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GILBERT THORNDYKE

BY

WILLIAM G. HENRY

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GILBERT THORNDYKE

OR

A MAN OF HIS WORD

BY

WILLIAM G. HENRY

BOSTON
DE WOLFE, FISKE & CO.

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PROLOGUE.

THE words in a prologue are usually radiant with hope and gladness; this will be one of privilege and sorrow.

The physician has just left my suite of apartments on Columbus Avenue in the city of Boston. For weeks he has skilfully evaded the truth, but at last I have succeeded in forcing it from him.

I have a valvular disease of the heart, and know now that I must soon die. How soon, I cannot tell. Perhaps in a few days; at the longest, in a few weeks. Well! Let it be so. The pain, which has been very great during the last few days, has disappeared, and a feeling of weakness has succeeded it, the meaning of which I cannot mistake.

As the pain disappeared, so all fear of death accompanied it, and I feel now only as if I were going to sink into the arms of perfect rest, contented and happy as the child that is laid to sleep in its cradle. All the troubles, all the cares, and all the perplexities which have tormented me during a lifetime that seems so short to me now, as I look back upon it, are now ended; the clouds have passed away; the star of eternal hope shines clear and bright on the distant horizon, that seems so far to mortals and yet is so near to me.

And is this the end of it all, a brief time of worry, a few uneasy, restless periods that we call years, and then that great angel Death? Many times I have been near to him, and many a friend has he embraced at my side, and so now it is my turn at last. The atmosphere will close around the space that I have occu-

pied, and my place will know me no more, for how soon we are blotted out and forgotten; then truly I shall be dead. Thus is it with us all. Stop and think of the millions upon millions that have lain as I have and thought the same thoughts; thousands and thousands of years ago they must have thought them, and for thousands and thousands of years to come they will think the same ones.

Well, it is not a good world; no one can say it is, unless it is those who are blinded to the great facts. For how can one expect a world to be a good one in which money is the great power? I have often wondered, not why it is so bad, but why it is so good. Now that I have lived, I am not sorry, but I should not wish to live again.

Before I pass through the open gate to the grand and glorious life beyond, where we shall ascend step by step, onward and upward

through the various changes to that perfection by which we are entitled to sit by our Maker, I desire to relate a tale, not one of my own history, but of another, a friend who is very near to me.

It, perhaps, will help to while away some weary hours of pain and suffering; if it does, I shall lose nothing by writing it. I do not expect it will be read much; it does not matter.

This story is of a man, I have given him here the name of Gilbert Thorndyke, whose early life was unfortunate and unhappy, full of sorrow and trouble. He may have had his faults, but I have excuses to offer for him; the principal ones are, the misfortune to lose his mother early in life, and the weakness of mankind. If these find no charity in your heart for him, you are either too good for him or he is too human for you. Do not read this story. Enough others will.

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GILBERT THORNDYKE.

CHAPTER I.

THE COUNTERFEITER.

SOME years ago, how many it matters not, although, if necessary, the exact date could easily be named, not far from the Old State House (a building devoted to history and offices) in Boston, down a street chiefly remarkable for its crookedness, three men sat eating their suppers in a tenement house. The room in which they were seated was evidently used as a kitchen and dining-room together. In appearance, it was very different from so many of those rooms used for such purposes, that to most of our readers are so familiar. No splendidly carved and ornamented sideboard was there, glittering with its silverware and cut glass. No handsomely framed

pictures were on the walls. No richly woven rugs or carpets covered the floor. No oaken table spread with its snowy linen or tempting viands. It was simply enough furnished to suit even the most economical. A small, cracked stove, as innocent of blacking as the paws of a polar bear; a square pine table, and few chairs of the same wood, completed about all the furniture of the room. The room was lighted by a couple of kerosene lamps, one being suspended in a bracket on the wall, near the door; the other was in the centre of the table, by the miserable light of which they were eating. Their supper was not one an epicure would select from a dainty menu. It consisted of bread, a large dish of cold baked beans, and a pitcher of beer, the last of which was seemingly more to their taste, judging from the rapid way its contents disappeared. From the supper, then, we proceed naturally to the partakers.

