest prayer that must have ascended to Heaven as sweet incense from a wicked world. For a long time she whispered her sorrows into an ear that is never closed to his children in distress.

Stella felt relieved now, and, with a great gulp, she choked down her sobs as she heard a light foot-step approaching along the corridor.

It was no one but a little beardless reporter for the daily press. Three of his fellows had been to the front office that evening and copied the names of the prisoners, and the charges set opposite, and such little incidents as the lieutenant could give.

But this little fellow had been twitted by

his contemporaries with being lazy. His vanity was mortified. He would penetrate the bowels of the prison, spite the noxious vapors, and find a peg on which to hang a sensation. Aye, he would comb the dungeon for items.

This reporter was not a dignified youth; it is not expected that young reporters should be. The dignity of the press is supposed to repose under the managerial tile.

There is a popular delusion abroad that the chief editor of a paper works for glory, and the reporter for bread. This child "to fortune and to fame unknown," seeing Stella awake, drew out his note-book. Your live reporter always draws his note-book when he scents an item just as an Indian draws his tomahawk at sight of a pale-face.

The rapacity of these literary vultures and their love of gossip is only equaled by the love of an Indiana turnpike company for the copper coin of the realm.

Reporter—"Good evening, Miss—not asleep yet?"

The girl raised her reddened eyes.

Stella—"No, sir; God forbid I should sleep in such a horrible place."

Reporter—"Nothing like getting used to it; but I am a reporter of the Daily Greaser, and am looking round for items, etc."

Stella—"Ah."

Reporter—"Yes, Miss, but what is your name if you please?"

Stella—"My name—well no matter I wish I had none, sir." and Stella's tears flowed afresh.

Reporter—I wouldn't take on like that. The Big Judge may let you go in the morning, if he's in a good humor; so try and get a good sleep, and you'll feel better for it;" and the reporter turned away with an air of disappointed hope. He had expected to catch a whale, and had only caught a minnow. As soon as he reached the front office he wrote the following for his paper.

"Annette Lee was arrested last evening by officers Billingly and Logan, on the charge of carrying concealed weapons and threatening. She is reported by those

who know her as being a perfect little vixen, and the officers had some difficulty in disarming her and bringing her in. Our reporter visited the station last evening, and found her quite penitent, even shedding tears. The case will come up before the Police Court this morning, when the Judge will probably have something to say on the subject."

We leave it to the reader's own judgment to say how much Stella Gibbons deserved this reliable notice.

If people fall among thieves and get into prison, put your heel on their necks.

CHAPTER XV.

The writer of a tale may be likened unto a hound that is dashing on in pursuit of game. The characters of the story are the game which the writer pursues. He tracks them from place to place; he notes their actions. If blood is spilled, he is there to measure it, if love is on the wing, he listens with acute ear to the cooing pair. He runs hither and thither among the characters that none may escape him. Sometimes he loses a trail because their destiny divides them, and then he goes back to the point where the paths diverge and pursues them one at a time, and in order to make greater speed he is sometimes, under extreme emergencies, compelled to cut cross lots, and so ambles on, now running now walking—it is a race of life and death. The reader is the hunter, booted and spurred. He comes quietly on in the wake of the unerring leader. He can afford to be more liesurely and dignified than he who runs in front. When the trail is lost, he can wait until it is found, and then gallop on.

Lest some of the characters of this story be lost, we must go back on the trail a little; or if you are weary, then sit down and rest, while we bring them up to the point we have now reached. We promise you, on the honor of a scribbler, that we shall not be long about it either.

We are quite sanguine, that if we have been so fortunate as to claim your atten-

tion thus far, you would like to know a little more about Stella Gibbons just now; but please be patient and you shall hear more of her by-and-by. We shall not forget her. Poor girl; she has the writer's sympathy whether she has yours or not.

When we last saw Miss Lucy Moorehead, she was a little piqued at witnessing a street interview between George Somers and Stella Gibbons, and resolved to teach the presumptuous policeman a bitter lesson in love-making. Her conscience was a little uneasy, but then, you know, young ladies come to look on flirting as a sort of innocent amusement; but sometimes it has turned into a serious matter in the end.

Lucy had a good heart; but her greatest failing was, she did not comprehend human nature. She judged the rest of the world by those she met in the daily walks of life.

These people, or some of them at least, were case-hardened so far as the nobler feelings of the human heart are concerned. They looked lightly upon life and those whose destiny had cast them into the furnace of affliction.

Not long after Lucy had made up her mind to teach George Somers this very important lesson, she took her rounds among the poor people of the East End. A driver in livery was ready with carriage and horses to go. She had an engagement with a lady acquaintance, who was to accompany her on her mission of mercy. Lucy, therefore, directed John to drive to the house of her friend. Arrived, she found the young lady suffering from a severe headache that forbid her appearance on the street. Lucy resolved to go alone, and was driven to Third and Lawrence streets, where she alighted and directed John to either remain, or return in an hour. The reason Lucy did not wish to appear in the lower quarters of the city in a carriage, was that it created so much comment among those she came to serve. So she preferred to go among them on foot, and

dressed in her plainest habit. Thus did Lucy go from one to another, hearing tales of woe and suffering, and wondering how people could be reduced to such pitiable poverty. Yet in the goodness of her heart did Lucy wish she had the means at hand, to relieve all the suffering there was in the world. "Why should people," she thought, "go to foreign lands to help the poor while there were so many needy at home?" Thus did she go from house to house, and hearing these tales of sorrow began to give her an insight into human character. Heretofore she had been looking mostly on the bright side of the picture, but now the other side stood before her in all its unpleasant distinctness of outline.

At one house everything seemed quite neat and tidy. The woman said her husband had been sick three weeks, confined to his bed.

"You have sons that are able to work?" suggested Lucy.

"No, my children are all too small to work."

"Then how do you manage to live?"

The woman hung down her head a moment, and then replied:

"My husband is an Odd Fellow, Miss, and the lodge always takes care of its sick. They send a nurse here every evening, who stays through the night."

Lucy opened her bright eyes.

"But," said she, "that does not buy bread for you and the children."

"Oh no, of course not, but I suppose you know that the Lodge pays weekly benefits to those who are sick and disabled; that is of its own members."

"Indeed! I know but little about Odd Fellows. I have seen them parading about the streets with flashy uniforms on, but I supposed they didn't amount to anything."

At this the woman bridled up a little. "You are mistaken, Miss." If it wasn't for these good people, hundreds of us would starve with your church folks looking at us."

Lucy was a little chagrined, but said nothing—only waited.

The woman continued: "The officers come once a week, and pay us the benefits in money, not in promises. George Somers, the Noble Grand of husband's lodge, was here not an hour ago and handed us our money."

Lucy colored a little at the mention of the name, but soon recovered her composure. Consulting an elegant gold watch, she saw that she yet had half an hour before the time appointed to meet the driver. It occurred to her that she was now somewhere is Stella Gibbons' neighborhood; she would ask the woman if she knew her. The woman did not but directed Lucy to call at No. ——— street and they could tell her. Lucy noted down the number and street and took her departure. As she walked along she reflected upon what had just been told her.

She had noticed Somers wearing a pin bearing some strange device which she did not understand. Then he was one of these Odd Fellows she had heard so much about. Perhaps it was a good institution, and perhaps not. While thus reflecting, and occasionally consulting the ivory tablet, she came to the number and touched the bell. There was no name on the door, but the building showed evidence of fresh paint. The freestone steps were as clean as a new pin. The door opened, and a middle-aged handsome woman invited Lucy to enter.

"No, thank you, I only called to inquire where Mrs. Gibbons lives, as I am told she lives not far from here."

The woman reflected a moment, and then replied:

"I think I have heard my son speak of her, and I am sure he knows. Please step in a moment and be seated while I call him."

Lucy walked in and sat down while the lady went out. She had time to look around her. Although the room was not gorgeously furnished, there was an air of elegance about every thing. Good taste must have been at the bottom of it all, to

give to the room such a cozy look, and at such small expense. Books with substantial bindings lay upon the center-table, while the sofas and chairs stood around the room, tidy but not stiff. Two or three paintings of some merit hung upon the walls. A chromo in particular attracted her attention. It was a shipwreck scene. A man was clinging to a rude raft holding his wife, while near by floated the apparently lifeless body of a child. In the distance, a boat was rapidly approaching. In the bow a man seemed to be throwing up his arms as if making gestures to the one on the raft. She did not understand the picture, though she felt it must have a meaning.

Lucy's thoughts were disturbed by approaching footsteps, and presently the lady returned followed by a man in the fatigue suit of a policeman. Lucy looked and blushed crimson. It was George Somers.

The policeman was scarcely behind Lucy in blushing; but this did not prevent him from advancing and extending his hand, which she took. She tried to make some excuse for intruding on their privacy, but George stopped her with—

"We are only too happy to have you here. Allow me to introduce you to my mother, Miss Moorhead." Both ladies bowed.

"I called, Mr. Somers, to inquire the location of the house where Mrs. Gibbons and Stella live."

"I feel quite sure, Miss Moorhead, you will never find it without a guide; so if you will accept one so humble, I shall be pleased to act in that capacity."

Lucy smiled assent, and Somers disappeared and exchanged his coat with metal buttons for another without these emblems of authority.

George and Lucy set out, leaving Mrs. Somers in wonderment at what she had seen. What with blushing faces and stammering tongues she was confused and anxious to know the meaning of it. George Somers never felt more happy in all his life, than when walking along the street

with this lovely girl. The very houses never looked so grand before. The air never seemed so balmy and soft. He inhaled an atmosphere of love. From the bottom of his soul he wished Mrs. Gibbons had lived in Covington, or even St. Louis, provided he could have had the company of such an angelic creature for his companion on the journey.

But it did not take them long to reach the humble tenement-house. George mounted the creaking stairway, followed by Lucy. The door of Mrs. Gibbons' room was opened, but what a sight met their view! The poor woman sat by the stove, wringing her hands and weeping bitterly, while Willie stood by sharing his mother's grief. Lucy looked to George for an explanation. He had none to give. She approached Mrs. Gibbons tenderly and took her hand. My dear Mrs. Gibbons, what is the matter?" This only added fuel to the flame, but in a little while she was calmer, and drew from her lap an envelope with the end clipped off, which she handed to Lucy to read. Lucy drew out the note and silently scanned the contents, which ran thus:

"CINCINNATI, —18, 18—.

"MRS. GIBBONS.—It is with a sad heart that I inform you, that I saw your daughter, yesterday, on one of the steamers bound south. She informed me that she had wearied of such an humble life, and had fully resolved to try something better, at least a change from her present condition. I feel quite sure that you will be alarmed at her absence, and hence I have taken the liberty of writing you this note. A FRIEND."

Lucy trembled violently as she read, and the note dropped from her hand and fell on the floor.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Big Judge was not so named on account of any vast amount of legal lore that was supposed to repose in the judicial brain of that important functionary, nor yet because he was a mountain of flesh, but rather on account of the powerful influence he wielded over the destinies of the

miserable wretches that were daily marshaled in his court for sentence.

He decided those petty cases that were too insignificant to be heard in Common Pleas.

Trifling as many of these cases really were, there were others that, in sentence and fine, covered a period of nearly or quite two years. The law, we believe, only gives the Big Judge the right to send up prisoners for one year, yet when we remember that he can impose a fine of two hundred dollars in addition, which must be eked out at seventy-five cents per day, it requires but little arithmetic to ascertain that the poor wretch gets two hundred and sixty-six days in addition.

A court of common pleas would have called a jury to hear and weigh the evidence before giving a judgment involving such a long term of imprisonment, but under the police regulation the judge acts in the capacity of the jury.

The location of a man's residence, even in Ohio, has much to do with his trial and punishment. If he lives in the country, and steals ten dollars' worth of property, he is arraigned before a jury of his countrymen and an inquiry made into his offense. But, on the other hand, suppose the culprit lives in Cincinnati; then his case comes before the Police Judge, and is disposed of in a hasty manner, and often, we fear, upon the flimsiest testimony, such as would not weigh an atom with twelve of our honest countrymen. You say the prisoner may demand a jury; but in the light of a recent expression that is said to have fallen from the lips of an Ex-Police Judge, it is not strange that they decline to do so. This learned disciple of Blackstone, when interrogated as to how he avoided having juries called on him, replied:

"When a prisoner demanded a jury, and that jury convicted him, I always gave the fellow the severest sentence the law allowed. This soon stopped their demanding juries."

The fault does not rest with the judge,

but with the system. It is rotten to the bottom.

The Big Judge who presided on this occasion was not a man of equable temper, and like many very ordinary mortals, was given to "spells" of irritability. Those who knew him best were aware that he carried his domestic troubles to the bench with. The rankling wound of many a curtain lecture at home often found vent in long sentences and fierce warnings to the miserable herd in the dock.

On the morning of the day on which Stella Gibbons was to have her trial the Big Judge and his better half had come to a misunderstanding about some trivial matter. It may have been a "rat or a mouse," but it matters not; hot words ensued, and this legal luminary with a curse upon all women, rushed off to deal justice in court.

His face was flushed as he entered the court-room, and the prosecuting attorney read the story so legibly written there. The "regulars" also read their doom under that lowering brow.

The court-room was filled by the loafers and bummers that are usually on hand to witness the miseries of fallen humanity.

The newspapers have sought in vain to burlesque these loafers out of court, but curiosity still holds them to their accustomed haunts. Their hides are impervious to such delicate missiles as newspaper articles.

Nothing short of grape and canister, or ball and chain, will ever rid the court of these human vultures. Then there was the fussy prosecutor, who was supposed to be "man Friday" to his honor. When the judge lacked brains or legal acumen, this important official was sure to throw himself into the breach. Then, too, there were lawyers without causes, buzzing hither and thither among the prisoners. These shysters (as police court lawyers are often termed) were supposed to wield a certain mesmeric influence over his honor, and thereby soften the blow to the culprit. Reader, if on an unlucky day you should be in the dock, be sure to get the most

influential shyster to plead your cause.

The court was opened in due form, and the causes were called in rapid succession. The docket showed thirty-five cases, and there were just three hours in which to hear and decide them.

If the cases of Warren Hastings or Henry Ward Beecher had come before his Honor, the Police Judge, we feel confident that, instead of occupying months in their hearing, they would have been disposed of in fifteen minutes. This system has the one redeeming merit of not keeping the prisoner long in suspense as to what his sentence may be—the jury never disagrees.

The first case called was Bridget Malony (a regular); charge, "drunk and disorderly."

"Well, Bridget, what is the matter with you?"

"Yer honor, on yesterday I had a sore nose, and—"

"There, that will do, Bridget. It will take fifteen days in the work-house to cure that nose." [Exit B. Malony.]

"Ben Pine, I hope you don't hail from North Carolina."

"No, your Honor, am from New Jersey."

"Well, Mr. Pine, to the discredit of your State, I find you charged with stealing a saw. Who saw Ben Pine steal the saw?"

An officer here testified that he found Ben with the saw in his possession and trying to sell it.

"If you had been using the saw I should have felt more disposed to let you go; but as it is a clear case you must go to the work-house for twenty days."

Ben Pine was for entering a protest, but the officer kindly took his arm and led him down stairs. Case followed case in rapid succession. Some were let off with a warning, others were sentenced.

While all these cases were being disposed of, there was a little by-play that we must not fail to notice.

A little whiffit of a fellow, with a moustache and whiskers so faint that it required a good light and the proper angle of observation to trace them, approached

Stella and inquired if she wanted an attorney. She was quietly crying. Between her sobs she replied that she had but little money.

"Have you as much as five dollars?" he asked tenderly.

Stella nodded.

"Then give it to me, and I will defend you."

Without uttering a word she put her hand in her pocket, and drawing forth the money gave it to the lawyer.

The little fellow's eye glittered as he fobbed the bill much as a hotel waiter receives and hides a quarter put into his itching palm by a liberal guest. Then this little lawyer with the lightish whiskers began to comb his hair upward with his fingers, to add to the fierceness of his otherwise meek countenance. His next move was to tilt his chair back against a table and exhibit his shoe-soles to the Judge, by elevating his feet on the back of the chair next in front. This change of posture demanded a change of hands, and his thumbs naturally formed hooks in the armholes of his vest, from which depended the digits. He had now obtained that coveted position of young lawyers, the right to say "my client," and he was therefore content to wait and watch events.

He had not long to wait, for the Judge soon came to the name of Annette Lee. The Judge called the case, but there was no response.

The shyster nudged his client.

"Why don't you answer," he whispered.

"Because that is not my name," she replied.

"No matter, Miss, what name they call you, don't rile his Honor, or it will be all the worse for you."

Thus admonished by her counsel Stella stood up.

"Miss Lee, you are charged with carrying concealed weapons and shooting with intent to kill—a very serious charge against one so young. Do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," whispered her attorney.

Stella responded accordingly.

Just then Stella for the first time noticed Paul Annear sitting in close consultation with officer Billingsly and the Prosecuting Attorney. One hat would have covered the three heads.

"Call officer Billingsly."

The officer stood up and testified "that as he was passing a certain house on his beat, he and his partner heard loud words and paused a moment to listen. Just then the front door was opened and Mr. Annear appeared, closely pursued by the prisoner, with a small pistol cocked and pointed at his head. My mate and I secured the weapon, and run the prisoner in."

Cross-questioned by the counsel:

Counsel—Did you say wrested the pistol from my client's hands?

Policeman—I did.

Counsel—Was it loaded then?

Policeman—It was.

Counsel—Every chamber?

Policeman—Yes, every one.

Counsel—That is all.

The next witness called was Paul Annear. He testified in substance, that he had called at the house of one of his father's tenants on some business. That he here met the prisoner whose displeasure he had incurred at some previous period. No sooner did she see him than she drew a pistol and fired at his head. She then ordered him out of the house, making many threatening gestures with the pistol, and by holding it occasionally in close proximity with his head, she put him in bodily fear of his life.

Cross-questioned by counsel for defense:

Counsel—You say that my client here fired at you?

Annear—Yes, sir.

Counsel—Are you sure?

Annear—I am.

Counsel—Then how can you explain that the pistol was loaded when it came into the hands of officer Billingsly a few minutes afterward?

Annear—I don't know, sir, rather doggedly.

Counsel—That will do.

"Call the witnesses for the defense, if any," said the Big Judge.

Paul Annear turned a shade paler.

None appeared.

"Prisoner have you anything to say?" asked his honor in an unkind tone.

Stella stood up. She swept the audience with a glance. They were cold and unsympathetic. The story of Paul Annear had chilled the blood in her veins, and she did not until now realize what a great criminal she was in drawing a pistol, given her by a policeman, in self defense.

Stella was dumb and sat down without being able to articulate a single word. She buried her face in her hands.

His Honor—Your penitence comes too late, Miss." He would doubtless have been delighted to have seen Mrs. Big Judge equally humble. "You are aware, no doubt, that you have violated the law," a judicial frown; "yes, violated a law that protects every man's life. Suppose you had killed this man, (no great loss thinks the reader). The Court shudders to think of the consequences to you. I confess I am astonished, Miss, to think one so young and fair, should even contemplate so horrible a crime. The shedding of human blood should be a last resort, and then only in the clearest cases of self-defense "It was self-defense," gasped Stella.

"It has not been shown in evidence, and until it is I must be permitted to believe you the aggressor; therefore, as the representative of the offended law, it becomes my unpleasant duty to administer to you a severe sentence even for a first offense. Had it been clearly established that you really fired the pistol, it would be doubled in time and fine, I therefore sentence you to thirty days in the work-house and a fine of twenty-five dollars and costs. Take the prisoner below, and call the next case."

Stella was chilled to the bone by the freezing words of the Judge, and when the climax was reached she uttered one cry of despair that would have touched a sympathetic heart as keenly as the point of a

needle. Conscious of her own innocence and of the rectitude of all that she had done, poor thing, she did not realize that courts are guided by evidence and not by sympathy. A general smile of the motley crew of loafers in the space allotted the audience, was the welcome that her distress received.

The court officer saw that she was faint, and, promptly stepping to her assistance, led her away.

This wonderful Judge had heard and disposed of this case in just fifteen minutes. It is a pity the great assault and battery case of David vs. Goliath had not come before his Honor; for we feel confident its hearing would not have covered a space of over twelve minutes, while the hisrotian has spread its details and consequences over pages. Let the good people of Cincinnati fall down in blind adoration of a system that places the scepter of power in the hands of one man—a power that within its orbit is as great as that wielded by any monarch of Europe. In this day of free schools and free thought, is it not strange that so miserable a sham upon justice should so long exist?

When the Big Judge had moved the prisoners right and left, he adjourned court.

He had usually about so many cases to hear, and if the number was increased, then the time devoted to each must be less.

Who could expect so important an official to allow his mutton to grow cold for the sake of hearing testimony? Human nature is too weak to brook the idea.

As soon as the court had adjourned, the Big Judge, the prosecutor and the shyster, went over the street to take a drink to give them a zest for their dinners.

The "Black Maria," the prison wagon, rolled up to the door of the station-house and the miserable prisoners who had received sentence were loaded up, and under guard of an officer, driven out to the Work-house.

CHAPTER XVII.

Lucy Moorehead scarce knew what words of consolation to offer to Mrs. Gibbons in this hour of affliction. Her heart bled as she comprehended the terrible blow that had fallen on this humble woman. Nor was Lucy unconscious of the grave error that Stella had committed—an error that women never excuse or pity in their own sex. With such a taint upon her character, what could this poor misguided, willful girl, ever hope, either now or hereafter.

Meanwhile George Somers had caught up the discarded note that lay open on the floor, and was eagerly scanning the contents. Lucy furtively cast her eyes to the face of the young policeman, and started as she noticed the marks of passion engraved on its lineaments. The cheeks were red, and the whole face flushed.

"That's a lie from the beginning to the end," he said, as if forgetful of the presence of ladies. "I beg your pardon, ladies; but if I was ever tempted to commit murder, that time is the present."

Mrs. Gibbons looked up through her tears, and Lucy shot a timid glance into George's face.

"What do you think has become of my child?" asked Mrs. Gibbons.

"I hardly know, Madam, but rest assured that she has not gone south on any steamer. But calm your fears. I will have a thousand keen eyes searching for her before twenty-four hours roll around. All will be done to find her that human ingenuity can devise.

And turning to Lucy, he said, "Miss Moorhead, after I have seen you to your carriage, my work begins."

"I shall not keep you from so charitable a work," said Lucy; and after speaking a few kind, hopeful words to the widow they took their departure.