Now, the three men in question were by no means the sort of people that a wealthy mer-

chant would choose as partners in business, or a respectable minister of the gospel be likely to select for intimate friends; nor could they, in any light, be regarded, strictly speaking, as desirable acquaintances. Still, they were "men and brothers," and, had they believed in any religion at all, would probably have been Christians. The one who was apparently the leader of this trio we will describe first. One could see at a glance that he was far superior to his companions in points of intelligence and dress. He was tall, broad-shouldered, and deep-chested. His features were good and regular, the most noticeable feature being his chin, which was very square, denoting great determination. He was clean shaven, neatly but not richly dressed, and, taken altogether, was rather attractive than repulsive looking. His name was Joe Greenfield. His former occupation had been that of a circus performer, but at present he was entering on a more profitable but not quite as creditable a business.

The personage to his right was a small, thin

man, with small, bluish eyes, reddish hair, and a nose like the beak of a parrot. His dress was somewhat peculiar, — an old stiff hat with the crown about an inch high; a black coat of our grandfathers' fashion which showed strong signs of having been brushed to death in its youth. The pants were a threadbare old corpse of a pair, of a faded blue; his shoes were split open on the sides. Taken all together, he would have attracted considerable attention at a fashionable dance.

He might have been a millionnaire in disguise, but if he was the disguise was perfect.

He swallowed his supper in a stealthy, avaricious manner, as if to make sure of his share, seeming meantime to be eying his companions with a timid, suspicious air. He will be known in this story as Tom Knifton.

The one to the left of Greenfield styled himself James Hobson, otherwise known as Crooked Jim, an appellation given to him on account of the crooked ways he used to earn his livelihood; was a medium-sized man, with dark,

curling hair, a round, good-natured face, very black eyes, and a costume consisting of a short blue coat, a pair of checkered pantaloons, and a fancy vest. He had on new and shining shoes, duplicates of which may be had any day for the sum of two dollars and fifty cents on Essex Street. He was, in his own estimation, "quite a swell."

The men ate their meal in silence. When they had finished, Greenfield shoved back his chair, and, drawing his pipe from out his pocket, proceeded to fill and light it, when, suddenly turning towards Tom, he asked, "Well, Tom, how are you making it?"

"Nothing doing," answered the man, in a whining voice.

"I'll tell you what, Jim," fixing his keen eye on Tom, "if he ain't lying, he's pretty near it. Why don't he look a pal in the eye?"

"Because," answered Jim, "the truth ain't in him, and never was, for he's the only son of the man who told a lie the first words he ever spoke, and never spoke another afterwards."

"You needn't make me the butt of your stupid jokes," muttered Tom, looking angrily at Jim, and appealingly towards the leader.

"Oh, that's all right. Tell us now, on the square, what you have been doing to-day," said Jim.

"Well," replied Tom, who, under the eye of Joe, was like a bird magnetized by a serpent, "I got these," and he reluctantly drew from his inside coat pocket several silver spoons, which he held up to the gaze of the other two men.

"How did you come by those?"

"I sneaked into the kitchen of a house at the South End and swiped them."

"What are you going to do with them?"

"Put them in hoc at Moses's," answered the man.

"I don't think much of your game. I have something now on the wheel that will pay you big money. Are you in it with me? What do you say?"

"You surely don't think of — of —"

"Of the old business again?" broke in Jim.

"No, no," said Joe. "Something better; more money, more gentlemanly. I've never been behind the bars yet, and got no desire to be. I admit that I have helped crack some cribs in times gone by, but all that's ended. I am getting pretty tired of risking my liberty, and perhaps my life, for a few ducats; so I think, while there is time, I will turn over a new leaf, and become a speculator. That's what I intend to do, and want you both to do the same, at once."