As they walked along, George suddenly turned to Lucy and said:

"You doubtless thought my conduct strange on reading that letter; but, as a policeman, many things come to my knowledge that others do not know. Now,

I do not perhaps feel a much greater interest in Stella Gibbons than I do in thousands of others in my ward who are intrusted to my keeping; yet when I see those who are rich shamelessly tramping upon the rights of those who have no money, I almost feel vicious. Here is a girl whose offense is that she has a fair face and is poor, and a villainous wretch, as I believe, has taken some mean advantage of her, because he has the money to fee the lawyers."

George Somers had never risen to such dignity in Lucy's estimation before.

"I do not understand you, Mr. Somers. You speak in riddles.

"Perhaps I do, but if Stella should prove as innocent as I believe her to be, she can, if she chooses relate her trials to you. They are enough to chill the blood of a girl of her age."

"I must be content to wait, then. But, oh! Mr. Somers, do try and find the poor girl and restore her to her grief-stricken mother."

"I will do all that human energy can do. Meanwhile please do not reveal in public what you have heard. Remember the poor girl's character is at stake. It will be soon enough to denounce her after we know she has erred."

"Trust me, the subject shall never be mentioned to any one. But you spoke of having a large number of keen eyes searching for her. How will you enlist so respectable an army of sympathizing friends?"

"I will tell you; Miss Gibbons' father was an Odd Fellow, and it is the duty of the thousands of the craft in this city to defend the child."

"Oh, I see now. I almost begin to like the Odd Fellows."

"And well you may," returned George; "for they are a powerful body of men, both rich and poor combined for a great purpose. But I see we are at your carriage door."

Lucy put out her hand as he handed her in.

"May we not have the pleasure of see-

ing you at our church on Sabbaths?" she asked.

"You may possibly; for I begin to feel as if I should be pleased to see you often."

Lucy blushed, and told John to drive her home.

George Somers was mortified that Lucy had only invited him to church—a place where he had a perfect right to go without an invitation. He had hoped for more than this.

Oh, these young lovers. They can never learn the way to a woman's heart. To how many is the path a dismal swamp. They grope their way in darkness because they can not read the signs of the times. Then they are so unreasonable and unreasoning—they expect a girl to do all the courting, the very thing she ought not to do under any circumstances. Many a girl has been lost to a bashful lover, because he had not the manliness to declare his passion at the right moment. George Somers had no time to stop then and reason on matters of the heart; he had a great work before him. His first duty was to go to police head-quarters, and report to the chief, giving a written description of the girl. These chiefs of police are a skeptical set of people. They listen to many stories of people being absent—promise everything and do nothing. Somers next sought out Mr. Peckover. He found that worthy gentleman in his office up to his eyes in business. No sooner did he see Somers than he threw down his pen and extended a hearty welcome to him.

"Is it possible that the girl has disappeared from home, Brother Somers?"

"Nothing surer. I have just come from there, and Mrs. Gibbons is taking on so, that it almost makes me cry to see her grief."

"I dare say, poor creature. But I have an idea. I'll go right home and send Mrs. Peckover down directly, and let her try and comfort the good woman, while I go about among our Lodge folks, and see what can be done."

"That's right, and in the meantime I

will go among such of the police, as are members of our Order, and try to excite them to keep a keen lookout."

"I shall see some of the prominent members of each Lodge in the city, and we will hold a private meeting this evening to divide the work. We must not leave a rat-hole unsearched."

"Well, I'll be off now. I suppose we will meet at the lodge-room this evening?"

"No better meet at my house first, and decide on a future course. Come promptly at eight o'clock."

"With a promise to be on hand, Somers hurried away. He had not said anything to Mr. Peckover about his own suspicions, but he had them. Taking Paul Annear's previous conduct in account, he had no doubt that he was in some way connected with Stella's absence. He would know.

George first went to the office of his chief, and obtained leave of absence for the night. He next went down to the Central Station and looked over the register. He scanned each name and strange to say read the name of Annette Lee without even a suspicion crossing his mind that there might have been a mistake somewhere. From Ninth street, he went to Hammond street, then to Third street, and lastly to Bremen street, searching the slates of all these several stations and making inquiries. This was the very afternoon that Stella had been sent to the work-house. Having looked in all these places, he went down town and ascertained what steamer had gone south. But one had departed for points beyond Louisville—the Westmoreland, bound for New Orleans. He telegraphed a description of the girl to a friend in Louisville, feeling sure that the boat must be yet at that point. In an hour a dispatch came, that no such person had taken passage on the Westmoreland. He then went and visited all the packets in port, and it so happened that they were the very ones that had departed on the day Stella was missing, having come back for a return trip.

What he had learned thus far, only went to convince George Somers that there was

some mystery connected with the sending of the note to Mrs. Gibbons, and that Paul Annear was at the bottom of it. He went to Mrs. Gibbons and got the note and put it in his pocket. Mrs. Peckover was there and had partially succeeded in soothing the poor woman. In answer to an inquiry as to what he had learned, George told Mrs. Gibbons that he had satisfied himself that the note was false. Beyond this he would not venture a conjecture. That night there was a conference at the house of Thomas Peckover—those present consisting of eighteen or twenty Odd Fellows. There were also present, Crabster and Cruger, detectives.

"Well brothers," said Thomas Peckover, "I have detailed to each of you the circumstances under which this poor girl has disappeared. I have taken the liberty of inviting a couple of well-known detectives to be present, thinking that they might materially assist us in the search.

"Now, detectives expect to be paid, of course. I propose, for one, to give fifty dollars to the person who finds Stella Gibbons." Another brother gave twenty-five, and so they continued, until a purse of two hundred dollars had been subscribed. The detectives, after getting a full description, took their departure.

"Those chaps will hunt this town good," said Mr. Peckover; "but we must be on the lookout as well. We can do it quietly, but not less earnestly." They then proceeded to divide the city into districts, to watch and hunt. It was made the business of one to hunt the hospitals, public and private. Another was charged to make inquiries at all the hotels. And so they divided the work—systematically arranged it so that there would be no confusion. The detectives assured them that through their agents, they would go through and through every den of iniquity in the city; and it seemed that no place would be left unsearched.

George Somers had his own ideas, and he meant to keep them to himself and work them out after his own way.

Meanwhile we must not forget McKoy.

No sooner had the officers marched Stella away to the station house, than Jane began to experience a horrible and undefined fear. She therefore, without a moment's delay, began to pack her household goods, preparatory to a hasty flight.

When Paul Annear returned from the Central Station, he found the Madam with her sleeves rolled up, and just on the eve of tearing up a carpet.

"What means this?" he asked.

"You may well ask what it means, when it was you that brought this trouble upon me."

"You were handsomely paid," sneered Annear.

"Well, that's a question. I don't believe anybody was ever paid for making themselves outlaws."

"You are not alarmed, I hope, Madam?"

"Why shouldn't I be? Do you suppose that girl won't bring the police down on me?"

"No danger at present. I will see that she goes to the work-house. When she comes out again, I'll be around and see if she's got tamed."

"My opinion is that you had better let that girl alone, if she has any friends."

"Your opinion is not worth much."

Madam McKoy shot him a glance that pierced him through. "You had better not get too peppery; a line from me would open people's eyes and might make trouble."

"There, there; don't go into a rage. We must be friends, and so let your carpet alone. I will give you a word of warning if worst comes to worst. Now, come into your office and write a letter for me." Thither they went, and while Paul indicted, the Madam wrote the note that Mrs. Gibbons received.

The next night Paul Annear came in, and hastily closed the door. His next move was to go to the window and cautiously peer out. The Madam noticed this strange conduct and asked an explanation.

"Hist," said Paul in a whisper.

After watching a few minutes, he turned away from the window.

"That infernal policeman, George Somers, has been dogging me for half a dozen squares. I suppose he thinks I didn't see him. Now he is standing at the mouth of an alley on the opposite side of the street. I believe I'll try the effect of a shot at him. Maybe that will teach him to attend to his own business;" and Paul drew out a navy six shooter.

Madam McKoy caught his arm. "Not for the world. You would probably miss him, and then the whole force would be down on us in a minute."

Paul turned fiercely on the woman. "You are a coward, but I suppose you don't want to lose your property. How much do you value your traps at?"

Outside of my wardrobe, at least a hundred and fifty dollars."

"Then here's your money. Pack your wardrobe and travel." The Madam was a little surprised at this sudden offer, but she accepted and soon had the trunk ready. She dragged it out on the street and hailed a passing hack, and while the driver took up the trunk she sprang inside and away she went.

Three hours later there was a cry of fire, and the flame burst out of the room and upper windows of Madam McKoy's late residence. The engines came dashing up and rapidly unrolled their leather hose, but they were too late. The flames were now hissing their long red tongues out at every window in the house. The water was thrown upon it in torrents and then the lurid glare softened down and a dense cloud of smoke and steam rolled up from the debris, the walls tottered and fell, and nothing was left but the smoking, smoldering ruins.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Those in the secret of Stella Gibbons's absence, and earnestly engaged in the search, dropped into Mr. Peckover's one after another. There were solemn countenances, but no one had even a clue. Of those present, on the previous evening, but

two remained unheard from, namely, Crabster and Cruger, detectives, and Policeman Somers. Presently Mr. Crabster came in to report that he had so far been unable to get any trace of the girl whatever. His men had hunted the town from end to end, and he felt quite sure she must have left the city. While those present were debating what was the next step to be taken, a small boy called and handed in a note. It was addressed to Thomas Peckover. The old gentleman tore off the envelope, and carefully adjusted his spectacles. He hastily scanned its contents, and while a smile of satisfaction lighted up his noble countenance, he said: "Brothers, this begins to look like business—listen." Every voice was hushed.

"THOMAS PECKOVER: Dear Sir and Brother—I am happy to inform you that I have got a clue to the missing girl, Stella Gibbons. Will know soon if I am correct, and report at nine o'clock P. M.

Yours,

GEORGE SOMERS.

There was a general buzz of approval over this welcome bit of intelligence. Of course all other proposals came to a standstill, until Somers arrived.

At nine o'clock George came in, looking rather solemn, so those present augured that he had failed or been mistaken. He took a seat, and Mr. Peckover said, "Well."

"I have found her."

"Where?" asked half a dozen voices in a breath.

"In the work-house."

"Oh, impossible!" said Mr. Crabster, "for I was out there myself and looked over the register."

"I can't help that, sir. I say she is there, for I saw her myself not two hours ago."

"Wonderful! Why did I not find her?" And Mr. Crabster saw two hundred dollars go glimmering in the distance.

"Because she is not registered as Stella Gibbons but as Annette Lee."

"Oh, that accounts for it;" and Crabster's official pride was mollified.

"Come, tell us the particulars, Brother

Somers, for I am sure they are worth hearing."

"Yes, yes," said several others, "we want to hear."

"Well, then, to begin, there is a villain in this city (I will not give his name now) who has conceived a sort of passion for this poor girl. She refused to hold any conversation with him. This young man is very respectably connected, and, it seems, always has plenty of money at his command. A short time since he attempted to carry off this girl by force. He was aided in his efforts by a villainous hackman, whose name I have never been able to learn. Their plan was to catch her on the street and force her into a hack; but it failed, for just as they had seized the girl, a private watchman came up and interfered. My mate ran up, and the scoundrels took fright and fled. I continued to look out for the villain, but he kept out of my way. Now as soon as I heard the girl had disappeared, I said to myself, This villain had a hand in it. So I went down to Mrs. Gibbons's and found this note." He here read note No. 2. "I learned there had been a previous note sent, asking the lady to send her daughter to a certain house on a certain street, but as the girl had taken the first note with her I could not ascertain the number. The last note I put in my pocket, believing that it might be of some use. I then went to work to find this villain. I hunted him all day yesterday, but could not get sight of him. Just after I had left the meeting last evening I accidentally met him. He was walking rapidly and seemed not to wish to be recognized. After he had gone a little way, I turned and followed. It was hard to keep him in sight, and I am sure, from the way he dodged about, that he knew he was being followed. At last he went into a house down on Plum street, and I dodged into the mouth of an alley opposite. I saw him draw aside the curtain and peer cautiously out. I drew back deeper into the alley, and waited patiently. After a time I saw this man and a woman drag a trunk out on the curb.

The man returned to the house, but the woman hailed a passing hack and got in and drove away. I followed and had a run for it, but managed to keep them in sight until they reached a depot at the lower end of the city. As the woman alighted, I followed her in and saw her buy a ticket to St. Louis. Then she went into the long depot where a train was ready to start. Just before she entered the cars, I tore the buckskin covering from my brass buttons that she might know me for a policeman. Stepping up I touched her gently on the arm, requesting her to stop a moment. She turned to me, first with a look of surprise, which faded into one of paleness as she recognized me as a policeman. She began to tremble, and I saw at once, by her whole manner, that she was guilty.

"What do you want of me, sir?" she asked, trying hard to assume an air of injured innocence. I told her that she had connived at the abduction of a girl by the name of Stella Gibbons.

'This she denied bitterly at first; but as I was going only on suspicion and had sprung the trap, I stuck to it and told her I had abundant evidence. Here I drew out note No. 2, and charged her with that. It was a desperate game, but the cause was desperate. When she saw this letter, the woman began to cry directly. 'I'll tell you what I'll do, I said. She brightened up. 'If you will tell me where this girl is at this moment and she has come to no harm, I will let you go.' 'She replied, well, I will, sir, though I ought not to do so.

'Well out with it then for the last bell is ringing.'

'She is in the City Work-house under the name of Annette Lee.'

'How may I know that you are not deceiving me, Madam?'

'Go and see for yourself.'

'I felt sure she was telling the truth; but I replied, 'I will go and see at once, but shall send a man along on the train to keep an eye on you, and if you should attempt to get off this side of St. Louis,

you will be arrested. By the time you reach your destination I will know all and if you have told the truth you can go on your way, but never let me see you in Cincinnati again.' She was glad enough to get away so easily. The train pulled out, and, if I am not badly mistaken, that woman's guilt will make her uneasy all the way to St. Louis. Well I went at once to the Central Station, and found that a girl by the name of Annette Lee had been sent out on the charge of carrying concealed weapons. I was quite sure this was the lost girl, for I had myself given her a pistol after the first attempt at abduction. Well, this morning I went out to the Work-house and found that Stella Gibbons was there sure enough, and I have spent the remainder of the day running from one Director to another trying to effect her release. This is Thursday, and the Board does not meet until Saturday. Now, you could not get one Director to walk three squares to see another if it was a matter of life and death. I had thought that I might by this time report her safe at home, but I see no chance now before Saturday."

"You have had a time of it, anyway," said Mr. Peckover.

"And worked the case up in true detective style," said Mr. Crabster, admiringly.

"And earned your money," suggested another.

"The money shall go to Miss Gibbons, brothers, she has suffered most."

"That's good for you, Somers;" and they all shook hands cordially.

CHAPTER XIX.

The red tape is not all consumed in the capitol of the country. Small rolls of it are carefully distributed among the city officials of Cincinnati with which to bind up and clog the wheels of the municipal machinery. This fact Thomas Peckover found to his sorrow on the morning following the events narrated in the last chapter, when he was hurrying from one director to another, in a vain effort to effect a meet-

ing of the Board. They all sympathized (official urbanity) with the girl in her trouble, but nothing could they do until Saturday afternoon. It would be a sacrifice of official dignity to convene an extra session on so slight a provocation. Weary and disgusted at last, Mr. Peckover went home.

He had dispatched a messenger to Mrs. Gibbons on the previous evening, to notify her of her daughter's safety, and furthermore stating that the young lady would be restored to her afflicted relatives in the course of a couple of days at the farthest. Meanwhile we must not forget her whose life history plays so important a part in these pages.

Stella was huddled into the Black Maria as the prison wagon was facetiously called, with a half dozen others who had received sentence by the Police Judge. All were under guard of a policeman. Among the number was the woman whose wild ravings had so disturbed Stella on the previous evening. The woman was thoroughly sober now, and took her conviction as a matter of course. Long inebriation had benumbed and partially paralyzed her intellect; but there was one problem she never forgot, namely, that one drunk always brought one term in the work-house.

This woman sought to draw Stella into a conversation, but the policeman, who pitied the poor girl, ordered the old hag to hush. The woman did hush; but she wore a look of injured innocence on her wrinkled face. It was to her a greater privation to hold her tongue than to be deprived of her liberty. The wagon thumped and bounced as it whirled along over the bouldered street. People cast one look of curiosity at the black vehicle as it passed, but they could not see within, nor what it contained. For aught they knew it might be loaded with a municipal tea party going out to the work-house to feast on the contents of the superintendent's larder. Or it might have been some visiting alderman from a neighboring municipality, being chaperoned about the

suburbs with a view of impressing them with our rustic magnificence.

The prison van wheeled in from the avenue in good style, and halted in front of the City Bastile. The prison is a very large and a very cold looking building, that spreads its wings right and left like a great quailnet. The windows are in rows that shows great mathematical precision. The windows are to let in light, and not as some suppose to allow prisoners an opportunity to feast their eyes upon the beauties of nature.

The prisoners were marched in and duly registered. The superintendent was a man with a benevolent cast of countenance. One would not have taken him for a superintendent of a reformatory institution. His mild countenance marked him as a man that would have appeared well in the pulpit of a church.

When Stella gave him her right name, he stared, and wondered, and finally wrote it Annette Lee as it had been telegraphed from the police court.

The prisoners were now separated, the women going into one ward, and the men into another. The Cincinnati work-house, for an institution subject to the caprice of local politics, is an admirably conducted institution. Everything is scrupulously clean, and the sanitary regulations are all that could be required. The filthiest prisoner that enters the building, must go through a process of scrubbing, in order to make him clean and decent.

The matron was a lady of feeling, and gave Stella a much warmer reception than she expected. Kind words even brought tears to the girl's eyes, and caused her, as a last hope, to appeal to this woman's sense of justice. With but little encouragement, Stella with burning words poured into the good woman's ear the sad story of her arrest, trial and sentence. She warmly denied that she was a criminal deserving of such a severe sentence. She pleaded her cause so eloquently that the Matron manifested symptoms of deep and earnest sympathy.

"Dry your tears, child, and go quietly

to your cell," said the matron, "and I will go and talk to the superintendent." With a ray of hope faintly struggling in her heart, Stella entered the narrow limits of her cell and the gate clanged behind her and was locked by the guard.

The matron went to the superintendent with Stella's story. He listened patiently for he had great faith in the judgment of the matron, but replied that while it might all be true, he was powerless to do anything until the Board held one of their semi-monthly meetings.

When the matron carried the superintendent's answer to Stella, hope vanished again.

She threw herself down on the bed in despair and wept herself asleep.

Next morning she was taken with a number of other women into a large room and set to work on some coarse clothing for a firm in the city. This tended somewhat to detract her thoughts from the overpowering sorrow that weighed down her spirits, though she was allowed to converse with no one but the forewoman, and then only on business.

Often as her needle pierced the coarse fabric on which she was working, tears would silently course down her cheeks. Her body was in prison, but her thoughts were free as the air she breathed.

The Creator has placed the mind beyond the reach of man to imprison. He has invested our thoughts with the mantle of secrecy that they might be free from the surveillance of those who surround us. Stella often thought of the loved ones at home; indeed she thought of little else. How she longed to fly to the bosom of that kind, gentle mother for consolation in this hour of affliction and seeming disgrace! Would that dear mother think less of the child because she had been wrongfully sentenced to prison? Poor thing! she had never in all her life spent a night away from home; and now it seemed an age that she had been gone, so slowly does time drag on when the mind is weighed down by some great sorrow.

On the second day after her incarcera-

tion, Stella heard voices behind her, and instinctively looking over her shoulder, she gave a scream of joy at the unexpected sight. George Somers was standing in the doorway conversing with the superintendent. Stella threw down her work, and was on the point of rising to go to him, when the forewoman motioned her to keep her place. She sank back, frozen to the heart by the frown she saw on the face of the unfeeling forewoman.

Stella turned pale and trembled in every limb, but there were no sympathizing hearts around her. The genial glow in those calloused bosoms had long since been snuffed out. Again she turned her head, hoping that either Somers or the superintendent would advance, but they were gone.

How hard it was, she thought, not to be allowed to lay before George Somers the burden of her sorrow, and plead her innocence! Why had he left so abruptly? Did he believe her guilty of the crime with which she stood charged, and thus believing, leave her to suffer out the unjust sentence? Yet of all men on earth, George Somers was the one from whom she would fain have hidden her present degradation.

CHAPTER XX.

As nothing more could be done until Saturday, Thomas Peckover and the Odd Fellow friends were compelled to bide their time in patience. Though fretting at the delay that kept an innocent girl in prison, they thought it better to restrain their impatience than to run the risk of irritating the prison trustees. As matters now stood they felt sure of their interest in the case.

On Saturday afternoon a half dozen prominent and influential members of the Order attended the meeting of the Board which is held at the Work-house. After transacting some routine work, the case of Annette Lee alias Stella Gibbons was taken up. Policeman Somers was called and made his statement. Then Stella was called in and made a succinct statement

of everything connected with her abduction. She narrated her trials with such simplicity of manner, that there was not one that did not believe her a persecuted girl.

"I think, gentlemen, we have heard enough," said the President of the Board, running his eye over the countenances of his confreres? They nodded assent. Then one of the Board moved, "that Stella Gibbons be dismissed, she being, in the opinion of the Board, innocent of any crime whatever, except the carrying of concealed weapons, and that in self-defense." The President put the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

Then there was a rush of the Odd Fellows to congratulate Stella on her escape. Foremost was Mr. Peckover, and he wept tears of joy as he took the girl's little trembling hand in his own. Then the others crowded round, each eager to grasp her hand, though most of them had never seen her before in their lives. Such is the power of sympathy.

Stella tried to thank them all, but her voice was scarcely audible.

"There, that will do; come away," said Mr. Peckover, taking her tenderly by the arm. He led her out into the open air and seated her in his buggy, and drove down the avenue.

The pair rode on in silence for a little way. Mr. Peckover scarcely knew what to say, and Stella nestled beside him with the childish fondness she would have felt for a father. How she venerated the silver locks that softened and gave benevolence to that kind face!

"My dear child, you have had a sad experience for one so young," said the old gentleman, by way of opening a conversation.

"Oh, sir, it has been so sad; but if I am only esteemed none the less for it I can bear it all."