"Speculate!" squeaked Tom.

"Speculate?" queried the Crooked man, with equal surprise.

"Yes, speculate," reiterated the ex-circus performer and house-breaker.

"Now, listen, you, Jim, and you, Tom! I am going to take you both into the scheme; but there must be no back down, for, if either of you are caught and squeal, you will be shot even if it has to be done in the court-room. You are dealing with two men who mean busi-

ness, and who will not overlook any nonsense. You know *me!*"

"Who is the other? Your friend?" asked Jim suspiciously.

"Yes, who is he?" echoed Tom.

"A good one, and don't you forget it; a thoroughbred. He is coming here to-night, soon. Use him well, for he does not relish jokes," said Joe grimly.

"But we want to know who he is!" again demanded Jim.

"Never mind his name. He is the — Master!" replied Joe.

"The devil!" exclaimed Jim, who seemed very much impressed by the title.

"Well! if not, he must be a near relative," muttered the leader.

As he finished speaking, steps were heard leading to the floor they occupied.

"He's coming now. Be careful."

At the same time a knock, sharp and clear, was given on the door, and Joe hastily arose and unlocked it, admitting a man dressed

entirely in black. He would have had an almost ministerial appearance had it not been for a large and brilliant diamond that glistened in his immaculate shirt front. His face was pale — so pale that its pallor was almost startling; prominent features, the upper lip shaded by a silken mustache. His hair was cut short, and was black as night; his eyes; such eyes! Large, black, intensely black, with a strange gleam in their depths, so full of strength and power that they gave Joe's companions a start of dread and fear.

"Good-evening, Mr. Greenfield," said the stranger.

"Gentlemen, good-evening. I will drink to our future acquaintance!" And calmly taking a bottle from his hand-bag, the mysterious man, at one blow against the edge of the sink, removed its neck, and as the centre of the admiring glances of the three spectators of his actions, drank its contents at a single draught.

"Have a seat, Mr. — Mr. —?" Crooked Jim paused.

"Jones, sir," said the new-comer briefly, "if it is necessary for you to know my name;" and he looked at Jim with his glittering eyes in a manner that made that person think that Joe was about right when he called him a relative of the Evil One.

"Jones?" repeated Tom.

"Yes, Jones," answered he whom Joe had called the Master, sharply, — "it suits me."

CHAPTER II.

IN BUSINESS.

"AND now to business," he resumed. "Do just as I direct, and I will make you all rich, but if you are false to me, your lives are worthless;" and as if to emphasize what he said, put his hand behind him, and drew from his hip-pocket a revolver, at which the leader alone smiled with cool satisfaction.

He turned towards Joe. "Hereafter I shall do all the business through you, and you only, but all remember that wherever or under whatever circumstances we meet, *we are entire strangers.* Do not look or notice me at all; such will be regarded as treachery."

"What is it anyhow? What must we do? Perhaps I have no use for the biz," said Jim.

"Did you tell them about it?" asked Jones of Joe.

"No," said Joe, "only that you are — the Master."

"That's correct!" said the stranger, taking from a pocket, apparently far down in his coat, a large roll of bank bills, which he carefully divided into three separate rolls, and with a polite bow handed a roll to each one.

"Now, boys," said he, "take your time; do not hurry; examine them minutely, keep the bad ones, and return me the good ones."

"First, what do you say, Mr. Greenfield?"

"Well," answered he, "I guess mine are all bad."

"What of yours?" turning to Jim.

"I own to it, I am euchred; there ain't a bill in my fist I wouldn't taken from any cove any day, yet some of them may be fakes; but I can't tell, and that's a fact. I throw up the sponge to them."

"These are all good ones I've got," chimed in Tom.

"So far, so good," said Jones. "So much for the opinions of three as fly men as there

are in this city, for if none of you can tell, who can?