"I think nobody will think less of you. They can not when they know you are innocent. I had hoped to see that scoundrel in jail before this, but he has left the city and I hope forever. And now if you

ever see him again, or hear of him being here, let me know it at once, and I will take care that he does not molest you."

After a short pause she asked after her mother and little brother.

"In my great trouble and selfishness to obtain my liberty," she said, "I had forgotten those who are dearer to me than life, my dear mother and brother."

"Well, I have seen them both, they are well, but greatly distressed at your absence. I sent them word evening before last that you had been found."

"Oh, I shall never know how to thank you enough for all your kindness to a poor family like ours."

"Whoa, Dick, behave yourself;" said Mr. Peckover. Now, be it known that Dick, the horse, was not misbehaving at all, but measuring off the jog trot. We surmise the old gentleman was scolding Dick a little to get his mind off the subject. Flattery, be it ever so well deserved, always made him a little shaky.

"I'm not the one that deserves the most credit, Stella; though I've been anxious enough to be sure."

"Whom else must I thank?"

"Well, George Somers did the whole business. The rest of us piddled around, but he went to work like a man; got your track and worked night and day until he found you out."

Stella's face turned scarlet at this welcome bit of news.

"God bless him," she sighed.

"Yes, my child, God will bless him; for he is a noble man, if the Creator ever made one."

Stella sat silent for a few minutes, and then asked: "Well, who else have I to thank?"

"I don't know except in a general way, but as Somers did all the work, that is the real work, I suppose we must give him all the credit."

Just then they halted in front of Stella's humble home. Stella sprang out, and invited Mr. Peckover to come in; but he excused himself and drove away.

Reader, I wish I could do as much, but

he who takes the pen is like he who takes the sword, he must die by it if need be.

Stella ran lightly up the dear old stairs; its creak was sweeter than music in her ear. She stood in the door-way of her home. Her mother and brother were there; she had half expected they would be dead; for it seemed an age since she went away on that fatal errand. At a glance she saw that her mother had been weeping—her eyes were red and blood-shot. Stella was shocked, her mother stood and stared at her so hard. She advanced to put her arms around her neck, but her mother caught and held her at arm's length.

Stella turned pale.

"Stella, why do you come back here after having disgraced your mother and little brother?" said Mrs. Gibbons sternly.

"Oh, mother," groaned the girl.

"Your penitence comes too late; it should have come before not after you have sinned."

Stella threw herself on her knees, and cried with anguish. She thought to clasp her mother's knees with her arms, but Mrs. Gibbons shook her off and paced the floor, showing signs of the greatest mental agony.

"Great God! that I should live to see the day that my daughter has become an outcast. Oh that I had died before she was born."

The truth flashed upon the poor girl, and she raised her streaming eyes.

"Oh, mother, you misjudge me; I am innocent."

"Prove it, girl; prove it, or my heart will break."

"Oh, mother, if good kind Mr. Peckover was here, he could tell you all."

"I am here, God be praised," said one at the door. They looked, and the venerable trustee stood a spectator of the scene.

"Oh, do tell her all," pleaded Stella, turning to Mr. Peckover.

"I will, dear child. Mrs. Gibbons calm yourself."

Mr. Peckover then narrated the whole

story, just as the reader has heard it. When he had finished Mrs. Gibbons was crying. Turning to Stella she said:

"Oh, my daughter, can you forgive your poor, poor mother her unjust suspicion?"

Stella's answer was by throwing her arms around her mother's neck and weeping. Her mother kissed and wept over her, and Willie who stood in awe at what was passing, came up and tried to put his little arms around both of them, and he, too, wept from sympathy. When their joy had somewhat subsided, they turned to the door, but Mr. Peckover was not there. Those who saw him depart say that when he got to the foot of the stairs he took out his handkerchief and mopped his face, though it was not a warm day.

A word in explanation. After Mr. Peckover had driven a square or two on his way home, it occurred to him that in the flurry of getting Stella out of the Work-house he had forgotten to pay over the two hundred dollars reward donated by George Somers. He had suggested that George ought to take the money and pay it to Stella himself. This George had positively declined to do. Mr. Peckover then hastened back to discharge the obligation and arrived on the scene at an auspicious moment. He was so worked up over the scene that he abandoned the idea of saying anything about the money that day, but went directly home.

CHAPTER XXI.

Although Lucy Moorhead had resolved to play the coquette with George Somers, she began to see in him many good qualities that she had not seen before. In their brief interviews on former occasions she had admired more the external than the internal man. Every well-bred lady likes to see her favorite appear well in society. The more numerous her female acquaintances that admire him, the better, provided the said biped of the masculine gender does not so deport himself as to excite that little demon, jealousy. I think I may lay it down as a rule of Cincinnati society

that the lines of social distinction are not near so finely marked with reference to gentlemen as they are to ladies. Perhaps some reader with a head for statistics can solve the conundrum with eminent satisfaction to himself.

Lucy Moorhead saw, with true feminine shrewdness, that the first step would be to get him to attend church. This would smooth the way for his introduction to her set. It would do more—it would lull any scruples her father might have, for Elijah Moorhead was a wonderfully clannish sectarian. Impolite people would have called him pig-headed. The man who accepted his faith stood head and shoulders above all outsiders. The number of such illiberal Christians are diminishing in number each year. It was not surprising, therefore, that on the following Sabbath morning, as Lucy took her seat in her father's pew, she cast a timid glance around to see if Mr. Somers had accepted her invitation. He was nowhere visible.

The loud-mouthed organ pealed forth an anthem in thunder tones. The choir sang, and the preacher offered a voluminous supplication to the throne of grace; then the choir sang again. During the singing of this last hymn, one of the ushers came down the aisle escorting a gentleman, and, strange to say, stopped at the head of Mr. Moorhead's pew, as if looking for a vacancy. Elijah looked up, and, recognizing George Somers, beckoned him to come in. George accepted the invitation, but blushed like a woman at finding himself in Elijah Moorhead's pew.

Lucy, although taken aback, had sufficient command over her emotions to keep the blood measurably from her cheeks.

Mr. Moorhead recognized Mr. Somers in a stately way, but Lucy was gracious enough to permit a half smile to part her pretty lips. Then there was a slight inclination of all the young female heads Somersward, and many a little body in dimity asked itself who that handsome gentleman was in Elijah Moorhead's pew. The minister's wife sat in a front pew. These church committees, in letting out

the pews of a church, always reserve one for the minister's wife, on the principle, we suppose, that she is the censor of the pulpit. The preliminary service having begun, the minister arose, and, with quiet dignity and earnest manner, began his sermon.

Elijah Moorhead sat as straight and upright as one of the cedars of Lebanon. His bald pate and side hair might have been mistaken by a drowsy worshipper for a plaster cast of some of the long line of distinguished dead.

George Somers gave the minister his undivided attention. Perhaps he felt a little mortified at one of the causes that had induced him to attend this particular church on this particular occasion. Be that as it may, there was not in that large congregation a more devout and attentive listener than George Somers.

The minister was ever eloquent, and never tedious. It seemed that "at his control, despair and anguish fled the struggling soul."

We shall not repeat his sermon, but suffice it to say it was brief, lasting but thirty minutes. How our grand-sires would have grumbled at a sermon only thirty minutes long! It would have been like selling them a yard of cloth and giving them but a half.

As soon as the congregation was dismissed, Elijah Moorhead extended his hand to George Somers.

"I am really happy to see you at our church. I hope that, having found your way, you will come every Sabbath."

George thanked him politely and expressed the hope that he might be benefitted by the ministrations of such an able shepherd.

"That you would, Mr. Somers, I tell you he gives us the true doctrine, none of your milk-and-water trash."

"I hope, Mr. Somers, that since you have come to our church, you will not forget our mite society and, by the way, it meets at our house next Wednesday." This from Lucy.

"I shall be too happy to contribute my

mite, and thank you kindly for the invitation."

"It is not a party, you will please remember, nor a reception either," whispered Lucy, "but a collection of our church folks. We all go very plain to these little gatherings."

George bowed acknowledgement.

"We shall expect you without fail," said Lucy, as she cast a soft glance into George's honest face.

"I shall be there."

All this little by-play occurred as they slowly pushed their way up the aisle at the heels of the audience. The latter part of it occurred at the carriage as Lucy and her father were on the point of stepping in.

George bowed himself away, and as the carriage rolled down the street he offered a mental benediction—a sort of blessing—on at least one of the occupants. He then turned and walked homeward, thinking as he went, not so much of the excellent sermon that had been showered over the congregation, as of the sweet creature he had just left. His imagination magnified the awkwardness of his own position in permitting himself to be thrust, like a penny-collection box, into Elijah Moorhead's pew. Under other and more favorable circumstances he would not have seriously objected, but just now, as he was visiting the church for the first time, and his conscience told him for what, it was ridiculous. At least that was the way it looked from his stand-point. But, with a strong effort of the will, he thrust aside this annoying subject, and tried to think of the coming mite society meeting. Was he a fit person to be in a lady's parlor in the presence of a large company of highly refined people? He could collar a ruffian and walk him off to the station-house, or he could quell a mob, but this dealing with the upper tandom, or upper snobdem, was completely out of his line.

We often do things for love that all the mules in christendom could not kick us into doing under other circumstances. He half regretted his promise to go to the

mite society, but now that he had made it he resolved to be as good as his precious word.

The mite society will require a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XXII.

The excessive expense attending the giving of parties in our American cities has always been a subject of thought among prudent people. In the country it is different, the greater portion of the edibles furnished for the occasion come from the family larder, and are prepared by members of the household. But in cities the family who is doomed to the worry of giving a party must make elaborate preparation.

The pastry must come from the establishment of some noted confectioner (at exorbitant prices), and the flowers be culled from some florist's green-house. The rooms must be prepared, music furnished, and many etceteras, that cost prodigiously. In view of these facts, the congregations of our western cities some years since imported the mite society. Whence came this migratory bird I know not; but here it means, in our American parlance, a cheap party. Yet while these parties are cheap, they are, in a small way a substitute for the New England tea-parties of half a century ago, and afford the same latitude for social gossip.

George Somers seemed in such an anxious state of preparation for the few days prior to the meeting of the society that his mother felt constrained to ask the occasion of it all. George replied, that he had been invited to a sort of party or as church folks termed it—a mite society.

"By whom is it given?"

"It is to be at Moorhead's this week."

"Ah."

"Yes, mother; and you know I have to appear in my best, as everybody will be well dressed."

"Well, come in here before you go, and let me look you over."

"Thank you, mother, I will, for I don't

want to look as if I had just jumped out of a duck's nest."

George assorted his wardrobe, dressed, and came into the sitting room for inspection. His mother ran her eye over him. "Your cravat is awry, to begin with, and there is a long thread dangling from the back of your coat collar," and she threw it away. "What have you in the breast pocket of your coat?"

George thrust in his hand, and drew out a book.

"There, leave your book at home."

Mrs. Somers continued her criticisms.

"Have you a clean handkerchief in your pocket?"

"Yes."

"And your gloves?"

"No," and he ran and got them.

"There, I guess you will do now," said his mother, admiringly.

He kissed and thanked her, promising to return early, and then took his departure. Mrs. Somers felt reasonably proud of her son.

Meanwhile Lucy Moorhead, even under a calm exterior, was a little nervous, lest her protege should not properly conduct himself in the presence of such a critical assembly. There was in her breast a sort of undefined fear that he would say or do something during the evening that would mortify her vanity. She had hazarded all, and she trusted to his good sense, not to shock the assembled aristocracy by any crudities offensive to the ritual of polite society.

The large parlor was brilliantly lighted, and the guests began to drop in by twos and threes and fours. People, for the convenience, left their carriages at home.

Lucy eagerly watched and welcomed the arriving guests. She had a smile and a kind word for all. She began now to be a little nervous lest Mr. Somers would not come at all; but her uneasiness was at length dispelled by the appearance of our hero. She felt flattered by his elegant appearance, and gave him her hand with womanly grace. George took it, and bowed low. After he came back from the

gentlemen's dressing-room, Lucy introduced Mr. Somers to the company. She then more particularly introduced him to Mr. and Mrs. Norton, the minister and his wife, with the request that they would see that he did not lack for special introductions to those present.

Lucy could not have left him in better hands, and she knew it. Mr. Norton was one of those refined persons who could entertain without indulging in flippant conversation. Mrs. Norton was her husband's inferior in intellect, but was chaty and always agreeable. Under such tutorage. George's natural timidity soon wore off, and he began to feel at ease.

"I was pleased to see you in our congregation last Sabbath, Mr. Somers."

"Thank you. I was well repaid for going, I assure you, sir."

Mr. Norton felt complimented, and expressed the hope of seeing him present often.

Then the conversation took a turn on some point of Mr. Norton's sermon that involved the geography of Palestine, and from that to Roman history. Here George was perfectly at home. He had mastered "Plutarch's lives," "Josephus," "Julius Cæsar," and many other ancient works. Mr. Norton's eye brightened at finding a young man who had stored his mind with such useful knowledge—it was such a rarity, you know.

Mrs. Norton gabbled on until they got into Plutarch and Josephus, and then she found she was gradually being drawn beyond her depth; so she prudently waded back to the shore and opened a tete-a-tete with a lady on her right. In the midst of this interesting conversation, Lucy came up, and laying a hand on Mr. Norton's arm said, as if half offended: "There, Mr. Norton do you call this right. I put a gentleman under your charge to be introduced to the company, and you go and monopolize him yourself."

Mr. Norton smiled, and begged his fair hostess's pardon for his remissness, and at once began to make the round, introducing Mr. Somers to each and every one present.

I doubt not that some gentle reader may ask why none of them knew Somers. That question would never be asked by a person who has long lived in a large city. Why, it is no uncommon thing to live next door to a man for a year, and not know his name.

There was a flutter among the fair sex and many a coy glance cast at the manly, handsome form of the policeman; and as he was introduced by Mr. Norton, he was considered all right. By "all right" was meant that he was a suitable person for such company. The gentlemen acknowledged the acquaintance with less formality, but, if the truth must be told with greater indifference.

In vain may Charles Reade sneer at the petty spite existing between persons of the feminine gender; the indifference of one male to the existence of a rival is equally pitiable.

They swung the circle at last, and if our hero had been hung and quartered for it the next moment, he could not have remembered the names of three ladies in the company.

As Miss Morton was the last lady introduced, he sat down beside her and opened a conversation.

Miss Morton was a tall lady—a very tall lady, who had sprung up like Jonah's gourd, but as no lover had come she had begun to wilt a little. She was on the centennial side of thirty and was voted horrid by the sprigs of the "set." They slyly called her Aunt Julia, but always behind her back. She had passed the day of shilly-shally talk, and began to be companionable for a man of sense. Miss Morton was flattered by being transferred from a wall-flower to the center of gravity.

George at once opened a conversation, and in a masterly way drew out Miss Morton. She was a little indifferent at first, but in less than five minutes she was attentive and then hung on his words. Miss Morton was charmed beyond measure. He had come determined to make himself agreeable to every one, and he was succeeding admirably.

After a time there was a call for music, and then what a wonderful sight of colds there were! Colds go through a company as the measles go through a neighborhood, but are impervious to sheep saffron.

These stubborn colds that afflict young ladies when called to play the piano usually yield to the night air, and the mesmeric influence of the young gentleman that sees the young lady home.

Lucy being unable to get a volunteer to go to the piano was compelled to advance on the mute music-box as a sort of forlorn hope. We have said before that she was no novice in music. But she had a surprise in waiting for the society. She meant to bring out her protege, and was saving him like a rocket to be let off on a Fourth of July. After she had played a piece or two, she quietly glided over to Miss Morton with a "please excuse me, Julia," whispered to Somers, and he walked with her to the piano. People held their breaths, for they knew not what *coup d'etat* was to come next.

Lucy gave the key-note, and whispered the name of the piece to be sung.

"Ready," whispered Lucy, and lifted her voice; but George stood mute as a post. She sung a line and stopped. "Why don't you sing?" she whispered turning very red. George stammered an excuse and said he was ready. The fact was that just as Lucy uttered the first note the fire-bell began to sound the alarm of fire, and he instinctively began to count. A matter of habit. The singing went on finely, and George's fine tenor charmed every one, and Miss Morton in particular. After the music the plate was passed, a penny collection taken up.

During this interesting performance, Miss Bundy whispered in Lucy's ear:

"Mr. Somers and Aunt Julia Morton have fallen in love at first sight. It will be a match, I'm sure."

Lucy bit her lip as if half annoyed. Her little persecutor went on.

"I heard her invite him to call, and he accepted very heartily."

Lucy excused herself.

The company broke up, and at parting, Lucy ventured to ask Mr. Somers to call again.

After they were all gone, Lucy sat down in the parlor to think. She was glad Somers had passed the trying ordeal so well; but it was a poor return, she thought, for her condescension and trouble, for him to fall in love with Julia Morton at first sight. She was a little jealous.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The house in which Mrs. Gibbons and her little family had humble quarters, as we stated in the early pages of this story, was inhabited by other families besides her own. These tenement-houses are like omnibuses, they seem to expand and grow with each new demand upon their capacity. To the eye of the greedy landlord they are never full.

There were several families in the various rooms both above and below stairs, and old Annear had thought seriously of clearing the rubbish from the little damp cellar and letting it to some poor family at a moderate price.

Among these various tenants was Mrs. Whalen, widow of John Whalen, whose death we noticed in our third chapter.

Although no great length of time had elapsed since her husband had gone hence never to return, yet, after grieving a few days, she had dried her tears, and with philopie resignation accepted the situation, not as the decree of heaven, but as a matter of fact that she neither understood nor cared to study.

Whalen had been a lifetime drunkard, and by degrees his wife had come to look upon his weakness in about the same way that we regard any harmless eccentricity that fastens itself, barnacle-like, upon the character of our associates. If Whalen had died of a fever, she would not have cherished his memory more reverently. When sober (which was seldom) he had some good traits, and these she marked to his credit in large figures, to be offset by any little peculiarities when toying with

the bachanalian cup. To have intimated that John Whalen was not the pink of husbands would have put the woman in a phrenzy. The insult would have been mortal. The burden of supporting the family had not been increased by her husband's death. It had rather been lessened, inasmuch as she had one less mouth to feed.

During his lifetime, Mr. Whalen had been a serious impediment to the social qualities of his wife. Her idea of enjoyment was to have a few intimate female friends gathered around a groaning board, and there eat and gossip. She had even attempted on several occasions to hold these little social reunions, but John had always managed to stumble in upon them roaring drunk and cast an icy mantle upon these otherwise pleasant conclaves. She was therefore reluctantly compelled to give them up. Now that this social barrier had been removed, Mrs. Whalen resolved to call her friends about her once more and fulfill the long deferred hope of being queen of the feast. She had therefore prepared a dinner with extraordinary care. Her children had been dispatched to beg among the wealthy uptown families with a view to presenting a variety that would tickle the olfactories and tempt the appetites of the invited guests. The humble petition of these little dirt begrimed faces was not without its reward, and like bees returning to the hive, each came laden with sweets of the green fields in which they labored. One child came with half a turkey, another with a portion of a goose and a plum pudding, and some pretzels, while yet another brought some cold corn beef and a head cheese. Thus by these gleanings from a number of tables, Mrs. Whalen was enabled to prepare a sumptuous repast, that while there was no surfeit of any one article yet afforded endless variety.

Mrs. Whalen's occupation of washer-woman enabled her to bedeck her own voluptuous person in the habiliments of her wealthy patrons. She selected an elegant party dress of a Mrs. Drescher, that had

been sent her to be washed and be done up. Her large beet-like hands protruded from the sleeves of the splendid muslin garment, deepening the contrast of color, as well as adding to the strangely inappropriate unfitness of combination. She had tied a finely embroidered handkerchief around her thick tawny neck. This dainty bit of linen in the delicate hands of Miss Meagher, had shot poisoned arrows to the hearts of sundry gentlemen as she gracefully waved and flirted it along the public thoroughfares. To what base use had it come in wrapping the neck of this heroine of the wash tub!

Mrs. Whalen's hose were of pure silk, borrowed like the rest for the occasion. Silk hose and calf skin brogans were scarce in keeping, but she trusted to the ample skirts of her dress to hide the inequality.

Thus arrayed Mrs. Whalen called her children about her. They were almost speechless at the changed appearance of their maternal relative. A little four-year-old, in an ecstasy of delight, made a dive at his mother; but she waved him away with all the grandeur of a stage queen dismissing an apple boy, that had dared approach too near her royal highness. She gave her children a short but impressive lesson on "manners before guests," and warned them that any infringements of these rules, would receive a well merited punishment the moment her visitors had departed.

About this time the guests began to arrive until the number had increased to the number of four. This was the exact number that were expected to partake of Mrs. Whalen's hospitality on the occasion. The dinner was on the table steaming hot, and the guests were invited to draw up and partake. The steam, as it arose from the savory viands, was snuffed by hungry nostrils that bore to their owners the indubitable evidence that the dinner was properly served.

Reader, have you ever seen a queenly woman preside at the table? Think not it is a place easily filled. How gracefully the lily hand lifts the steaming urn.

Slightly depressing the spout the amber fluid rushes out in a tiny flood and forms a miniature Niagara, as it plunges down into the china receptacle. With what nice precision must the cup be filled? If too full there is no room for cream; if too little, there is suspicion of stinginess.

These queens of the table know how to fill our cups as they do our hearts. Then this lady must have an eye for the comfort of the guests, for the great bear who sits at the other end of the table, and whom society calls husband, usually has his mouth so full of food and has so much to talk about, that he is apt to be neglectful. It therefore remains for the queen to prompt him by calling his attention to things practical as well as hospitable.

All hail to the queen of the table!

Such a queen was not Mrs. Whalen. She did the best she could, however, but the baggy sleeves of her elegant dress seriously interfered with the pouring of the tea. Then the children hung around the outskirts, like a pack of hungry wolves waiting for a camp to be deserted. These children toed an imaginary dead line, and if one ventured too near, a sharp reprimand or an impressive wink from Mrs. Whalen caused the intruder to back away.

The oldest girl held the youngest in her arms, and thus extremes met. The hostess had not only to keep an eye on the comfort of her guests, but on the brats as well, to keep them back. With the tea and edibles came gossip, for be it known that while the presence of ladies restrain excesses in men, the presence of the latter causes reticence of gossip among the former.

"I had expected one other guest present to-day, but she didn't honor us with her presence it seems," remarked the hostess.

"Who?" asked Mrs. Benedict, whose mouth happened to be empty at the moment, and therefore in the best condition for talking.

"Mrs. Gibbons."

"Bah! she's too high-toned to associate with the likes of us."

"Wonderful high-minded," put in Mrs. Hall; "and to tell you the truth, I've seen an old chap calling there a little too often of late. It don't speak well for Mrs. Gibbons."

"Goodness gracious!" from two or three in chorus.

"Yes," continued Hall, "he give her a sewing machine not long ago. I know he has a decent family up town, the old sinner. I went by his house the other night and poked a note under the door telling his wife about some of his pranks down this way. Wouldn't wonder if there's trouble amongst 'em when that was read."

"Won't you get yourself in trouble?" asked the hostess.

"No, I guess not. Don't think I'm afereed of either Sal Gibbons or Stel Gibbons, or the old sinner that comes there for no good. Who are these Gibbonses? Hasn't Stell just got out of the work'us, sent up charged with shooting a man on Plum street? Don't think they have any reason to think themselves above us, their betters. But that is not all I've done. I put notes under the doors of the houses up town where Sal Gibbons gets her work, telling 'em a few facts. Maybe they won't get so much work to do as they used to."

Hall's auditors were all ears; but her words revealed such a vindictive spirit and uncovered an action so mean and contemptible that they fell even upon the ignorant women like a clap of thunder from a clear sky.

There was silence for a minute, then the hostess ventured to say: "Well, I allus thought rather well of Mrs. Gibbons. She come in when my man was dyin' and done what she could, and I'm not one to forget a favor."

Hall saw she had ventured a little too far in emptying the vials of her wrath, and began to draw in her horns.

"Well, everybody to their notion, but while these Gibbonses may not be as bad as some people say, they are not my style of folks."

There was another short pause, and then,—

"Pass your cups, ladies," said the hostess, smiling.

The cups went up and came back brimming.

"You must be lonesome living here all alone," said Mrs. Benedict.

"Well, 'tis rather lonesome; but then I've the children, and they're a comfort," returned the hostess with a sigh.

"True enough, but then they do not supply the place of a good husband."

"That's a fact;" a deeper sigh.

"If I were in your place I would set out and catch a good man."

"Why, Mrs. Benedict?"

"There aint nothin' wrong in getting married, is there?"

"Well, no, not that I knows of."

"Then look around, and get a good man—one that's able to work and take care of the children."

"I don't know what would be best, but I 'spose if I ever get another man he'll not be equal to the last."

Thus the gossip went on, and on and on; but, dear reader, imagination has pictured out this dialogue between you and I:

Reader—"Is this silly gossip to have no end? Why do you detail it?"

Author—"Because gossip displays the real character. We have no way of judging of the contents of the brain save by the mouth and pen."

Reader—"Then turn we away from such characters and tell us more of Stella Gibbons."

Author—"That we shall do presently, since you have sounded the fog-horn, but first let us conclude this brief chapter, for it is of a likeness."

Reader—"So be it, then; but pray be brief."

The sumptuous repast was ended, so far as the guests were concerned; but no sooner had they vacated the chairs than the children, no longer able to restrain their impatience, broke ranks and rushed in like a pack of jackals. The confusion was at first terrific; but Mrs. Whalen laid about her with a will—a slap here, and a sharp reprimand there, soon restored order.

The guests staid to gossip, but there was one woman in that little assembly resolved to relate to Mrs. Gibbons what she had heard concerning the sending of notes to her customers. That woman was Mrs. Whalen.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Mrs. Gibbons found her business suddenly declining after Stella's return from the work-house. Stella had been received with coldness everywhere except at Elijah Moorhead's. She had been told that there would be no more work at more places than one, and had the door slammed in her face by one of her mother's best customers. These little indignities had been promptly reported to her mother.

Unable to understand all this, Mrs. Gibbons had gone up to Elisha Moorhead's and asked an explanation. Mrs. Moorhead laid before her what she deemed the reason for such unkind treatment.

"There is a rumor going the rounds that Stella has served a sentence in the work-house for doing wrong."

"She was imprisoned for a few days, but for no wrong of hers. No sooner was the truth known and the case explained, than she was immediately liberated. If it would not worry you, I would be glad to tell you all, and thus vindicate my child from suspicion."

"Let me hear it by all means, for I feel an interest in your daughter."

Thus encouraged Mrs. Gibbons gave a detailed account of all that had occurred. During the recital Lucy was seen to weep, and even Mrs. Moorhead's eyes were moist with tears.

"Your daughter has had a truly narrow escape, and what she has suffered shall be remembered to her credit. We shall continue to give you our work as usual."

"Thank you, Madam, and we shall strive to merit your confidence."

"Now," said Mrs. Moorhead, "since you have seen fit to make Lucy and I your confidants in this matter, I think it is but right that you should know that some one

is laboring hard to injure you. Do you suspect any one?"

"None but this Annear."

"Think. Have you any rival in business? Have you offended any one?"

"God knows I have not needlessly offended any one." She paused to think.

Mrs. Moorhead arose, went to a bureau, and took a paper from a drawer and handed it to Mrs. Gibbons.

With trembling hand and flushed cheek, she read the following scrawled upon a bit of paper:

"CINCINNATI, — 18—.

"MRS. MOORHEAD.—You must Excuse my impedense in writin, but i think it is dew you to kno who you higher to do your work.

"This woman Gibbons don't bare a good Charackter Down where She lives. Her dawter is no better and has jist got out of the work howse. Peeple is titterin about you big fokes hiren sich as they be. I only give you this news bekaws it may be for your good. Yours, JANE."

The paper fell from Mrs. Gibbons hand, and she arose like one stung by an adder. Her face was flushed, her eyes sparkled.

"Madam, if you and Lucy believe this, the sooner I leave your house the better."

"Calm yourself, my dear woman, I shall show you how much I value that scrawl," and she caught it up from the floor and fed it to the blaze in the grate. Mrs. Gibbons' tears flowed at this mark of confidence. "God be praised for raising up friends to the poor," she said between her sobs.

"Think no more of this matter so far as we are concerned," said Lucy.

"I think it very likely that similar notes have been sent to all your customers," suggested Mrs. Moorhead. "The hand that could write such a note as that would not stop at anything short of murder. Let it all pass now. You shall have our work, and I made up our minds to your innocence before we heard a word of explanation."

But for all this explanation Mrs. Gibbons' customers dropped away, and she found herself in straightened circumstances. Stella had placed the two hun-

dred dollars that Mr. Peckover had given her in a savings bank, and her mother declined to listen to any proposition to use it. "Save for a harder day," she would say, "for there is no telling but it may be the means of saving our lives yet."

Mrs. Gibbons was one day looking through her large trunk for some article to put in pledge for a small sum of money to enable her to meet her rent. She could get the money from Mr. Peckover, but her pride was too great to acknowledge their poverty.

Willie was a silent looker on as his mother laid out one article after another. There were several articles of wearing apparel that had been made for others and then refused on some frivolous pretext or other. She resolved to place some of these articles in pawn. The bottom of the trunk was reached, and Willie peering in saw some bright object shining as it lay half concealed.

"Oh, mother, what is that?" he said, pointing to it with his finger.

Mrs. Gibbons picked it up and looked at it.

It was three golden links.

The links were entwined forming a miniature chain with a pin attached.

"That, my child, once belonged to your father. He used to wear it on the bosom of his shirt."

"Then give it to me, and I will wear it."

"Wear it and welcome, my child, and may you be as proud of it as your father," and she fastened the pin on the lappel of his little coat.

Willie seemed to grow an inch as he walked back and forth admiring his golden treasure.

Mrs. Gibbons finally selected a few articles, and did them up in a neat package. Stella hesitated to go with them, but the case was urgent and she conquered her scruples. Willie wanted to go along, so she consented. They set out at once, and were soon at the door of the Jew Benjamin. Three golden balls were suspended to notify the public that articles were taken in pawn.

Benjamin met them with a smile—a sympathetic smile—such as undertakers wear when collecting bills for services rendered at funerals.

Stella's face reddened at the thought of being in a pawn-broker's shop, but Benjamin had seen faces mantled with shame, time and time again, so he paid no attention to this mark of decaying fortune.

"Vell, Miss, what can I do for you?"

Stella laid her package down on the counter.

"We wish to pledge these articles for some money, if you please."

"Vell, Miss, money is skeerce, and things don't bring mooch, but let me see vat you have."

Stella undid the package, and rolled out the contents.

"Dese weemen's goods brings so leetle that we hardly vants 'em," and Benjamin eyed them critically.

"Well, I suppose we must go elsewhere and try," returned Stella, beginning to fold them up again.

"Stop a leetle," said Benjamin, placing one paw on the goods.

"Vat you want for 'em? How mooch?"

"How much could you advance on them?"

"Yawkup," said the pawn-broker, turning to the book-keeper, "how mooch did dose dresses pring vat we sold last?"

Jacob, thus appealed to fumbled among the leaves of the ledger and after making a calculation replied, "Thirty cents apiece."

"You hears dot."

"We can get more than that for them at auction, so if you cannot loan us two dollars each on them, I will take them home."

"Two dollars! Oh, my goodness, too mooch,"

Stella began to roll up the package,

"I geeve dollar and fefty cent, and no more."

"Two dollars, or nothing," said Stella, firmly."

"Vell, I takes 'em, but if you don't re-

deem 'em I'll prake up. Yawkup, make out de teekets."

Benjamin paid over six dollars for the three dresses, but grumbling all the while, and uttering dismal forebodings as to the prospect of ever getting even again. As he handed Stella the tickets, his eye caught sight of the three links displayed on Willie's coat. He started back and asked:

"Vere you get dat pin, my son?"

"It belonged to father, but he is dead, and so mother gave it to me."

"Ah!" and Benjamin stopped to study a moment, then taking out his pocket book he took therefrom a dollar note and handed it to the child.

"Dees is for the leetle Odd Fellow," said Benjamin. Willie thanked him.

A man who was standing at the back part of the room stepped up and said.

"Miss, I am a stranger to you, but my name is Calkins, I am a detective, and my office is No.—Third street. If you should need any more money, call and I will see that you do not suffer."

Stella thanked them both, and took her departure. She noticed, however, that both men wore pins that were the counterpart of Willie's. What a wonderful influence had this little keep sake to open men's hearts! Benjamin, who was hard at a bargain, and earned his money from the necessities of the impecunious, no sooner beheld this token than his heart opened to the genial ray of sympathy.

It was not the first time that this MYSTIC JEWEL had opened the hearts of men and broken down the barriers existing between wealth and poverty.

CHAPTER XXV.

Lucy Moorhead scarcely knew her own heart. It was an enigma that she had seldom tried to solve. She was young and of a cheerful disposition. She enjoyed life, and had seldom given a thought to her own heart. But now a change was coming over her dreams—a ripple of love was agitating her placid existence.

George Somers was a visitor at the house, and he had even escorted her once to the opera. When a lady assumes the role of a protector of young gentlemen, she prejudices the case in their favor. She was beginning to feel a deep interest in George Somers. His manliness, his deeply sympathetic nature, found an earnest response in her own. To be heartily loved without returning it, is unnatural, and exists more in the imagination than in fact.

Lucy therefore felt that she was loved by an honest, worthy man, yet there were social barriers between them that could only be crossed at a great bound. While she was seriously meditating this matter, George Somers's heart was burning with a love he had never felt for any living mortal. He felt that life without Lucy Moorhead would be a desert waste. He was all light and sunshine in her presence—dull and thoughtful in her absence. Yet he pored over his law books with a devotion worthy of a philosopher. For her he stored the dry unromantic pages of Blackstone and Greenleaf. He robbed himself of the hours of needed rest that he might make his debut at the bar with honor to himself and credit to her he loved as he loved his own soul. His cheeks grew paler and his eyes began to sink back at the unnatural strain upon his physical and mental being.

His instructor, while flattering him for great proficiency and his prospect for an early admission to the bar, told him plainly that he was studying too hard. In vain he urged him to be moderate. George was driven on by a powerful incentive, one that has driven many a man to noble deeds as well as to dark and bloody crimes.

George Somers was not an indifferent spectator to the fact that Lucy Moorhead had other beaux beside himself—young men of great expectations who were skilled in the art of flattering women. Every smile that Lucy bestowed upon these rivals was a needle sent to his own heart, or, more properly, a poisoned arrow shot from Cupid's bow. The case was growing desperate, and he felt that it would be a

relief to this torturing anxiety to know the worst. He had not even the old saw that there is sometimes "luck in leisure" before his eyes.

While laboring under this sort of depression, he visited Lucy Moorhead, determined to know his fate. If she refused him, he would thrust her image out of his heart. He thought Lucy had never looked more beautiful than she did on that particular evening. His spirits seemed to flag to such an extent that Lucy asked with some solicitude whether he was ill.

"Yes, Miss Moorhead, I am ill; but not physically—it is a disease of the heart entirely. For weeks and months the disease has been growing and fastening itself in my heart until I can not shake it off."

"Is there no cure?" asked Lucy demurely.

"Yes, there is a cure, Miss Moorhead. You are the sorceress that has the power to heal. I love you as no man ever loved a woman. Without you all would be darkness, with you, all is light and joy. Lucy (permit me to call you by that name), may I ever hope to be nearer to you than a friend? Say the one word that will make me happy for life."

Lucy had averted her face during this declaration, and as he paused, seemingly for an answer, she turned her eyes to his, and replied:

"George, this can not be. You are worthy of a better wife than I. Abandon the idea of ever marrying me."

"Oh, God!" he groaned, burying his face in his hands, "this is more than I can bear." Then arising, after he had become a little calmer, he continued: "But I will not remain longer in your presence lest I become unmanned."

Lucy started as she beheld his pale, haggard countenance transformed by his terrible grief. As he moved away she half relented; but he did not even look into her sympathizing face. "I hope we shall still be friends," she said.

"Friends, Miss Moorhead, is a cold word."

"Be it so, then; but I hope we do not part as enemies."

"No, Miss Moorhead; I could not hate you if I tried. But farewell. May you find one that is more worthy of you than I. My prayers will be for your happiness. He took her hand at parting; it trembled, and he clung to it as a drowning man clings to a straw,—then he left and, with bowed head, crept up the street toward his home.

No sooner had he gone than Lucy threw herself down upon a sofa and burst into tears. She wept as though her heart would break. She reproached herself with causing misery to one whom she felt was worthy of her. She compared him with the silly gossips that had fluttered around her. He was so noble, so grand, even in his grief that her heart bled for him. But then, he proposed so suddenly, not even giving her time to think the matter over quietly and weigh the pros and cons. But, more than all this, his love was sincere. What woman does not wish to be loved ardently, devotedly? Women feed on love—men on applause.

He was gone now, she felt, never to return. She had driven him away by her cold, indifferent refusal. For more than an hour she thus lay crying, and then she went to her room, but not to sleep. In the morning she excused herself from coming to breakfast. Her red eyes and haggard face told the tale of a night of misery.

George Somers did not go home at first. He cared not whither he went. His face burned, and he felt feverish and sick at heart. He wandered on, with no ray of hope beaming upon him and bidding him not to despair. As he walked on, he passed a saloon. There were loud voices within. Should he stop and drown his sorrows in a glass of strong liquor? It was an eventful moment in his life. The tempter was tugging at him and singing her siren song in his ear. He paused and looked in. The bottles were arranged temptingly on a shelf behind a little circular counter. A bar-keeper in his shirt-sleeves stood ready to serve out the vile

stuff to all who chose to imbibe. He hesitated, but it was only momentary, and turned to go. Just at that moment two of the disputants within came to blows. At any other time he would have gone in and arrested them, but now he cared not. They could fight and beat each other to jelly if they chose to do so. Let the officers on that beat attend to their own cases. His bailiwick was Ward 5.

Thus did he wander aimlessly about until the streaks of approaching day were beginning to brighten the eastern horizon. Then he went home.

As he turned into the street two squares away, he was startled by hearing an engine in the neighborhood. He hurried on and the nearer he approached the more his heart misgave him that something had happened. What at first had been an undefined fear as he neared his home turned to reality. At last he stopped aghast. The house that had sheltered him from earliest infancy lay a smouldering mass of ruins. One engine only was playing upon the smoking, steaming debris.

"My God," he exclaimed, as he beheld the devastation. He turned to the hose-man who guided the nozzle and asked:

"Do you know how this house took fire?"

"Well, no not exactly; but I heard Bill Martin say there was an explosion."

"An explosion? Heaven forbid! But do you know what became of the lady? I mean the one that lives here."

"No, I don't; the 5's beat us here. D—n 'em, they're getting awful smart of late. Didn't used to be so."

Somers groaned.

"You seem to take it to heart, sir."

"Yes, the house was my mother's, and she was alone."

"Oh!"

"You say you don't know where she went when the fire took place?"

"No, I do not, but I suppose some of the neighbors might tell you; there was a big crowd here."

George turned away; his own trouble had sunk under this greater affliction.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Filled with apprehension for the safety of his mother, Somers began rousing the neighbors in searching for her. He was fortunate in finding her at the second house where he made inquiry. His mother was on intimate terms with the family, and they had kindly taken her in. She was not seriously injured, but was suffering from a sprained ankle contracted while hastening down stairs to leave the burning house.

She related the whole occurrence as follows: We give her own words:

"After your departure, I felt a little lonely, and thought I could find some consolation in reading. Jane, the maid of all work, had finished her ironing in the kitchen, so I told her if she was not too tired and chose to set up awhile, I would read to her out of 'Pilgrim's Progress.' You know she so loves the book. She gladly assented. I read perhaps for half an hour, when she stopped me with the remark that the gas was escaping somewhere. She lighted a bit of paper, and tried around the gas pipe that feeds the burner in my room, but found it all tight. As the gas smell seemed to increase, she lighted a small hand lamp and expressed her intention of finding the leak. I heard her walking around in the kitchen and then in the dining room and parlor. After this I heard her open the cellar door, and then came an explosion that shook the house to its very foundation. I heard Jane scream, and I ran down stairs, and in my haste slipped, spraining my ankle. The poor girl's hair and eye-brows were singed, and she stood speechless with fright at what had occurred.

"It was not long before the smoke began to curl up the cellar stairway, and in two minutes we heard the flames hissing and crackling among those shavings you put there last summer."

George groaned and muttered an imprecation at his own carelessness."

"Well, it was not long before we heard the cry of fire on the street, and with Jane's aid I succeeded in getting out just

as the flames began to dart up the stairway into the dining-room. The girl, after seeing me safe out of the house, ran back and succeeded in getting out the greater portion of our clothing. About this time I heard the alarm of fire sounded. The engines came quickly, but the delay in turning in the alarm proved fatal to the building. Ere the engines got their steam up and the pipemen their hose laid, the flames had run up both stairways, and were sending out long tongues of flame from both front and rear windows. The house was burnt to a shell before a drop of water had touched it. A great crowd had gathered, and I was almost carried off my feet by the press of the throng. The walls crumbled and fell inward. I could look no more. Mr. Jones invited me to his house, and I accepted. Under the excitement I scarce felt the pain, but no sooner was it over than it hurt me severely. A physician was sent for, who attended my wound, and now I am feeling comfortable."

"I am glad of that. But where is Jane, for I would not that harm should come to her after what she has done for us."

"She has gone home. You know she only lives a couple of squares away."

"Very true; I had forgotten."

"She will be here this morning, I'll warrant you."

After a pause, George said:

"Well, mother, the old home is gone, and although both house and furniture were insured to their full value, yet I am sorry to lose it. It had many pleasant memories associated with it. Its solid walls protected my childhood years. But thank God, you are left me yet."

Mrs. Somers's eye brightened at the words of affection.

"And I have reason to be thankful that God has given me such a son. What is the loss of a palace compared with the loss of a child? Oh, George, a hundred houses might burn over our heads, but so long as you are left me I shall be satisfied."

"Mother, I know you are wondering why I was not present at the fire last even-

ing. I will tell you in good time; so rest easy on that score—my explanation will be satisfactory. Now I know you need rest and sleep after the excitement of last night, so I will go to a hotel until I can procure another house. Rest quiet and I will return and see you in a few hours at furthest." He then kissed his mother and took his departure.

The morning papers chronicled the explosion and burning of Mrs. Somers's residence with appropriate head-lines.

As Lucy Moorhead came down stairs the morning following her rejection of Somers, she took up the Commercial, and her eye caught the startling head-lines directly. She read, and, as she read, she turned paler than she really was. In half an hour she asked the coachman to drive around to the front door, as she desired to take an airing.

John, ever ready to oblige his young mistress, soon had the bays in the carriage, and was waiting at the place designated. Lucy hastily made her toilet, and came out and sprang into the carriage. "Where shall I drive first?" inquired the obsequious John as he closed the door and turned the latch.

"I wish to see where the fire was last night."

She gave him the location. John had once before driven her to that locality. He had seen a young gentleman escorting her along the street as she returned. He began to put this and that together. These servants are paid for their services and not for their opinions; so John kept his own counsels.

Mounting to his seat, the coachman clucked to the sleek span of horses, and they sprang nimbly over the bouldered street, their iron-shod hoofs making the fire fly as they drew the precious burden.

A few minutes drive brought them to the location of the ruins. Lucy told John to draw the reins that she might look. As she sat there on the cushioned seat, wondering whither the family had gone, and if any one had been injured, she heard footsteps coming down the street.

The man passed by the carriage without looking at its occupant, paused to look at the ruins, and then went slowly on.

It was George Somers. Lucy had expected some sort of recognition; but he did not deign to notice her existence. Her pride was touched, but perhaps his affliction had caused him to forget everything else. She began making excuses for him. And then his face looked so haggard and worn, she scarcely recognized him. Had he approached her the evening before according to her own ideas, she felt that she would have yielded; but he had rushed on her so suddenly that she refused, ere she had time to consider his offer.

But, alas! he was gone now, and she more than half expected that this haggard look was not all the result of losing his home. She began to realize how desperately he had loved her. The love that could distort a face like that in a single night, was it not worth having? Aye, a love like that, she felt, would have endured to the shadow of the grave. She sighed heavily, and ordered John to drive on.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Now turn we back to the humble tenement-house with its many occupants. Mrs. Whalen, true to her promise, had gone to Mrs. Gibbons with her budget of dinner-table gossip. She had unfolded it bit by bit, until the poor woman was racked by the torture of uncertainty, until she was ready to cry out in mental agony. Mrs. Gibbons dared not reveal to her torturer that she knew of the sending of these tattling slips of paper, lest her informant should withhold the name of the writer.

At last unable to restrain her curiosity longer, she asked Mrs. Whalen who could have sent such an infamous story to her customers?