"It so happens, Joe, that every bill you have got is a genuine one, as good as made. But yours," and here he turned towards Jim, "out of the fifteen you hold, ten are counterfeits; and five are good. In the other lot, that Tom now holds, every one was manufactured in my own workroom. But enough time has already been expended. Now, what do you say to this speculation? The terms I offer you are these; five dollars for two, spot cash, and no funny business. Are you in it?"

While talking, the speaker eyed each of the men with such a penetrating and determined look, that even Joe moved uneasily in his chair — even marble statues are occasionally shaken on their pedestals — but said nothing. The other two followed his example, until Tom broke the silence by whimpering, "Ain't it risky?"

"Of course there is risk to it, you fool. If there was not any I would do it all myself,"

snapped the unlawful manufacturer. "Come, what will the verdict be?"

"We are in for it," said Joe, speaking for himself and companions.

"Good! Follow my directions, and you will be safe. I shall see no one but you, Mr. Greenfield, and will want to meet you at least once a fortnight, to keep up the supply. To-morrow night meet me at the same place as before. Remember what I said about not recognizing me. Good-night!"

Then making a courteous bow to the leader, the mysterious individual withdrew from the room without further words, leaving the two subordinate rogues in a peculiar condition of surprise and uncertainty of mind.

"Well, what do you think of him? Ain't he a jim-dandy?" exclaimed Joe enthusiastically, as soon as the door was fairly closed.

Every kind of crime has its own peculiar horror; but, to the ignorant rogue, the criminal who uses his genius inspires a greater feeling of respect and awe than the most adventurous thief.

"*Won't* we go it when we get rich?" suddenly cried Crooked Jim, who saw now open before him a future life of ease and wealth.

"Ain't it awful dangerous to do such work?" suggested Tom in a scared way, feeling somewhat like a little fly caught in a large spider's web.

"Nonsense!" said Joe encouragingly, "You needn't begin to take back water. Shoving the queer is no great matter, especially when you're well heeled, and have plenty of good ones to hand over if there is any kick made. You stay here, I suppose, Tom? Where are you going, Jim, to-night?"

"I'll take a walk up Tremont Row, and see if I can't catch some country jay from Wayback, that I can work," said the worthy addressed, in a careless tone.

"Look out for yourself, that's my advice;" and thus talking, the three intended breakers of the law separated, as we also, not unwillingly, shall be separated from such bad company, for the present, at least.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEXTER MANSION.

THE scene of our story is now entirely changed. Instead of the shabby attic tenement, we will picture to ourselves the magnificent house, No. — Beacon Street (that street famous all over the civilized world for its palatial residences of the aristocracy of the capital of Massachusetts). This house, owned and occupied by Mr. Amos S. Dexter, was built of brick with a brownstone front, with white marble steps leading up to the large and handsomely carved black-walnut doors. On each side of these steps, with tail in air, staring eyes, and open mouth, stood a bronze lion, as though he were a sentinel guarding the entrance.

As to the interior, it contained everything desirable to make a home cheerful and beautiful. Carpets that one seemed to sink into as

he walked over them, covered with imported rugs of great value. Furniture made of gilt and satin by those skilful workmen, the French. Rare and expensive statuary of Parian marble. Mirrors of the costliest description. Meissonier, Guido, Murillo, Correggio paintings could be seen on the walls, as well as the works of other great masters. But, with all this style of exaggerated splendor, the furnishings were in good taste.

Such, in short, was the house occupied by Mr. Dexter, at the time we write of, one of the leading and wealthy merchants of Boston, and his invalid wife, and daughter Maude. But these were not the only occupants, outside of the large retinue of servants; a cousin of Maude's had for many years made the Dexter mansion her home.