"Well, I don't know that I ought to tell," replied Mrs. Whalen, with well-feigned discretion.

"What, not tell me the author, after telling me such a hideous story?"

"Well, I suppose I must; but I don't do it for the purpose of creating hard feelings between my neighbors. It was Mrs. Hall that did the business."

"And the motive?"

"Laws! I don't know, unless it was because she thinks you hold your head a little too high."

"The miserable villifier! May she receive the sentence of a just God for the crime of Ananias! I hope, Madam, that you do not share with this pitiful slanderer her unjust suspicions?" she asked, turning abruptly to Mrs. Whalen.

"Well, I don't know, things do look a little suspicious like"—

Mrs. Gibbons seemed to grow in height as she said: "Mrs. Whalen, you leave this room at once, and never let me see you in it again. I desire you to go immediately."

Mrs. Whalen sprang up with the venom of a tiger flashing in her eyes.

"You order me out of your room! You, who are no better than you should be! It has come to a pretty pass, that people can't be told of their faults without their flying in your face."

"Will you go, or shall I call the police to arrest you?"

"Yes, I'll go," and she sailed away. "But I'll call the landlord's attention to the carrying on in this house. It's a pretty out, that decent people have to be insulted by those as isn't." This last sentence was uttered as she raged along the hall in the direction of her own dingy room.

Mrs. Gibbons closed the door and paced the floor. Her blood was at fever heat. Was it possible for poor people to escape suspicion? Luckily she was alone, as she would not have her children witness the scene that had just been enacted. Gradually her wrath went down until she was herself again. Then, like most people who lose their temper, she felt sad and dejected.

The reaction that follows great anger is never pleasant. The brain is over stimulated, and nature, the tyrant, demands the forfeit of the offended law. She reproached herself with being too hasty in allowing

her temper to become the master. She had perhaps driven away a neighbor, when a few words might have explained it all.

Mr. Peckover, the lodge trustee; continued his visits to the family, but Mrs. Gibbons began to receive him more coolly than on former occasions. She was smarting under the taunts of her neighbors, and well did she know that their lynx eyes were watching her every motion. They mentally noted each incoming and outgoing of the venerable trustee. A few words would have explained it all, but she deigned not to satisfy their curiosity.

Mr. Peckover had some hint from his wife that Mrs. Gibbons was losing all her customers, and urged the more to send her all the work he could. He became more pressing in his offers of money; but after all that had been said, the poor woman declined to take the money. However, loads of coal were dumped in to the cellar, and the bills came to her receipted, and she inwardly thanked the Order for their noble devotion to her in this hour of need.

Stella's experience at the pawn-broker's had made a deep impression on the mother, as it had upon the daughter. It had shown her that there was a mysterious and deeply sympathetic bond uniting this mysterious brotherhood—a sympathy that survived the grave.

Spring was yielding to summer, and Mrs. Gibbons accompanied by her daughter and son, paid a visit to Spring Grove Cemetery, that magnificent city of the dead.

They went to visit the grave of the dear father and husband that quietly slumbered there. Although too young to remember his father, yet Willie always enjoyed these visits to this magnificent place. The beautiful green grass, the trees, the tall shafts rising from the green sward, and the graceful swans floating on the lake, were all sources of delight. To Mrs. Gibbons and Stella the place seemed another Eden. As they drew near, with bowed heads and reverent mien, to the sacred spot where

the dear father slept, Stella caught her mother's arm with a convulsive grasp as she pointed to the grave.

Mrs. Gibbons lifted her eyes, and beheld a neat tombstone at the head of her husband's grave. They approached, and read the name graven upon the pure Italian slab.

The mother looked at the daughter with tears in her eyes. Stella could restrain her feelings no longer, but began to sob. Let us kneel down here, and ask God to bless the hands of the good people who have raised this monument to our beloved dead. They both knelt down, and Willie with them, and silently poured out their souls to him who watcheth the sparrow as it falls—the Great Ruler of the Universe and the giver of every good and true blessing. When they had done this, they arose and stood in silence, looking at the grave. No question was asked as to who it was who had been thus thoughtful of the deceased. Their hearts and instincts told them it was the same hand that had given them the sewing-machine and the fuel; the same that had stood by them when the poor girl was in prison and without friends.

This mysterious brotherhood, unasked, had gone forth and planted a mark at the grave of him who had gone before. Oh, glorious Order, that succors the living and crowns the dead with immortelle! Death may rob us of those we love most dear on earth, but it hath no power to rob us of the sweet memories of their virtues. The trio turned away at last, but cast lingering looks behind.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The love that is earnest is faithful. It may meet rebuffs at every turn, but it does not wholly die. It is this unquenchable love that lifts a man up from his fallen condition and brings him a little nearer the angels that plume their wings in the golden realms of Paradise. The love that a noble man feels for a pure woman is a counterpart of that which we should feel for the God that made us. It is this love that makes nobler men and women.

George Somers took his refusal sadly. Some would have cursed the race of womankind. Not so with our hero. Every impulse was that of a gentleman in the full control of his senses. He moped a little, however; he bowed to the stroke as the tall tree bows, but does not break.

Lucy was the chief of all womankind in his estimation. He compared others by her standard, but they were found wanting.

Yet for all this partiality of George Somers, there are hundreds and thousands of young ladies in the world (some of them reading this story now) that are just as handsome and just as good as Lucy Moorhead.

He did not say to himself I will never marry, but felt as though he could never love another with the same ardor that he had Lucy.

He performed his duties as a policeman with the usual alacrity; for, thought he, "I am working for the city, and they have no interest in my private affairs. They pay me to do my duty, and I must."

Mrs. Somers had recovered from the sprained ankle she had suffered on the night of the fire, and they had rented a house as a temporary residence until they could procure or build one suited to their ideas.

Mrs. Somers, with a mother's eye, had noted the change in George's manner—not that he was less kind or less attentive to her wants, but there was a languor about his movements, a sadness shadowed on his countenance that was not used to rest there. Then he was thoughtful in her presence—unusually so, she believed. He would read awhile, then his book would go down, until it rested on his knees. His eyes would stare into vacancy for a long time. Then his mind would come back from its wanderings, and with a sigh he would again pick it up and pore over its pages. His mother was led to suspect the real cause in this wise: A few weeks ago he was full of Lucy Moorhead. She did this or she said that; but now he never so much as mentions her name. The subject

was a delicate one, but Mrs. Somers thought she might venture upon it, and if he manifested symptoms of repugnance she would drop it forever.

One evening they were sitting in the parlor—George studying and thinking and sighing by turns.

"My son," began Mrs. Somers, "you are in trouble. Why not take me into your confidence? Perhaps I might help you out; who knows?"

"It would be a pity to bother you, mother, with an insignificant affair."

"It can not be such a small trouble, George; for you are not apt to be annoyed by trifles."

"You are right, mother, but what might seem of great importance to me, viewed in another light would appear a trivial matter."

"That is yet to be tried as between you and I; but I feel that this trouble relates to Lucy Moorhead. Would it not be right and proper to tell me? I am a woman, and know woman's ways better than you."

This was hitting the mark in the center, and George turned and looked at his mother with wonder written over all his face.

"You guess well, dear mother, and I am compelled to acknowledge that you are right."

"I knew it. Now come, make a clean breast of it; for if I am to help you out of this slough of despond I must know all of the facts."

"I am beginning to think you would make a good lawyer, mother. But to the subject. I will briefly state the case:"

"When I visited Mr. Moorhead's, at his own request, I fell in love—yes, to use a mild term—desperately in love with Miss Lucy. It was a great piece of assurance on my part; but I could not help it. She did not repulse me at first, as I had reason to expect; but, as I imagined, rather encouraged; and so, like a silly goose, I went on to my fate.

"Well, to make a long story short, I paid my respects to her, and became so in-

fatuated that, in a thoughtless moment, I proposed and was rejected."

"As you richly deserved to be."

"Mother."

"My son."

"Why do you say that I deserved to be rejected?"

"If for no other reason—to use your own words—because you were so foolish as to fall in love with her. But, to be candid, do you think you would court and marry a girl of Lucy Moorhead's sense in three months from first acquaintance?"

"I don't know," rather doggedly.

"Yet you do know. Your father and I were engaged a year before we were married. If he had come at me with a proposal three months after I first saw him, your name would probably have been George Smith or something else."

Somers laughed at the idea.

"I suppose you went at her just as you would at a culprit that had violated the law, or mayhap you told her an awful snake story by way of prelude, and then when you had her scared half to death, you jumped at her crying boo, boo, won't you marry me?"

"Oh, mother, this is all nonsense."

"No such thing. You great men who have the strength to fell an ox are afraid of a little piece of flesh and blood in dimity. Now tell me, were you not greatly excited and scarcely knew what you were saying?"

"There is more truth than poetry in your words."

"I thought so; perspired freely, one handkerchief scarcely enough to mop your burning forehead?"

"Mother you are making light of a serious subject."

"I had no intention of doing so. Now, just put yourself in Miss Moorhead's place, and behold a young man come to lay siege to your heart. You admire him, but while you are trying to make up your mind whether you love him or not, he suddenly gets jealous, lest some other chap will come in and snap you up, and

rushes at you with a proposal. Would you not do as she has done?"

"I don't know."

"Yes, you do know. Now answer me like a man."

"Well, I think I would."

"There, I have cleared Miss Moorhead of any blame; now I will take up your case. I once saw Miss Moorhead here, and I noticed that she regarded you with friendship at least, and that is the first stepping-stone to her affections. She was willing for you to call on her at home, and even to escort her to parties; and that was the second. She called here ostensibly to inquire the way to Mrs. Gibbons's, but more likely to ascertain what were your connections."

"Mother, I shall hate Lucy Moorhead presently."

"No danger of that. Well, you were on your way to her affections, climbing up, as it were to the level on which she stood. You were getting on well enough, but you were not content to let well enough alone, but must clear the intervening steps at a single bound, and so lost all, or at least put yourself back just where you started from.

Never to return."

"Nonsense. Go to work now like a man, and be guided by the experience of the past. Build slowly but surely—don't run before you can walk. Learn that a woman likes to be courted. Marriage is the great event of a woman's life. If she marries well, her happiness is secured; if badly, her misery is likewise assured."

"You talk like a philosopher."

"I hope not, for philosophy is often a mere theory that is impracticable; but I do hope that I talk common sense."

"Yes, but having refused me, why, as a matter of course, that ends it."

"Suppose you were commanding a ship, and an enemy should send one shot clean through the vessel, making the splinters fly, but doing no serious damage; would you strike your flag and surrender like a coward?"

"Of course not."

"Now, because you get a little slap in the face by a pretty hand for being a little too hasty, you propose to give up the race. You are easily discouraged. Oh! if I were a man, with my knowledge of woman's ways, I think I could woo a queen successfully."

"Now, good mother, since you have given a diagnosis of the disease, please offer a prescription."

"Nature and common sense ought to suggest a remedy. In the meantime keep quiet, and if you meet Miss Moorhead on the street or elsewhere, treat her as pleasantly as if nothing had happened. Whatever you do, manifest no symptoms of annoyance at your rejection. Go into society—yes, into the very society into which she has introduced you. In a word, be a gentleman, and bide your time and opportunity. But, bless me, here comes Stella Gibbons, all smiles. It is really a pleasure to see her sweet face. What a good wife she would make a man!"

Stella came in, and was greeted warmly by both mother and son. After chatting pleasantly for a little time, George excused himself and went down town. He wanted to be alone and think over what his mother had said. Her last remark lingered in his ears. "What a good wife she would make a man!" He had always admired her, but could he love her while Lucy Moorhead stood in the way? That was the question.

After George had gone, Mrs. Somers asked Stella whether she visited Lucy Moorhead now.

"I only go there when called upon to do so. Lucy seems so down-hearted of late."

"Indeed! how long has she been in that condition?"

"Oh, only a few weeks. I thought she was ill, and ventured to put the question to her one day. She said, 'not ill,' but I saw the tears in her eyes. Then I knew she must be in trouble. How I wished to know what it was all about. I was sure I could sympathize with her, but I dared not ask. One day she told me all, and then cried as if her heart would break; and poor me,

I cried too. If there is an angel on earth, Lucy is one."

"But the trouble."

"I promised Miss Lucy never to tell a living mortal."

"Then, my child, be as good as your promise."

"That I will, for I would rather die than betray such a sacred trust."

Mrs. Somers admired Stella more than ever, yet she had her own opinion of Lucy's trouble. She surmised that Stella had heard one side and she the other of the same story.

CHAPTER XXIX.

One evening not long after the conversation reported in the last chapter, George Somers went to Hammond street to report for duty. As he neared the station he consulted his watch and found that it wanted an hour of roll-call; so, to occupy the time, he strolled up town. On the corner of Eighth and Sycamore he met Jeff Wilson coming down. They stopped to exchange a few words, as partners on the same beat are almost sure to do when they are off duty.

They had talked perhaps five minutes, when they heard a great racket up the street. They both turned and looked, and saw a span of horses coming down at a furious pace, with a carriage at their heels. Their iron-shod hoofs made the fire fly from the boulders as they clattered on.

The driver sat pale as a ghost. He had tugged at the lines; but as well might he have tried to curb the hurricane. He had lost all control over the frightened animals. The policemen took all this in much quicker than it can be written.

Wilson feared for the occupants, and wished he had the power to save them from destruction. With George Somers to think was to act, and no sooner did he see the carriage approach than he ran out near the middle of the street. When they came within twenty-five yards, he started and ran his best in the same direction. Of course they gained rapidly upon him,

and as they passed he seized the near horse by the bit. Running as he was, the shock was not so violent as would have been had he stood still and attempted to seize the flying team. But the shock was sufficiently violent to carry him off his feet, and swing him round against the horse's side. He felt a sharp pain in one of his legs near the foot, but he held on with the tenacity of a bull dog. His weight on the bit had but little effect at first upon the hard-mouthed animal. But after the distance of a square had been passed, it began to tell. The driver plucked up courage, and seeing the leader so effectually muzzled he put his whole weight on the other line. Finally the speed of the team began to lessen, and from a furious gallop they broke down to a trot. A drayman caught the off horse, and the team was brought to a stand-still, though trembling with fear and excitement. Somers, seeing the danger over, released his hold on the bit and endeavored to step aside, but fell fainting to the ground. An immense crowd had gathered, and with the senselessness of such a throng drawn from curiosity alone, were pressing around the carriage until they threatened to trample the wounded hero. Just at this moment Jeff Wilson came up puffing and blowing from exercise, for he had run hard in his effort to keep the vehicle in sight. He elbowed the crowd right and left, until he reached his mate.

"Stand back gentlemen," he cried "do you want to trample a wounded man to death?" The crowd gave back a little. Three or four other policemen coming up on the instant, they pushed the crowd back and made a circle around the carriage. A young lady had alighted, and stood a trembling, frightened spectator of the scene. Two or three present recognized her as Lucy Moorhead, and went to her assistance.

"Let us take him to the hospital," suggested some one referring to Somers.

"Bring him to our house, it is near by," said Lucy.

"Better take him home," said Wilson.

"Gentlemen, be kind enough to oblige me by bringing him with me. He has saved my life, and if he is not already dead I will answer for his care."

She blushed to make such a speech before so large an audience, but the case seemed urgent.

This settled the question, and the policemen gathered up the unconscious man and bore him along, followed by the throng.

Lucy turned to one of the gentlemen and asked him for his arm. The procession moved, and at last reached the residence of Elijah Moorhead. Lucy hastened in, and the others moved more slowly. Her father came to the door, and in a few words she told him what had happened. Then Elijah headed the procession, and led them to a bed-room, where the policemen put down their burden. The crowd was filing into the yard, when one of the policemen went out and drove them away. Only a few newsboys hung on the iron fence, hoping to have their curiosity further gratified.

A surgeon was sent for post-haste, and he came and began an examination. He looked Somers over as a good housewife would examine a garment she desires to mend. After he had gone through with his professional examination he said: "Leg broken near ankle joint; badly bruised in back; wrist considerably wrenched; unconscious from exhaustion."

The surgeon set diligently to work to set the bone first. Then he applied himself to the task of bringing the patient back to consciousness.

The policemen now departed, as it was time for them to go on duty. Lucy was present, and did many little things for the patient's comfort, such as smoothing the pillows and holding the basin while the surgeon sponged his face. While they still worked the door-bell rang, and, half annoyed, Lucy went to answer it. Two gentlemen stood on the stoop. They were ^{both} strangers.

"We called to inquire after Mr. Somers," said one of them.

"You are friends of his?" asked Lucy.

"Certainly, we belong to the same lodge. We come in fulfillment of a duty to watch by the sick-bed of our brethren."

"But suppose I should say that I had taken that contract."

Jim Armacost, the speaker, smiled as he replied: "If Somers is much hurt it would be a large contract for a lady."

Lucy felt half angry at this outside interference; but she invited the men into the reception-room to consult with her father and the surgeon.

The man of saws and lancets replied to her inquiry:

"Yes, you would kill him with kindness. No, let the men care for him at night, and you can sit and watch him in daytime, if you like."

Lucy consented to this arrangement, and the watchers were invited in. The doctor gave his directions, concluding as follows: "I know that you are anxious to know whether he will recover or not, and I will not deny that his case is critical."

The tears started in Lucy's eyes.

"But if there are no internal injuries and we can bring him back to consciousness by noon to-morrow, he has a chance of recovery. Good nursing is what he needs; for I doubt not that his nervous system has suffered a shock equal to that of his body."

Just at this point Mrs. Somers arrived, and in great agony was proceeding to throw herself upon her son, supposing him to be dead. She had been told so by the bearer of the news. The doctor gently restrained her. "Be quiet madam, if you value your son's life." The good woman sank into a chair, and inwardly thanked God that he was not dead. The man of medicine took his leave. At nine o'clock the family retired, leaving the watchers alone with the patient. Mrs. Somers would fain have remained by her son's bedside, but she was persuaded against her will to retire.

It is a severe task to men who work hard

all day to watch all night, but bound together by the indissoluble links of friendship, love and truth, they cheerfully perform this sacred duty. Men are not gossips generally, but on occasions like the one named above they must talk to keep awake.

They discussed the matter of the runaway in all its bearings, and praised the courage of Somers in trying to stop the team and save human life. A hundred men would have thrown up their arms and tried to frighten the horses into stopping of their own accord, and then, when that did no good, stand aside and let them go. Our hero had adopted a bolder course, and succeeded, though with great injury to himself. The watchers having each given his own observations in catching runaway horses, the subject changed.

Jim Armacost, one of the watchers, is a character so well known in Cincinnati that he scarce needs a word of either praise or description from pen of mine. Generous to a fault, quick to get angry when his corns are pinched, and equally quick to forgive. He would get up in the middle of the night and go and watch with a sick friend. He was so liberal that it used to be said of him "that he would loan his friends all the bed-clothes out of his house if they wanted to borrow."

Whatever he owned of personal property belonged equally to his friends. Obliging always, he was a model husband, and his wife loved him with a true woman's devotion.

They had several sons now progressing to manhood. No sooner had Armacost heard of the accident than he sent one of his sons home to tell his wife that he would probably be away watching with a sick man. He then put on his coat, shut up his shop and started for Elijah Moorhead's. On the way there he had fallen in with Shaffner and literally brought him along *sans ceremonie*.

"Did you hear of my good luck?" asked Armacost, turning to Shaffner.

"No, what is that?"

CHAPTER XXX.

"Why, about the new baby at our house."

"Not another boy?"

"Yes, another boy. I'll tell you all about it. One night last summer my wife waked me up in the night, and said there was a noise at the door like a child crying. So I got up and opened the door softly, and there lay a little black bundle on the step. I didn't know what to make of it at first, and was about to draw back and shut the door. My wife in her anxiety had got up and followed me out.

"What is it, Jimmie?" she asked, gently putting me aside. She reached down, caught up the bundle, and brought it inside. I closed the door and lighted the gas, while Mary undid the package, and out came a fat boy baby.

"I looked at Mary and she at me.

"Not mine," said I resolutely.

"Who said it was, you goose?"

"Oh, nobody, only you looked at me so oddly."

"That was not it. I only wanted to know what to do with the poor little thing."

"What do you say, Mary?"

"Keep it."

"So say I," and we did keep it. When the children arose the next morning and found a new baby in the house, there was loud crowing. It wasn't long until the story was all over the neighborhood, and then that baby was carried from house to house until, when night came, we could scarcely find him. He has grown now, and Mary says she thinks just as much of the little waif as she does of her own children, and I am sure I do."

Thus did these men beguile the weary watches of the night. At two o'clock in the morning the doctor came in and examined his patient. His face wore a serious air.

"What now, doctor?" asked Armacost.

"Symptoms very unfavorable. Watch him closely, and if you note any change, such as difficult breathing, send for me at once," and with this he glided out as noiselessly as he came.

Affairs were moving along smoothly down in Ward 5. Mrs. Gibbons and her daughter were finding a good deal of work through the efforts of Mr. Peckover and his wife, who had interested themselves in behalf of this worthy family. Being thus employed, mother and daughter were earning a tolerable living for themselves and Willie. With employment and improved prospects for the future came better spirits to all. The clouds of adversity seemed to be drifting away from the meridian of their sky. The joy of a sailor after a storm safely passed filled their hearts and lent a radiance to their daily lives. They were full of hope. Willie attended school regularly. On Sunday Stella would take her little brother and go to the Bethel to Sunday school. They both loved to go there. Stella had grown into such favor with Mr. Lee, the superintendent, that she had been assigned a class of little girls. From teaching others she soon learned to teach herself. She became a Christian. Her mother had long professed christianity, and often visited a mission church in the vicinity of their home.

Stella would read the Bible to her mother and Willie for hours when her time would permit. The evening readings were not always confined to the Bible, but other works were searched and their contents stored in Stella's retentive memory.

One day Stella came in pale and excited.

"Oh, mother," she began, "I have just heard that George Somers was nearly killed last night."

"How, my child," asked Mrs. Gibbons with anxiety.

"A pair of horses were running away with a carriage, and in trying to check them he got hurt. Poor George!"

"Who was in the carriage?"

"Miss Lucy Moorhead."

"I hope she escaped harm," said Mrs. Gibbons with much feeling.

"She was not harmed at all, but poor George, they say, is lying insensible at

Mr. Moorhead's. His life is almost despaired of. I am sorry for him."

Mrs. Gibbons cast a glance at her daughter, and asked:

"Why are you so sorry for Mr. Somers?"

"Well—well, I'd be sorry for any one who was hurt in trying to save others from harm."

"Would you be as sorry for Mr. Wilson?"

"Perhaps not, at least, I scarcely think I should."

"Because you don't love him as you do George Somers."

Stella's face was scarlet, and to hide her blushes from her mother's eye she turned and looked out at the little window.

"I do not blame, but pity you. He does not love you in return."

Stella sighed heavily.

"I saw when he visited us in company with Miss Moorhead that he was in love with her. She is too powerful a rival for you."

"But she told me," said Stella, catching at a straw, that he did not visit them now."

"A lover's quarrel has doubtless separated them temporarily; but now that he has risked his life and saved hers, it will all be made up again."

Stella buried her face in her hands as if hoping to shut out the sight.

"My child, give over grieving for George Somers, and try to think of some one else. Girls must wait to be courted. This is the misfortune of our sex. We dare not step beyond the prescribed limit. We must all take our chances. If a suitable person offers himself, we have but to accept. I am persuaded that many of the unfortunate marriages are brought about by this very condition of affairs. Girls have a horror of becoming old maids. They accept offers against the promptings of their better judgment lest another should not come, and, as a consequence, are unhappily mated. You perhaps do not see this matter in the same light with me. You are younger, but when you have attained my years, you will doubtless agree with me."

"I have no doubt, mother, that you speak the truth, and I will try and forget George. He has been so good and kind to us, but it would be unwomanly in me to go on loving him and not be loved in return."

"Spoken like a lady. We can't always get whom we like best, but whenever you find an honest and self-respecting young man whom you can love well enough to marry, come to me and I shall not object."

"I don't feel as though I should ever want to leave you, mother; you have been so kind to me. I really don't now wish to marry any one."

"You may feel so now, but sooner or later you will change your mind. Marriage is the goal of woman's existence. She is a dependent creature, and clings to the stronger sex as the vine fastens its tendrils to the oak."

After a short pause, Mrs. Gibbons continued in a subdued tone:

"My child, I have had strange forebodings for the past week or two. I can not tell how or when they first came, but I feel as though my days were almost numbered."

"Why, mother, what makes you talk so?" asked Stella, starting to her feet.

"Be quiet, my child, none of us will die until God wills it, and when he does, we must submit. I have had strange feelings of late—a sort of presentment that some great event in my life is about to occur. I can not describe these feelings to you, because they are undefined. Three nights ago I had a dream. Willie and I were traveling, hand in hand, in a desert waste. The sky was cloudless over our heads, and there was nothing but sand under our feet. There was not a hill or tree in sight. The walking was slavish by reason of our sinking almost to our shoe-tops in the yielding sand. As we struggled on, the sun sent down his scorching rays, almost blistering our faces and hands. We were weary and thirsty, and would have given all the world for one drink of cool water. We thought we saw a lake but a little way in advance; but as we approached, it seemed to recede

and then I remembered to have heard you read how travelers journeying through the great desert of Africa were often deceived by the mirage. At last we could go no longer, and sank down from exhaustion. While we thus lay panting on the sand, an angel came and asked whither we journeyed."

"Had it wings?" asked Stella.

"Yes; and carried a shepherd's crook. Well, I replied that my child and I were journeying in search of water with which to quench our thirst."

"Then your wish shall be gratified," it said. The angel raised its crook and waved it over its head three times. Look! it said, pointing across the desert waste."

We did look, and my eyes never beheld such a scene. The desert rolled up like a piece of parchment and we stood on the bank of a river of pure water.

"Now slake thy thirst, said the angel, taking from its girdle a golden goblet and handing it to me. Willie and I ran down to the margin of the stream, and dipped up the water and put it to our lips; but it was bitter, and we turned back disgusted; but our thirst was gone. We climbed the bank of the river, and sat down beside the angel. We saw across the river a beautiful grove, and a little beyond a great city. From the grove came the sound of the sweetest music the ear of mortal ever heard. We could see other angels flitting among the trees with harps in their hands.

"What river is this?" I asked.

"The River of Death," replied the good being at our side.

"And the city beyond?"

"That is the Promised Land; the land where the sun never sets; the clime where sickness and pain and death never come."

"Who are those who dwell there?"

"Those who love and obey the great Ruler of the Universe; a final abiding place for the saints who have remained faithful to the end of life."

"Do none ever come back to earth?"

"None ever wish to return, having once gained that delightful abode, and been greeted with the welcome that awaits all good pilgrims."

"Can we not go over?" I asked.

"Not until you are called. None ever pass this stream until they are beckoned from beyond." The angel mused a moment and then continued:

"No, good sister; go back to your friends, and in a little while you and this darling boy will meet me at this spot, and I will give you safe guidance to that better land."

"The angel waved its wand, and I awoke."

Stella listened with breathless interest to the story of her mother's dream. She was half frightened at it.

"I am no believer in dreams, continued Mrs. Gibbons, but there was something so real in it all that it startled me when I awoke. I reflected a moment, and then arose, and crept softly to your bed, and Willie's to see if you were there."

"Oh, mother, you frighten me. The very thought of you and Willie being taken away. But I should not be long behind you."

"God forbid that I should frighten you my daughter; but it may all prove to be an idle dream at last. I have no wish to die now. I would live for my children's sake, if for nothing else."

Mrs. Gibbons then drew her daughter's mind away to a more pleasant theme.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The two watchers, thus admonished by the doctor, watched closely at the bedside of the patient. About four o'clock in the morning Somers became more restless and talked freely at times. He talked disconnectedly upon all subjects. Sometimes it was his mother and again it was Lucy Moorhead. When the power of the brain called reason has flown, the mind wanders on uncontrolled. The balance-wheel is wanting, and the machinery goes aimlessly on. Yet in these vague wanderings of a mind that is temporarily unbalanced, there are certain things that come out into characteristic prominence. Thoughts that would probably not find ut-

terance coming out of a sound mind often creep out of a diseased one. George Somers would try to raise himself in bed, and ask why Miss Moorhead had deserted him. Then one of the watchers would speak kindly to him, and gently press him back on the pillow.

The symptoms were such that Armacost dispatched Shaffner for the physician. While he was absent Somers became more violent and attempted to arise from the bed, becoming very loud in his talk. It was only by the most violent exertions that Armacost could keep him down; indeed the exertion caused the perspiration to start from every pore the of watcher's face. While trying to soothe the sufferer, a light female figure glided into the room. It was Lucy Moorhead.

She came up to the other side of the bed and spoke soothingly to Somers, and begged him to be quiet. There is a magnetism about a woman's voice that has its effect upon even a half-crazed mind. No sooner had she spoken than Somers spoke back and said: "If Miss Moorhead was here she would allow me to get up and walk."

Lucy said nothing, but arranged his pillow so that his head would rest easier.

"You are robbing yourself of needed rest, I fear, Miss," said Armacost kindly.

"Oh, no, sir; I have not been asleep a minute, the whole night. Why did they drive me away when it is I that should have been watching here instead of you?"

"I think," said Armacost, "that if you had been watching him alone, he would have been in Ward 5 by this time."

Lucy saw the force of his remark and asked:

"Had you not an assistant in the evening?"

"Yes, he has gone for the physician."

"Then you think him worse than in the evening?" asked Lucy, trying to read Armacost's fears in his face.

He never moved a muscle under the scrutiny.

"Well, no, Miss, not much worse, but any change of symptoms ought to be re-

ported to the doctor. He is the best judge as to whether they are for the better or worse."

"Very true, sir, and I thank you for your kindness to Mr. Somers."

"Oh, we don't work for thanks, or we would all be overpaid. Yet it is a satisfaction to help those who can not help themselves."

"I believe you are a friend of Mr. Somers."

"Well, yes; a brother in the lodge."

"Oh, I see, you belong to the same society. I remember to have heard him say that he was an Odd Fellow."

"That's it."

"You always take care of your sick, I believe?"

"Always. That is one of the commands of our Order."

"I begin to like the Odd Fellows. It is the true friend that stands by us in the hour of sickness. What a noble sentiment to prompt men to assist each other in adversity!"

"It is indeed, Miss," said honest Armacost, his face glowing with the zeal of his soul. "I have been an Odd Fellow this many a year, and I tried to live up to its teachings, not only in the lodge room, but in the world at large. It is a sore trial sometimes, but I have always felt better afterwards for the effort."

Odd Fellowship was Armacost's hobby, and there is no telling how long he might have continued to eulogize the Order but for the arrival of Shaffner with the physician.

The doctor looked a little surprised at finding Lucy in the room and at the bedside of his patient.

Lucy caught the look of wonder on the face of the medicine man, and blushed lightly.

The doctor turned to his patient and regarded him attentively. He was still restless. So a small quantity of morphia was administered. After this he quieted down and slept soundly.

"Gentlemen," said the doctor, addressing the nurses, "you have been up all

night, and it is now coming day. I will relieve you, as I shall not go home until breakfast time."

The two nurses bid Lucy good morning and quietly withdrew. After they had gone the doctor said: "Miss Moorhead, I fear you have robbed yourself of needed rest after the excitement of yesterday."

"Oh, no, sir, I could not sleep at all, so I thought I might as well contribute my poor mite, especially as this all comes of trying to save me from harm."

"It seems to me that you rate the service too high. Mr. Somers was a policeman; and it was his duty to do all he can for any one who needs his services."

"Yes; but he was not on duty at the time."

"That may be; and yet a policeman is never off duty as far as defending the helpless is concerned."

"But how many of them, pray, are willing to risk their lives, whether on duty or off duty, in trying to stop a pair of vicious horses, that have taken the bits in their teeth and are flying along at break-neck speed, threatening to dash the carriage to pieces every moment?"

"I am willing to admit this is an exceptional case."

"If Mr. Somers had been killed, I should have mourned his fate all my life."

Lucy said this so earnestly that the Doctor looked at her with a little surprise. A slight pause ensued. Then Lucy asked:

"Are you an Odd Fellow, Doctor?"

"You mean, am I married?"

"No, sir, I mean do you belong to a society called Odd Fellows?"

"No, I do not."

"You ought to join them."

"Why so?"

"Because it seems as if almost all the gentlemen belong."

Esculapius looked a little puzzled. He scarcely knew what construction to put on the word gentlemen, in the connection in which it was used.

"Well, I don't know," he said "I am acquainted with many good people that are Odd Fellows; and many bad ones too, for that matter."

"We ought not to judge an institution harshly, because they get in some unworthy people. Churches do, you know?"

"Yes, Miss Moorhead, but churches are not secret societies. We know what people go to church for, because we can go ourselves if we choose; but we do not know what is done in these secret conclaves, I am sure."

"Nothing wrong, I hope."

"We do not know what they are up to."

"If they were hatching mischief, I scarcely think they would go about helping poor people and watching by sick-beds."

"They may have a purpose in all that; but I am free to say they behave themselves very well generally. But you know, much we do from interested motives. For instance, if I go and sit by the sick-bed of another, when he needs care, is it not reasonable that he will return the favor when I need attention?"

"Most assuredly, but what harm is there in that?" Does not the Bible teach us that we are to help each other. 'Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you.'

"Oh, I have no fault to find; but I was only arguing that the motive was not wholly disinterested."

"Of course not. How many things are done in this world from disinterested motives? Would you have spent the best years of your life in studying medicine from disinterested motives? Would the inventor immerse himself in a garret, planning, and studying, and drafting, from disinterested motives?"

The doctor was not a Hercules in argument, so he yielded the point, for he scarcely knew where he would be cornered next.

"Well, I see where you are driving, Miss Moorhead, so I yield the palm of victory to you."

Lucy blushed at finding herself so earnestly defending an Order of which she knew so little. Yet for all this, George Somers was an Odd Fellow, and he had done a gallant action, and as he was now *hors de combat*, and she his next friend, it would not be right to have an institution

of which he was a member slandered, and more especially by one who acknowledged that he knew nothing more of it than he could see with a curb-stone-ticket. The wily doctor knew more than he chose to acknowledge. He had once been a member—that was a long time ago. He was a young man then, and trying to build up a practice. He had joined in the hope of enlarging the sphere of his acquaintance and thereby acquiring a more extensive practice. When he got in, he found several more doctors ahead of him. Then he “soured on the Order,” as the saying goes, and finally allowed himself to be dropped for non-payment of dues.

The family began to be astir, and Mrs. Somers came to the bedside of her son, and relieved both Lucy and the doctor. During the forenoon, Lucy was alone with the patient. He was moaning slightly. She watched him attentively for a long time, and then the tears would come unforbidden into her eyes. She turned suddenly, and looked around the room, to see if they were alone, and the next moment she bent gracefully over the sufferer and imprinted a kiss on his pale forehead. Then she blushed scarlet at her forwardness.

Somers muttered half audibly:

“Stay with me forever, sweet angel.”

Lucy flitted out of the room like a scared bird. Somers raised himself on his elbow, and looked around.

“Where am I?” he asked.

No answer.

He looked about him in bewilderment, much as a man arising from the grave. There was no object that seemed familiar. His mother came in, and a smile of intelligence crept over his face.

“Mother, where am I?”

“My dear boy, you are with friends. God be praised that you have come back to reason,” and the good woman shed tears of joy.

CHAPTER XXXII.

“Oh, dear mother,” said Somers as reason began to resume her wonted sway,

“I had such a dream as I never had in my whole life.”

“Indeed!”

“Yes, I thought I was walking along the edge of a precipice looking for some wild animal, (a deer, I think) that I had shot and which had fallen or leaped into the abyss.

While shading my eyes with my right hand trying to fathom the gloom and shadows of the place, a great black bird came up from the darkness flapping its raven wings and uttering a wild unearthly scream that made me shudder. I watched it as it rose steadily in the air, and sailed away out of sight. While trying to think if I had ever seen such a bird before, I felt the earth crumbling under my feet. I tried hard to leave the spot, but some mysterious power held me fast. My feet gradually lost their hold on the earth and I went down, down, and in an agony of despair I looked up as if expecting help from the skies. It came. The black and repulsive bird that I had seen winging its way from the abyss, was now seen darting down, cutting the air like a knife as it came. My first impression was that this vulture had scented death from afar, and was hastening to the feast. But when the bird came within a few feet of me, and I could almost feel the vibration of the air caused by the flapping of its wings, it suddenly changed into the most beautiful woman I had ever saw. She extended her hand and I grasped it as a dying man clutches a straw. Then we began to go up and up until we reached the top again, and I was laid panting on the grass. Then this sweet girl stooped down and kissed me and vanished, I know not where. Was this not a strange dream?

“It was indeed my son—very strange.”

“And now I think of it, this lady resembled Miss Lucy Moorhead. Strange I did not notice the resemblance before.”

“Yes, but Miss Moorhead would not have kissed you, George.”

“No I suppose it could not have been her; but you have not told me where I am for surely we are not at home.”

"We are at Mr. Moorhead's."

"What are we doing here?" he asked in astonishment.

"Can't you think, my dear boy, of trying to stop a runaway team and getting hurt?"

He mused a few minutes.

"Yes, it is all plain enough. Why, it was only a few minutes ago."

"Nearly a day has passed."

"Is it possible. But I feel very sore. It pains me to move."

"I doubt it not, my son; your leg is broken, and you are bruised otherwise."

"I don't mind the bruises, for they come in the line of my duty; but if I have done anything to save her precious life, then I am the happiest man that ever lived. But, pshaw, she cares nothing for me now."

"You are mistaken, my son, in that, for she spent a portion of the night in watching over you with the tenderness of a sister. She has wept and prayed for your recovery, and only left the room when she saw reason returning."

"If that be the case, I care not if every bone in my body had been broken;" and George's countenance lighted up.

"Be discreet, my son, and your path is clear. Few young men have such an opportunity given them to win the girl they love than is now offered to you."

Somers now began to convalesce; but a broken limb is a serious affair, and it takes time to knit the bones, and many a twinge of pain must come and go. The Odd Fellows were unremitting in their care, and as for Lucy Moorhead, she watched over him and waited upon him. She regarded him as under her special charge. On the other hand, Somers was never so well satisfied as when Lucy was at his bedside. To him she was an angel of light, and no pain could wring a sigh from him while she was near.

"What a blessing it is?" he thought, "to be sick, and have such a nurse."

One day the mayor called to see him, and in the course of a conversation told him that he had promoted him to a lieutenancy. At any other time Somers would

have felt elated, but now he told his Honor that "while feeling grateful for the compliment, he should not long enjoy his promotion; for," said he, "I shall soon leave the force."

The mayor was a little surprised, and asked, "what motive impelled him to retire?"

"I have been studying law for some time during my leisure hours, and I shall be compelled to leave the force to attend the law school."

His Honor wished him success in his new profession, and ventured the opinion that if he was as zealous at law as he had been as a policeman he would succeed.

Time went on, and Somers had so far recovered that he might be taken home without danger. His mother therefore suggested to him the propriety of their going home at once. This suggestion caused him a pang of regret; yet he could not think of longer remaining a guest in the house, although they had shown him the greatest kindness. It was agreed between mother and son that they should go on the following day. The good woman then hastily took her departure to make preparation for the reception of her son. The half-deserted house must be opened and aired, and every precaution taken to insure her son's comfort.

John, the coachman, who, out of gratitude to Somers for saving his own bones as well as his mistresses', had been very assiduous in his efforts to do something to please the policeman, came into the room soon after Mrs. Somers went away. "Is there henny thing I can do for you?" was John's salutation, as he tugged at his front hair and stood bowing and ahem-ming. George did not always have use for his services, but on this particular occasion he told John he would like to get up and dress.

"H'at your service, Mr. Somers. Hi pride myself on being a first-class valet. Why bless my hi's, that's my hold trade in Hingland before I took to 'ors es. Hi was valet to Lord Ramy of Northumber-

land three years; then I nursed in an 'ospital in Manchester three years, then—

"I have no doubt you understand your business, so help me out of bed, but first lock that door. We must have no intruders."

John turned the key.

"Now for it John. I've been in bed so long I believe I've forgotten how to walk."

"No doubt, sir. Now heasy, don't jump hif a twinge snaps you hup so." and John, brought Somer's feet out of bed first. "Now set so until I bring a basin of water."

"With John's assistance, the patient performed his ablutions and dressed himself. The valet understood his business so thoroughly that the broken limb was not jarred a particle. John dressed him and brushed his clothes and then arranged his cravat with the nicety of an artist. He then seated George on a sofa and placed the wounded limb on another, with a pillow under it.

"You feel a little bit dizzy, hi have no doubt, sir," said John as he stepped off a few feet to more critically view his work.

"I do indeed."

"That will wear hoff gradually; it comes hof laying hin bed so long, sir."

"Are you a doctor as well as a valet and coachman?"

"Oh, no, sir, but staying in the 'ospital so long I come to know some of the symptoms like."

"I have no doubt you would do about as well as many that are peddling pills, for I've heard it remarked by physicians that were not too bigoted to tell the truth, that good nursing was half the batle in sickness."

"That is very true, sir, as hi hobserved in the 'ospital. Hif it weren't for the nurses 'alf the patients would go to the bone-yard in no time; but 'ow do you find yourself now, sir?"

"I feel a little weak yet; but I'll gain strength, I hope, in time."

"Yes, laying hin bed don't excite circulation; you want hexercise. The surgeon has done his work, nature must do the rest."

"John, I am certainly under many obligations to you for your kindness to me while here, but I shall not trouble you after to day."

"What, not going to leave, sir?"

"Yes, going home."

"Sorry to ear it, but hi suppose hits best. I opes hi am not ungrateful to you, sir, for stopping them orses that evening. Hif I've done you any little kindness, hit's because hi'm grateful to you for what you've done for me."

"Thank you, John. You may now retire and tell Miss Lucy I would be pleased to see her."

John bowed and went on his errand.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

There was a great consternation among the people of the Queen City of the West. The hot sun of early August poured its fiery rays into the lanes and alleys, turning them into furnaces by day and scarce more endurable abiding places by night. Built almost exclusively of brick and mortar, and located in a basin that shuts out any stray zephyrs that might otherwise fan its parched and glowing streets, Cincinnati is a hot place in summer. Add to this a terrible epidemic that stalks unseen in the air and clutches its victims unawares, and the place becomes unendurable. The Asiatic cholera was that year paying one of its unfavorable visits to this continent, and did this city ever escape its fangs?

Thousands of people took the alarm when the death rate suddenly ran up to ten per day, and they fled to more favored localities with their families; but the great mass of people, either unwilling or unable to flee in the face of danger, remained at home. Yet as the death rate rose steadily from day to day, people in perfect health felt a sort of undefined fear. The fear was heightened as they saw slimly attended funerals hastening in the direction of Spring Grove. The man who went to bed vowing he would not get alarmed, turned pale in the morning when he awoke and found his next-door neighbor had been

taken sick and died in the night. The veriest quack nostrums found eager purchasers if they bore that mysterious label: "Cholera Antidote." Druggists thrived and fattened on peoples' fears.

No person felt safe or at ease, unless a bottle of cholera medicine was within easy reach. We knew one young man who provided himself with a bottle of antidote which he carried home. Then it occurred to him that he might be taken at his place of business, so he supplied a duplicate for the store. Still he was not satisfied, for, thought he, "I might be seized between the two places," so he prepared a small bottle to carry in his pocket.

Many persons who had led temperate lives heretofore began to imbibe strong liquors as an antidote—the very worst thing they could have done. Business was paralyzed, and the shops were empty because country people feared to venture into the smitten city. There was a settled gloom hanging over the city that no pen can portray or words express. Those who have witnessed these trying times will remember them to the day of their death. The doctors were powerless, and often fell victims themselves, in a noble effort to stay the hand of the destroying angel. The scourge began as usual in the poorer districts of the city, along the river front and up the valley of Deer Creek; but gaining force it broke its narrow bounds and seized the wealthier portions of the city, until there was no place that had absolute immunity from its ravages. Steamers that came and went, often had to seek a landing on some lonely shore to bury a victim. Yet amid all these terrors of mind, real and imaginary, there arose many a bright and shining example of moral heroism. Men and women, who, when the insidious monster had crept into their fold as a thief in the night, developed a courage that was worthy of the highest praise and noblest eulogy. A book of incidents connected with the visits of the cholera to our American cities, would be a readable one indeed. Many of the moral

heroes perished at the bedsides of those they loved, when flight might have spared their lives yet a little longer.

Day and night the physicians went from house to house lending their assistance, careless of their own lives in an effort to heal the smitten. Space forbids our generalizing longer.

Mrs. Gibbons had noted with fear the ravages of the cholera in the immediate vicinity of her home, yet thus far no one had been smitten in the tenement-house in which she lived.

One night, near the hour of twelve, she heard loud moaning in one of the neighboring rooms. She did not awaken her children, but after a time Stella asked who was sick.

Mrs. Gibbons replied that she thought it was Mrs. Johnson the wife of a coal-heaver that had recently moved into the house. Both lay still for a few minutes, when they heard a man in heavy boots walk along the hall and stopped at their door. He rapped on the door with his knuckles. Mrs. Gibbons asked what was wanted.

"My wife is very sick, and would you be so kind as to stay with her while I run for a doctor?"

"Certainly," replied Mrs. Gibbons, who was already out of bed and striking a match. The man hurried away, and Mrs. Gibbons hastily threw on her clothes and went into the sick room. She found the woman in the greatest agony. Her legs and arms were being drawn into strange shapes. The muscles were rigid and drawn into knots. Even the muscles of her face had not escaped, and her countenance was distorted and drawn until it was frightful to behold. The husband soon returned with Dr. Pedigoss, the ward physician, at his heels.

The doctor took but a single glance, and then went to work. He had a cholera antidote of his own, made up largely of camphor and laudanum. This he administered internally, while all three went to chafing the woman's limbs, trying to restore warmth to those blood-forsaken

members. For more than an hour they worked and rubbed, and for a time it seemed as if the patient would rally, but at last she sank rapidly and died at two a. m.

Oh, wonderful science! how beautiful in theory! how impotent in application! While science and medicine stands shivering at the door King Cholera stalks boldly in, steals his victim and is away.

Two days after the death of Mrs. Johnson, Willie Gibbons was taken with a diarrhea, which yielded at last to some medicine prescribed by Dr. Pedigoss. Then it came on again, and while nothing serious seemed to grow out of his illness for the next twenty-four hours, yet he did not get well, but gradually grew worse, and another case of cholera was rapidly developed. The child grew worse with every hour of time.

Mr. Peckover learning that there was sickness down at Mrs. Gibbons, with characteristic forethought, brought his wife and another Christian lady to spend the night in watching. Poor Mrs. Gibbons and Stella hung over the child, and worked and cried and prayed alternately as they saw him rapidly failing and drawing nearer to death's door. A little while before he died, and when the disease seemed to leave him for a few minutes, he turned his eyes to his mother as if he wished to say something to her. Mrs. Gibbons bent her ear to the little sufferer's mouth, and he whispered, for he was too weak to talk louder: "Mother put on my Sunday clothes."

"What for, my child?"

"Because I see lots of children like me, and they are motioning me to come too. They are dressed up in nice clothes, and I want to be like them."

"I hope you will stay with me, Willie," replied Mrs. Gibbons, her grief almost choking her.

"Oh, I can't stay; mother, you will come soon,"—after a pause—"Good-bye, mother. Tell sister good-bye. Now kiss me, and don't cry so."

They all gathered about the bed, for each one instinctively felt that Willie must go soon. The time came at last, and the

spirit of the child fled the clay, to find a home in that blessed land where sorrow and suffering never come.

Overcome by the great weight of their sorrow, mother and daughter sank upon their knees, one on each side of the bed. They did not thus long remain, for Mrs. Gibbons fell back upon the floor, grappled by the monster that had robbed her of her child. It was a moment when strong men would have quailed and fled, but these two good women, who had come to assist, were not dismayed. Their courage rose with the demands upon it. They picked up Mrs. Gibbons, and laid her upon a bed, and at once dispatched a messenger for Dr. Pedigoss. He came and administered the same remedies that he had prescribed for the child, but the poor woman sank rapidly. Her sufferings were terrible.

To one who has seen a case of genuine Asiatic cholera, and watched its effect from the first spasm until death ensues, we need not rehearse each phase of the disease. Their own recollection will supply the description. To one who has never seen such a case, we simply say, we pray God you never may. We have seen it somewhere stated that the real suffering of those who are stricken with cholera is not so great as appearance would seem to indicate. The cramping itself would of itself imply great bodily suffering. Yet there is a point beyond which suffering cannot go. Death stands ready to cut the gordian knot, and bid the quivering body rest.

Mrs. Gibbons sank more rapidly than either of the two cases we have described. She called Stella to her and said that her dream was about to be realized, "but," continued she, "I have but one regret, and that is, that you will be left an orphan—houseless and homeless."

"Oh! dear mother, do not leave me," sobbed Stella, her poor heart almost breaking.

Mrs. Peckover, with tears in her eyes, took Mrs. Gibbons's cold hand and said: "Stella shall have a home with me, should God be pleased to spare our lives."

"God will reward you, I am sure, for your kindness to the poor."

"He has been very merciful to us all. Oh, Mrs. Gibbons, are you prepared to meet him in this awful moment?"

"Aye, and anxious. He has spared me and been more merciful to me, than to others more deserving. I have no fear. I have implicit faith in the promises he has made to sinners. I am his body and soul."

Six hours after the first symptom appeared, Mrs. Gibbons died. Poor woman!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Every age of the world has had its heroic women. The inspired penmen of Holy Writ have not forgotten the noble deeds of a Rachel, a Ruth, and an Esther. Profane historians have been quick to note and eager to pen the noble deeds of woman in war or peace. Her nerve and ambition may sometimes fit her as a leader of armies, but her gentle heart and ready hands more often fit her as a devoted nurse at the couch of the sick or dying. It is here she rises to the sublime, and sheds a radiance that must warm every heart with a genial glow of admiration.

Mrs. Peckover and her companion, Mrs. Schon, were brave and self-possessed. At this awful moment when death stared them in the face, they arose to that sublime attitude where a woman becomes a heroine. Placed in a position where hundreds of others would have fled in dismay, they never faltered in their duty for one moment. Had another been fatally attacked, they would still have stood firm. They took the only precaution they could take—opened wide the door and window that the air might circulate freely through the room. Then they went bravely to work to wash and dress the dead for the funeral, which they knew would take place sometime during the day. They assisted Stella to undress, and put her to bed, but not to sleep; for she lay there groaning and crying the remainder of the night. They began to prepare Willie first. Mrs. Peck-

over stopped suddenly, and pointed to the child's breast.

"What is it?" whispered Mrs. Schon.

"An Odd Fellow's pin."

"Ah! then these poor people are Odd Fellows, or rather their father was."

"Yes, and deserve our sympathy for it."

"Indeed they do, for are we not the Daughters of Rebekah?"

"Very true, and I am glad we have some opportunity of showing our appreciation of the noble lesson we have learned."

Mrs. Peckover undid the pin from the child's shirt, and going to the chair where Stella's dress lay, fastened it on.

"The child needs it no longer now, and Stella may," she said, turning to the bed.

Late the following afternoon a small funeral procession went out the avenue in the direction of Spring Grove Cemetery. A hearse with its black plumes led the advance, while it might have been noticed that the first hack coming next, contained only a small coffin, then came the mourners in half a dozen carriages.

As the procession moved through the wide gate-way and over the gravelled road, the sexton tolled the bell. Indeed, in these terrible days the sexton did little else than toll the bell, for there were now forty or fifty funerals daily. The procession halted at the precise spot where we once took the reader and told him that Mr. Gibbons was buried.

One wide grave had been dug, and mother and son were lowered by the solemn-visaged gravemen. These men had their sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and their sunburnt arms gave evidence of honest toil. They had, in the course of a long service, witnessed many heartrending and affecting scenes, until they had come to take them as a matter of course.

As the two corpses were borne up to the grave, the little procession followed. First came Stella Gibbons leaning upon the arm of an aged member, whose hair betokened the joys and sorrows of many years. He had known her father well, and had come to pay this tribute to the memory of his friend's wife and child. Then came Mr.

Peckover and his wife, followed by a number of the Order, George Somers among the rest, although it was with great difficulty he could walk.

The procession stopped at the grave, and the coffins were quickly lowered, and the clods pattered and thumped down upon the board covering. Stella shook like an aspen, as she saw through her tears that those she loved so well were being hid forever by the cold and unsympathetic clods of earth. The gravemen plied their shovels, and soon two little heaving mounds marked the spot where the bodies lay. The venerable man on whose arm Stella hung said:

"My friends and brothers—The last is the most solemn moment of our lives. To the old who have lived the number of years allotted to man, death is not always an unwelcome visitor, but to the young and middle-aged, it comes in seeming hardship. Yet, my brothers, we must all die—the mandate has gone forth from the throne of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe. It is but a span from the cradle to the grave, and death lays in ambush for the young and old alike. What a blessed thought, that beyond the grave we shall meet in that better land where sorrow and suffering never come, and where our broken and bruised hearts shall be healed by the tide that shall flow from the fountain of benevolence and peace."

He then offered a short and earnest prayer, and dismissed those present. All had sympathized with the poor girl, now so deeply afflicted. Mr. Peckover and his wife turned to speak a word or two with a friend. They had not talked more than a couple of minutes when the good woman said:

"We must take Stella home with us. Let us get her in our carriage and be off, for I know the poor girl is worn out."

They turned to speak to Stella, but she had disappeared.

"Where did Miss Gibbons go?" Mr. Peckover demanded of a bystander.

"She got in a hack and drove away, sir," replied the man.

"Then, wife, we must be on the move and overhaul her."

They got into their buggy, and drove away toward the city. The steady old nag that drew the buggy in which Mr. and Mrs. Peckover were seated, was like a great many others of his kind, a splendid funeral horse. His gait was snail-like, but when it came to overhauling a pair of undertaker's gaunt tackies, that he couldn't do. He had his gait, and neither whip nor spur could increase it. Carriage after carriage rolled by and a cloud of dust arose, but Mr. Peckover's family horse had long since abandoned any ambitious notions he might have entertained of being a king on the avenue.

They jogged leisurely on until they reached home, and there Mrs. Peckover got out while the old gentleman hastened down to Mrs. Gibbons' late residence, not doubting but that he should find Stella and bring her home with him. Arrived in front of the tenement house, he called a boy and gave him a dime to see that old Dick did not wander away. He found his way up the stairs, and once more stood at the door of the room we have so often described. He rapped gently. No response.

Again he rapped louder than before; still no answer. He then raised the latch and pushed the door ajar. The room was empty. For some moments Mr. Peckover stood looking about the vacant room; then he retired and closed the door behind him. Reaching the street, it occurred to him that he had forgotten to make inquiries of the other tenants. This required another trip up stairs. He wandered through the hall, rapped upon the doors; but he saw no one, and could hear no one.

Taking a seat in his buggy, he resolved to await Stella's arrival. The sun had already set, and the shades of evening were already drawing on. The lamplighter was hastening along with his little ladder and torch fighting back, as it were, the increasing darkness.

Mr. Peckover waited fully an hour, wondering what could have become of Stella, and half fearing that some accident had

befallen her. Then the old man turned sorrowfully homeward. On the way he met Jeff Wilson, the policeman, and told him his trouble. Jeff said that he would go around that way occasionally, and if he could see or hear of Miss Gibbons, she should be cared for.

Mr. Peckover went home, much perplexed and very sorrowful.

CHAPTER XXXV.

When Stella Gibbons turned away from the grave of those she loved, she felt that all she cared for on earth were buried there. She was a houseless, homeless wanderer on life's troubled sea. Her eyes seemed to burn in their sockets, and her heart felt cold. Half crazed, she turned away and crept up to the carriage in which she came. Mechanically she got in. The driver closed the door and sprang upon his seat in front, and the hack rolled away, the first to leave the cemetery. The driver had an engagement with his sweetheart that evening, and as there was no limit to the gait to be observed by returning funeral parties, he moved down the avenue in good style. The police of Cummins-ville shook their clubs warningly at the rapid driver, for he it known the good mayor of that out-lying suburb has a hobby, and that hobby is that all who pass through his domain must observe a dignified and easy pace. Hence his orders to his police-force on this subject were emphatic and enforced with rigor and great impartiality. Stella crouched in the corner of the hack, taking no notice of what was passing in the outer world. She thought only of her own crushing sorrow. The poor girl had cried until the fountain of the crystal flood seemed to have dried utterly. When the hackman drew up his coach in front of her home, and opened the door for her to alight, she awakened as from a dream. "What had she come there for? This was no longer her home. Those who had made it home were dead and gone."

The hackman drove away. Stella look-

ed up at the old house—it was the look of one in despair. She could not go there. The girl turned away from the place as one turns away from some horrible nightmare. She walked up Second street until it joined with Pearl street—then, as a car was passing, she got in and crouched in a corner. The conductor came along and collected the fare. Then she took the steam dummy and went to the end of the route. She knew not whither she was going, and cared not. Any place was preferable to that she had once lovingly called home. When the street car stopped, she got out and walked. After a time she came to a long bridge, and as it was growing dark outside, it was still darker as she walked through. The light admitted by the opening at the further end guided her and then she went ahead. Leaving the bridge behind, she followed the road or pike around the foot of a hill, while a small stream flowed on the other side.

It had grown quite dark, and there was no friendly street lamps to guide her wandering feet. She skirted the small village of California, and the glimmering lights here and there told that the people were still astir. At one house she passed the family were at tea, and to her it was a picture of happiness; but now the cup was dashed from her lips forever. She did not hunger for the viands upon the table, but her heart yearned for the happiness of those around that family board. To them life was a bed of roses; to her a bed of thorns—a night as dark as that in which she groped her way along a strange path. At last the road fell by a gentle slope until it skirted the brink of the great river. Stella left the road a little way, and sat her down on a log that had been cast upon the shore by a high tide. There she sat and thought—her head seemed to ready to burst with pain. Then a sudden thought came. She started up and looked wildly around as if expecting some one—but slowly advanced towards that calm and swiftly rolling river. "Why should I not end my sorrows here below, and then wing my way to those dear loved ones

above?" she thought. "It would only be a plunge and then all would be over. Perhaps these pleasant waters would cast my frail body upon friendly shores where some one would drop a tear in memory of her who found the burden of life too heavy to bear."

Stella advanced firmly to the water's edge, and stood ready for the plunge that would end her sorrows. She hesitated. Had not the king of the Jews—the Savior of the world said:

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." But that sacred word had forbidden man to take his own life. How, then, could she, how dare she rush into her Creator's presence unbidden." Christian philosophy triumphed, she knelt down on that rocky beach and poured out her soul to God for forgiveness for daring to think of disobeying his divine command. A steamer came rushing by, her cabin lighted and clouds of coal-smoke rolling away from her lofty stacks. Her wheels made a low humming as they beat the water. After the boat had passed, the little purling waves chased each other down the shore as if in one endless race with the wheezing craft that proudly rode the bosom of the river. Stella now felt a little more reconciled; indeed walking is one of the best antidotes for a troubled mind. The various objects one sees, and the sounds we hear, attract our attention and gradually divert the mind from the all absorbing sorrow, and thereby give the brain an intermission in which to recuperate.

She climbed the bank, and re-entered the road not far from the point she had left it, and walked briskly on. There was no moon, but the starlight was sufficient to enable her to see with tolerable distinctness.

Now that she had become a little more reconciled to life, the terrors of her situation grew in proportion. Unaccustomed to the country, every sound borne to her ears was a presage of danger. One side of the road was skirted with vineyards, while on the other, the river was distinct-

ly visible. After a half hour's walk, the distance between the road and the river was greater by reason of a broad and fertile bottom lying between.

As Stella was passing a farm-house, a large dog came from the yard with a roar, and sprang into the road. The poor girl screamed with fright, for she felt sure she would be bitten. The dog seeing what a disturbance he had created, and finding that it was only a woman, sneaked humbly back to his kennel. Stella was so weak from fright that she could scarcely stand. Yet she managed to walk on. The fragrance from the wheat-fields was delicious, and she felt that notwithstanding the sorrow that rankled and gnawed at her heart, she had passed into a new world. The gravel road that all day long had felt the force of the sun was yet hot and dusty. She saw a stream trickling down a small ravine, and she kneeled down and drank some of its cool delicious water. Here she sat down and rested a few minutes, and her mind went back to her sorrow. A feeling of utter desolation came over her, as she recalled to mind, those vivid lines, "The Exile of Erin." "How long would she wander, and would she never find a home,—any one on earth to care for her?"

She wept at the thought—her grief was almost overpowering. While she sat there she heard a wagon coming leisurely down the road from an opposite direction to that she was traveling. Not wishing to be seen, she, with the natural timidity of her sex, glided behind a tree until the vehicle should pass by. There were two men in the wagon, which had an arched canvas covering, now peculiar to the huckster trade, but formerly much used by emigrants to the far west.

The men were discussing their various experiences in going to market, but as the little bit that Stella heard would not be of interest, we omit it. As soon as the wagon had disappeared in the darkness, Stella came out from her hiding-place and resumed her journey. She walked for half an hour before anything occurred worthy of notice. The farm-houses presented a

dark and cheerless appearance. Silence reigned, except the tinkling sound of a cow-bell back in the hills, or the baying of dogs. While walking briskly along, Stella suddenly discovered some animal in the road. It was large and looked like a bear. She quickly crossed the road, and climbed the fence for protection, as if bears could not climb fences as well. The animal seeing this counter movement, advanced slowly until Stella could see that it was a large New Foundland dog. He did not look fierce, but appeared very tame and submissive. He came opposite the girl and looked at her wistfully as though he wanted to make friends. Stella scarcely knew whether to interpret this look into a desire to eat her, or whether, being lost himself, he desired a friend. She concluded to act upon the latter hypothesis, and spoke kindly and soothingly to him. The dog uttered a low whine, and advanced to the fence on which she stood. She felt encouraged, and got down and patted him on the head with her hand. The dog took this kindly, and when she resumed her journey he trotted along by her side. With such a brave-looking defender she felt comparatively safe. She called over several familiar dog names in the hope of finding his cognomen, but he answered to none until she came to Dash, and then he sprang up and licked her hand with such fondness she felt sure she had found it at last.

If Stella had reason to suspect the fidelity of her defender, her fears were soon put to flight. As they were passing a low hovel by the road-side, a large bony dog ran out with a fierce growl. Dash met him half way, and at it they went. They bit and growled and made the dust fly, as each struggled for the mastery. Sometimes Dash was on top, and sometimes the strange dog. Stella stood tremblingly by, though much excited by the terrific struggle. She encouraged her champion, and he won the victory. He got the strange dog by the ear, and then there was howl for mercy. Stella told Dash to let go,

and he obeyed. The strange dog went back to his den with louder howls than he came. Dash came meekly up to his mistress as if he scarcely knew whether he had done right or wrong. Dash was not long left in doubt, for Stella spoke kindly to him, and patted him gently. Dash's head went up at these symptoms of approval, and he looked as if he would like to whip half a dozen more curs, if they dared to molest his new-found mistress.

At the next house they came to, a very little dog came out in fine style as if to tackle Dash. The big dog paid no attention to the cur at first, but the latter gave the big fellow a nip on the sly. Dash turned, and then the cur fled with such precipitation that he near brained himself by running against the gate in trying to get into the yard. On any other occasion, Stella would have laughed at the ludicrous scene she had just witnessed.

They had gone but half a mile, when Dash, who was a little distance ahead, came back with every symptom of fear. His tail was down, and he whined piteously. Stella encouraged him to advance, but he would not budge an inch in that direction. What was she to do, for she felt there must be danger or Dash would not hesitate a moment. What was it?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

We must not in our haste forget the other characters of our story.

When Lucy Moorhead was summoned to the side of her patient, she came at once and was pleased to notice his improved condition.

"I fear, sir, you are acting without orders from the doctor or nurse in getting up so soon," she said.

"But for them perhaps I should not be able to get up at all."

"Well, I hope you feel strong enough for the task you have inflicted upon yourself."

"Not so strong as a well person; but I feel a great deal better. My head swims a little from weakness, but that will come all right in time. To-morrow I shall go

home, for I feel that I have too long been a burden to you."

"How can you talk so, Mr. Somers, when you know it has been a pleasure to serve you. 'Tis I that have reason to be thankful," said Lucy reproachfully.

"Forgive me, Miss Moorhead. I had no wish to give offense, but I feel that I have been a pensioner on your hospitality too long already."

"There now, that is just the way with you men; you ask pardon for some incautious sentence, and then put in a conjunction and end by giving a worse blow than the one you recalled."

Somers seemed a little puzzled.

"Come and sit here on the sofa beside me," he said.

"You will not utter any more such naughty sentences as those you spoke a few minutes since."

"I will not."

"Then I accept," and Lucy sat down on the sofa beside her patient.

"Lucy," began Somers solemnly, "I once asked you to become my wife, and you very properly declined, for who could expect a girl to marry him on such short acquaintance as was ours? I was aware of the great disparity of our stations in life, but blinded by the great love I entertained for you, I proposed in an unguarded moment."

"Now if you are going to talk like that, I shall leave you at once."

"No, stay and hear me out. You refused me. I went away almost heart-broken, but not angry. Never has there been an hour since that time—if reason held her sway—that I did not think of and reverence your name."

Lucy looked thoughtfully at a figure in the carpet, as if trying to decipher the idea the weaver had sought to convey.

Somers went on.

"It would be wasting words to say that I love you with my whole soul, and would sacrifice all that my own honor does not demand to secure your pure love in return. Can I, dare I, hope that you have changed your mind since I last pleaded my cause?"

"George, if I may be so familiar, I must say that I have not changed my mind one particle since that time as to whether I could love you or not."

"Then," said Somers, "I suppose we must part forever."

Lucy remained silent for a moment, as if not knowing what to say.

"George, you have done me a great favor; I doubtless owe my life to your strong arm, —"

"Yet you refuse me?" half reproachfully.

"Would you accept a wife who married you from gratitude?"

"No."

"I believe you. Well, since you are so honest in your expressions, I will make a little explanation that may or may not be satisfactory to you. When we first met, I liked you, and as time went on, this feeling grew on me, and I resolved to flirt with you, and when you proposed to me, I felt obliged to say no at least once, to keep a promise I had made to myself. Then you went away so sorrowfully, that I reproached myself for giving you pain. I said a few minutes ago that I had not changed my mind, neither have I; for as I loved you then I love you still."

During the utterance of this last sentence, one would have thought that George Somers was not crippled in his arms, however serious he might have been injured otherwise. Lucy released herself.

"There, George, that will do for heroes and heroines in novels, but not for common-sense people."

They talked long and earnestly on matters pertaining to the future. It was agreed that the wedding day should be fixed at least one year ahead. This was done that Somers might be enabled to complete his studies and be admitted to the bar.

George Somers went home a happy man. He had something to work and live for now.

The failure to find Stella Gibbons created a great excitement among those who knew her and appreciated her good quali-

ties. To none did the blow come with greater force than to Mr. Peckover and his good wife.

The Odd Fellows put forth another effort to find the missing girl, and among those most zealous was George Somers. He discovered about this time that Paul Annear, the villain, had returned to the city. The principal witness of his villainy had disappeared; hence his arrest would have been a farce, so they set keen-eyed and long-eared detectives to dog his steps. They watched his ingoings and outcomings for weeks, but to no purpose. As a last resort, circulars giving a description of Stella were printed and sent to all the lodges for a hundred miles around, in the hope of finding her, but no answer came.

Hope seemed to vanish. She had faded from the busy scene that surrounded her.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

When Dash refused to advance, Stella scarce knew what to do; she stood half irresolute. There must be danger, or the dog would not be cowering at her heels.

After reflecting a few minutes, she determined to execute a flank movement and skirt the real or imaginary danger. This change of base seemed to meet with Dash's entire approbation, for he nimbly sprang over the fence in advance of his mistress. "This augurs well of success," thought Stella. "But it looks a good deal like cowardice."

Having crossed into the field, she kept close along the fence, while Dash kept further away. With every sense keenly alive for the first symptom of danger, the girl heard a rustling sound and an occasional grunt. She stopped and listened—her heart kept beating almost as loud as the noise. She then advanced and peered cautiously through the crevices of the fence, and saw a sow suckling a litter of pigs. She wondered why Dash was afraid of a hog. She did not know then, as she learned afterward, that the fiercest dogs are sometimes afraid of a sow when surrounded by a litter of small pigs. Just as she was

passing, the sow sprang up, and, seeing the girl, made an effort to climb the fence, and champed her jaws as though she would want no better fun than to eat Stella. Having gone the length of the field, she now thought it prudent to re-enter the road. To this, Dash made no sort of objection. "I thought I knew better than you," said Stella, addressing her canine companion; "but I didn't."

Dash whined consent at this approving speech, and they went ahead. As they were passing near a tall tree that skirted the road, there came a fearful sound from among its branches. This sound rose loud, clear and sonorous.

"Whol Whol whol—who, who, who, ah!" The notes were startling, and Stella thought it must be some wild animal hidden among the branches and about to descend and devour both her and Dash. She uttered a silent prayer for deliverance. Then she looked at Dash to see if he was cowering with fear at hearing these awful notes of warning. Dash was not a bit alarmed; he "had not been born in the woods to be scared by an owl."

There was a noise in the tree-top, and looking up Stella saw a large bird flying away. She almost felt angry at herself for being scared by a bird. She now began to feel great fatigue from long walking and continued fasting. Her heart was heavy as lead, and it was each minute growing more difficult to drag herself along. She came to another bridge, though not near so long as the one she had crossed early in the evening. After crossing this bridge and going a little way, she found she was entering the streets of a town, which appeared to be of considerable size.

The gasoline lamps flickered and hissed; but the houses were dark. Stella wondered if everybody was sleeping and if there were no police to guard the town. The walks were poorly paved and the walking indifferent. What was the poor wanderer to do in this strange town? No friendly door opened at her command—no genial friend stood ready to bid her welcome. She streets and the houses vied with each other in

wearing a look of cold hospitality. Numerous mangy curs howled at her as she passed along, but the presence of Dash kept them back. She saw a hotel sign, but it was an inn open only to those who could pay for accommodation, and not to the moneyless. She could not stop here; she must go on, even though that were the watchword and countersign at the gates of this rural hamlet. Walking on for a time, Stella turned into a cross street that seemed to lead to the country. She came to a hill, or rather the road skirting a creek, and at the same time rose gradually from the lower grade of the town. Houses of a poorer class thick-lined the road; but as she got farther out the houses became less frequent. The grade by which the road gained the level of the higher country had a very fatiguing effect upon the weary girl. She panted heavily as she dragged herself along. As she reached the top of the hill, the streaks of gray were plainly visible in the eastern horizon, heralding the approach of day. The notes of barn-yard fowls were ringing loud and clear in anticipation of the coming God of light. Stella suddenly felt dizzy—her brain was whirling. She crossed the road and leaned on the fence for support. There was a moment of quiet, and she fancied she was better. Again she felt sick and faint, but it was only momentary, for she sank, unconscious, on the grass.

Nature had been overtaxed, and sought this method to gain a respite for the poor victim.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

In the county of Clermont, there once lived a farmer in good circumstances who had a hobby and that hobby was the buying of decayed roadsters with a view of bringing them up again. John Throckmorton was termed a good farmer. His lands were ample and productive. He knew how to use them that they might yield an abundant harvest. He made money off his lands, but lost some on his hobby.

He had a mania for buying old, broken-down horses. No horse was too poor for him to buy if he was only cheap. He

could see prospective good points in a mass of horse-bones that no other living mortal would ever have dreamed of. No itinerant colored preacher, borne upon the back bone of a moving skeleton of horseflesh, could pass the door without being bantered for a trade, or if the divine was unable to suit himself from Throckmorton's numerous herd, then he was paid cash, if the sum did not exceed fifteen or twenty dollars.

Thus did he pick up a bundle of bones, here and there, until his farm presented the appearance of a retired horses' home. In summer they wandered about the fields nipping the grass, or stood in groups beneath the shade of the trees fighting the flies, and inwardly blessing this benefactor of their species. The number of piles of bleaching bones about the farm showed that Throckmorton's pets often succumbed to his process of "raising."

John Throckmorton's family consisted of his wife and one son. William Throckmorton was now twenty-three. He had been raised on a large farm and had attended college two years. He was stout, strong-armed, well muscled young man. He had handsome features, with dark, curly hair. Although his features were sun-burned by exposure, his countenance did not appear less noble. Kind hearted and genial, he was the beau of the neighborhood; for be it known that if there is anything that pleases a woman it is manliness in a man. Sensible girls always give these effeminate men the go by, somehow, and take to the manly fellows. So William was a general favorite. He had been back from college a couple of years, and had adopted farming as his calling in life. He had gone earnestly to work, and one of the first things he did was to try to persuade his father to give up his hobby. This was a serious task. Mr. Throckmorton tried to argue the case, but his son had the fact in his favor. The heaps of bleaching bones were pointed out, and his elder asked to name a single instance where money had been made by his trading in horseflesh. Finally William got his father to agree not to buy another horse for a year as an experiment.

One summer evening, soon after this, William started for Cincinnati. He did not go far, but returning in the night he got the old horses from the fields and drove them on the road before him. All night he rode and chased his father's pets. Toward daylight he left them scattered along the road for miles. "If these old bones have energy to get back to our farm, they are welcome to end their days there,"

said William to himself. Mr. Throckmorton was almost inconsolable at his loss and broadly hinted at theft, but the neighbors only smiled, and as he could not hear of his favorites he was finally compelled to give them up as lost. One of them did come back and great was his joy, thereat. William said nothing, but had many a quiet laugh at his father's expense.

The fields were turned into meadows and corn fields. Fat hogs basked in the sunshine in the barn yard. Sleek cattle were lowing in the pastures, and good strong horses were in the stables. The farm prospered as it had never done before. At last the father had yielded the palm of wisdom to the son, and as he looked over his herds and flocks, he was forced to acknowledge to himself—though he did not to others—that William's method of farming was a great improvement on his own. In due course of time the old house gave way to one of more modern architecture. As money could be conveniently spared, new furniture and new books were purchased, until now this farm-house was fast assuming an air of refinement.

Mr. Throckmorton used to say to his wife in a confidential way: "This all comes of sending William to college;" and then the wife would reply, that "perhaps their son meant to bring home a college-bred wife some day."

The cholera usually spreads greatest consternation, where it does the least harm; namely: in the farming districts. Those swift-winged messengers, the newspapers, bear to the rural districts a half garbled account of the ravages of cholera in the city. These accounts are often doubted and seldom believed to convey the actual death-rate.

Then the hucksters plying their calling between city and country, in order to magnify their own bravery in venturing into a place where death lurks in every alley, bear away tidings of unlimited mortality. The country mind is kept in a state of vague uneasiness. The slightest symptoms are tortured by the imagination into forerunners of the cholera. A heavy dinner or an unguarded supper, which would pay the penalty of nature's offended law at any other time and not excite a thought, are now viewed with fearful forebodings of approaching disease.

Mrs. Throckmorton was taken sick in the night with cholera morbus, and camphor diluted with water failing to check the vomiting, William was dispatched to town in great haste for Dr. Preston, the family physician. That the doctor might be brought more quickly, William Throck-

morton went in a buggy. By this arrangement the physician could be brought along and return the next day. William quickly drove to town and waked the sleeping doctor.

These doctors are like apothecaries' clerks; they have been awakened so much in the night that they take it as a matter of course. The doctor was soon dressed, and catching up his leathern medicine box, sprang into the buggy, and rapidly drove away. It was now growing quite light, and some of the denizens of the town were already astir. They drove as rapidly up the hill from the town as the nature of the road would admit. There was but little talking done, as the doctor had so recently awakened that he did not feel very communicative.

People who spring out of bed before their time, don't usually feel talkative. A man may be a Webster after tea, but he is not likely to be a Cicero before breakfast. They had gained the top of the hill, and Throckmorton had just whistled at his horse to increase his speed, when Dr. Preston laid his hands on the lines and asked him to stop. "What is it?" asked Throckmorton, drawing up his horse suddenly.

"See; there lies a woman;" and Doctor Preston sprang out, and hastened to the spot where she lay. A Newfoundland dog sat by her side, and seemed overjoyed that relief had come. Throckmorton drove his horse into a fence corner and tied him, and then went to the side of the doctor, who was making a critical examination of the woman to ascertain whether she was dead or alive. "Does she live?" asked Throckmorton in a low voice; for he was struck by the beauty of that pale face, and half feared she would hear him.

"Yes, she is alive," replied the doctor, but life is trembling in the balance. She could not live long without attention." "What is that?" asked Throckmorton, pointing to a three-link pin that glistened on the girl's bosom.

"An Odd Fellow's pin, I should judge," replied the doctor, chafing the girl's hands.

"Oh! of course, and therefore she is under our protection."

"Then I think we had better turn about and take her back to my house; she will be properly cared for there."

"Don't think of it, doctor. You get in the buggy and take her in your arms, and it won't take long to get to our house."

The stout doctor gathered up the unconscious girl, whom the reader has doubtless surmised was Stella Gibbons,

and seated himself in the buggy. Throckmorton untied his horse and sprang in, and under the incentive of his voice the animal sprang away at a rapid pace. In half an hour they were at Mr. Throckmorton's residence. William relieved the doctor of his burden and bore her into the house. The doctor followed. They placed her on a bed. Mr. Throckmorton, senior, came in and matters were soon explained. He reported that his wife had ceased vomiting and was sleeping.

All anxiety for the good old lady being now put at rest, every energy was bent to resuscitate Stella Gibbons. Betty, the hired girl, lent her assistance, and in half an hour the doctor had the satisfaction of seeing the girl open her eyes and look wonderingly about her. Dr. Preston had surmised that she was some crazy person who, while wandering about the country, had fallen down in a fit. Great then was his delight at noticing with what a sane and puzzled look the girl cast her large beautiful eyes from one face to another, as if trying to read a line of explanation.

"You have been quite ill, but keep quiet and you will soon recover," said Dr. Preston, in a kindly voice.

"Are you a physician?" asked Stella.

"I am."

"Then it is to you that I owe my life; but your time has been sadly wasted in bringing me back to a world so full of trouble. Better to have let me perish and go to those I love," and Stella sighed heavily.

"There, now, don't exert yourself. You are in the hands of friends that will care for you," and the doctor turned about and left the room. Wm. Throckmorton followed him out. Once they were out of hearing, the doctor said:

"This girl is in trouble. What the nature of it is I know not; but she is not in a condition to tell us now. What she most needs is sympathy. Your mother is ill, and I think the best thing I could do, would be to go at once and bring my wife out here. She knows better how to doctor cases of this kind than I with all my physic."

"If it would not be too much trouble."

"Oh, not at all; for I confess to feeling a deep interest in this patient. Besides that wonderful pin she wears makes me want to know her history. Now see that Betty gives her some nourishment; a cup of tea, an egg and some toast, and I will run in and see your mother."

In a quarter of an hour the doctor was hastening to town. A few hours later he drove back with his wife, one of those re-

finéd, sympathetic ladies, who know how to say everything in such a kindly way that they win our hearts directly. Mrs. Preston made herself useful, for if her husband was the prince of doctors she was the princess of nurses.

Late in the evening, when Stella felt herself sufficiently strong, she told the sad story that had brought her away from what she had once called home. Mrs. Preston cried in sympathy with Stella, and when the story was told, she kissed her and said: "Dear heart, you shall never want a home. Come with me as soon as you are well enough."

Just then Mrs. Throckmorton, who had partially recovered, came in and said:

"We can't think of your going away Miss. I have no daughter of my own, so you must stay here."

After a wordy but good-humored contest, a compromise was finally agreed upon. It was that Stella should stay at Throckmorton's two-thirds of the time and at Dr. Preston's one third. So Stella had friends where she least expected to find them.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Stella Gibbons, now removed from the scene of her sorrows, and subjected to new and novel influences, forgot or controlled in a measure the sadness that weighed down her spirits. Yet in secret she sometimes wept for the loved ones that were in the grave; but she was not ungrateful to those who had found her an insensible clod upon the earth, and taken her into the bosom of their family. She sought to make herself useful, and manifested an earnest desire to learn. Yet her awkwardness cost her many a blush, and gave Mrs. Throckmorton many a hearty laugh. Being naturally quick to learn, she was soon able to lend her valuable aid to the good house-wife. In needle work she was an adept, and Mrs. Preston declared she had no equal. So effectually had Stella won the heart of Mrs. Throckmorton that the good lady began to look upon these visits to town as a sort of hardship that must be endured out of respect to a rash agreement. Dash had found a home too. He basked in the sunshine upon the verandah, or munched his meals complacently.

Whenever Stella went out for a walk he was always ready to accompany her. If she stooped down and patted his head, as she sometimes did, he was wild with delight.

William Throckmorton from being in daily intercourse with Stella, learned to

love her passionately. One night he returned from his lodge with a gloomy countenance and an air of dejection. "Why, son, what is the matter?" asked his mother, noticing his crestfallen look. "Listen and I will read," he said, fumbling in his pocket and drawing out a neatly printed circular. It read:

CINCINNATI, August —, 18—.

To the Members of the I. O. O. F:

BROTHERS—There disappeared from our midst on the — day of July, Stella Gibbons, the orphan child of a deceased brother. It is supposed that in a fit of melancholy or some temporary mental derangement, caused by the sudden death of her mother and brother with cholera, that she had left the city. (Here followed a minute description of Stella.) Any one knowing of her whereabouts will confer a favor on sympathizing friends by addressing WILLIAM PECKOVER or ——— LODGE, No. —, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Stella's face was crimson.

"What shall we do?" I hope you are not going to leave us," asked William.

"Let me see the paper," said Stella.

William handed it to her. She read it over carefully; and the young man watched her countenance.

"You have not told any one that you knew me to answer the description given in this paper?" she asked, turning to William.

"No, I have not."

"Then you need never do so," she replied, as she tore the paper into small bits and cast them into an open fire place."

William's spirits rose, and his countenance brightened.

Reader, by your leave we will drop a year from the record of the years that are past and gone forever, and ask you to go with us to the spot where Stella Gibbons had fallen exhausted upon the grass.

It was an Autumn morning. The fog which at an early hour had clouded the bosom of the river, had risen and hung like acres of crape suspended in mid air. Down through the openings in the hills could be seen the town nestled by the side of the sparkling river which flowed placidly on its torturous way. Beyond town and river rose the tall Kentucky hills, with patches of field and Autumn hued woodland. The scene was one to fill the soul with feelings of delight.

The fog bank above the scene looked like the gauzy curtain of the stage that rises from some fairy scene. It lent

a charm to the landscape that my weak pen can never describe.

Two persons sat in a buggy at the top of the hill viewing the splendid landscape, but they did not allow it to lure them from a more important topic. The occupants of the buggy were William Throckmorton and Stella Gibbons. He had just asked her to become his wife. She turned to him with a face full of love and admiration as she asked:

"William, you have heard my history?"

"I have, Stella."

"And still you insist upon my becoming your wife?"

"I do—my life would be miserable without you."

"Then so be it," she said, as she turned her head aside.

Throckmorton seized her hand and placed upon her finger the engagement ring.

"I have nothing to give in return," she said; then after a pause, "Yes: I forgot," and she drew from her pocket the three GOLDEN LINKS and fastened it to the lappel of his vest. "Wear these; they are harbingers of good. May they serve you as faithfully in the hour of need as they have me and my sainted brother."

Throckmorton undid the fastenings of the pin from the place where the modest hands of Stella had placed it upon his vest, and fastened it upon the bosom of his shirt.

"I will wear it and try to honor it as you have done, for it is dearer to me than a diamond."

One month after this event came the greater one of the marriage of this happy couple. The wedding was a quiet one, only a few friends and relatives of the family being present. Among the former was Doctor Preston and his wife. The doctor claiming that Throckmorton acted rather cavalierly in not asking his consent to the match, as Stella was his by right of discovery. His wife cut him off with "She may be yours by right of discovery; but she belonged to Mrs. Throckmorton and me by right of settlement, for it was we who agreed that she should not go back to the city, but remain here."

"It may be all true enough," said Throckmorton, that the doctor discovered her, and that you and mother settled her, but she is mine by right of conquest." This quick-witted speech of the groom created a laugh and the doctor was discomfited. "Never mind sir," replied the doctor, "just wait until you get sick, and then I'll get my revenge."

"Which misfortune, I hope, will be indefinitely postponed."

The next day after the wedding, the happy couple drove down to the city behind a span of splendid horses that sprung over the smooth road as if harnessed to a toy wagon. Stella had now regained her spirits, and her rosy cheeks were the picture of health. As they traveled over the same route which she had taken on her memorable journey, she pointed out the location, as well as she could remember, where each incident occurred. She did not even forget the large log on which she sat while meditating suicide.

They drove by the old tenement house where Stella had lived, and she shed a tear as she looked up at its familiar walls and chimneys, but new faces were at the windows. The old gate still kept its drunken watch at the entrance of the court, and but little change was noticeable anywhere. A little flaxen haired boy came out from the court as they passed, and Stella was forcibly reminded of her lost brother.

Stella thought the streets looked as much as they did a year ago, but they seemed so much more noisy, and the houses appeared blacker and smokier than when she lived in the city. Mr. Throckmorton was, of course, deeply interested in these various objects, but he could not experience the feelings of one coming back to her childhood. They were on their way to an uptown hotel, when Stella's attention was attracted by the frantic efforts of a newsboy, who was gesticulating to her and pointing in the direction in which they came. She asked her husband to stop the horses. He did so, and she looked back. Her face brightened into a smile.

"Well, if there isn't Mr. Peckover. Will, please drive over to the pavement."

Mr. Peckover came up, flourishing his cane and blowing with the exercise.

"Oh, you runaway," he said, catching Stella's hand and shaking it. "Why my child, where in the world do you come from?"

"From the country; but, Mr. Peckover allow me to introduce you to my husband, Mr. Throckmorton."

The gentlemen both shook hands cordially.

"Whither are you journeying now?" asked Mr. Peckover.

"To the hotel."

"Well, about face and drive to my house. We keep a hotel for our friends."

Stella said they would call before they left the city.

"No; that won't do. I have some business to fix up with you; and besides Mrs. Peckover will be glad to see you; so don't deny me, but drive around at once. I will be there as soon as you."

So they went to Mr. Peckover's, where they met a hearty welcome.

The same evening the lodge trustee informed Stella that after her sudden departure, and being unable to find her, he had taken out letters of administration and sold what property he could find at their old home,—no, he had not sold all, for he had allowed his wife to select many little articles that she thought Stella would prize as keepsakes. "And now," he concluded, "here is a check for the amount. I wish it was for a million, for you deserve it."

Stella thanked him, and at his request, request told him all that had happened to her since that eventful day when her mother and brother had been put away to rest. Mr. Peckover often wiped his eyes during the recital, and when she had concluded he said:

"God bless you, my child! You have had an eventful career for one so young; but those that put their trust in that golden motto, Friendship, Love and Truth, and enroll their names with us, will not be forgotten in the hour of adversity. Money is potent, but it is friendship, after all, that lends to life a sacred charm. In this day when men's hearts are much given to selfishness these social orders do a great deal to curb the baser and more brutal feelings of our natures. But I see by the pin your husband wears, that he, too, is an Odd Fellow."

"Yes, sir, and I honor him all the more for being one."

"He has indeed chosen well, and I hope he may long live to honor the Order."

Stella asked after Lucy Moorhead.

"Well, she is married to my young friend George Somers, and she could not have found a worthier man. Elijah Moorhead objected on account of social distinction, but Judge Nibs, a friend of his, told him that Mr. Somers was one of the most promising young lawyers at the bar. Then Mr. Moorhead became reconciled to the match, and gave them a grand wedding. I have sent word to George and his wife to come over and spend the evening with us, as an old friend is here."

"How thoughtful you are."

"I like to see old friends together."

Somers and his wife came, and were surprised to find a friend whom they never expected to see. They talked over by-gones, and it all ended in Lucy promising

to visit Stella at her home. This promise she not only kept, but has repeated.

After spending a few days in the city and visiting the graves of her relatives at Spring Grove, Stella and her husband returned to their home. Stella now declares that all the money in those large banks on Third street would not induce her to return to the city. Her happiness is complete.

Of the other characters of this story—the villainous Paul Annear, after returning to the city, entered upon his old routine of debauchery, drinking and gambling, un-

til to-day he is a miserable wreck of humanity, with the shadow of the grave stretching out to meet his coming footsteps. It is not likely that he will live to receive his father's fortune: The 'crafty Jane McCoy never returned to Cincinnati.

In conclusion, we ask the reader who has persevered to the end, to join with us in invoking a blessing upon all those who live honest and upright lives, whether they be rich or poor.

THE END.

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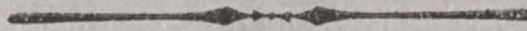
—AN—

Odd Fellows' Story,

—BY—

J. H. KINKEAD,

Past D. G. M. of Ohio.



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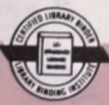


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