In the early evening of the day subsequent to the counterfeiter's enrolment of his new agents, in the handsome drawing-room of the Beacon-street residence, a man of about thirty years of age was seated engaged in conversa-

tion with two young ladies. He was tall, noble-looking, and of a stately and imposing appearance. His hands and feet were small and well shaped; his mustache was black, as were his large and thoughtful eyes, which were the most noticeable features of his face. When not resting on the faces of his companions, they seemed to be looking backwards into the past; or, possibly, forwards into the future.

His hair, slightly gray near the temples, showed traces of care and trouble, more than age. His manners were perfect and displayed unmistakable signs of birth and breeding. But the most remarkable thing about him was his smile, which seemed to light up his whole face, and which was singularly frank and winning.

Dressed in the most perfect and quiet taste, his appearance, without being foppish, was one of great elegance and *chic*. He was evidently in deep thought. Perhaps a physician might have taken him for a professional brother, pondering over the diagnosis of a difficult disease; a lawyer, for a brother counsellor worrying over

a perplexing case to be tried on the following day; a merchant, for a speculator contemplating a great speculation. It would have been difficult to have guessed. He sat on a divan of blue satin, partially facing a young lady of some eighteen or twenty years of age, who occupied a like position at the other end of the divan.

This young lady was Ida Sherman, cousin to Maude, and a favorite niece of Mr. Dexter. As she is to play an important part in this narrative, it might be well to describe her here.

Truly some friend of Ida had once said that her exquisite profile was so pure and noble, that it must have been cut by the chisel of a god. Her beautiful head sat so proudly upon her graceful shoulders, that a sculptor would have been delighted to secure her for a model. Her blue eyes were as clear as crystals as they rested, half covered by their delicate lids, on the gentleman's countenance. She had the carriage, the bearing and manners of a young queen. Words are weak in attempting to de-

scribe the great attractiveness of Ida Sherman's beauty.

Any man might have been proud of her love, and worn it with pride as his brightest jewel.

Opposite that part of the divan where the gentleman sat, Maude Dexter was seated at the grand piano, playing one of Mozart's beautiful airs. She looked as if she belonged to the sun and summer with her Greek profile, a proudly set head, a figure luxuriously moulded. Her eyes were large and black, and soft as velvet. Her heavy, drooping hair was black also. Her lips were full and bright, her complexion clear and dark. Such a face as Murillo would have loved to paint.

She had the temperament which generally accompanies such physiques as hers — slow, careless of trifles, not easily disturbed, and therefore generally acquiescent about small matters, but capable, when aroused, of an intensity of love or hate or scorn which was invariably carried to the extreme. A brilliant, dazzling woman, proud and passionate, never to be deterred from

anything on which she had fully set her mind. She was dressed in white, for the weather had been very warm, and white was very becoming to her dark, creamy complexion. She wore a corsage bouquet of Jacqueminot roses.

Suddenly she ceased playing, and, turning on her chair, remarked, addressing the gentleman, "Is not the heat unusually oppressive to-day?"

"Extremely so," answered the gentleman in question; "I have felt the heat more to-day than for a long time."

"I should not be at all surprised if we had a storm soon," said Maude's cousin.

"A storm!" said the gentleman. "I think there is no danger of that, for see how brightly the sun is shining," and he looked at Maude in such a manner that her face brightened at this delicately implied compliment.

"I cannot help but think," she said artfully, "that the sun would shine brighter but for the fear of the coming clouds."

"What are clouds but shadows that soon pass away?" asked the visitor, with another

smile so admirably forced that it dispelled, for the time, the suspicions that were arising within the young lady's heart.

But Gilbert Thorndyke, for that was the gentleman's name, having made the effort which policy and feeling demanded, soon relaxed into his former thoughtfulness; while Ida, who had sat quietly listening to the brief conversation, said in a tone of sprightliness, "Why, one would fancy, my dear cousin, that you were trying to be sentimental, talking such parables."

"We must talk about something," said Maude, not at all disconcerted by Ida's remark.

Gilbert here made an effort to start a new subject of conversation, by alluding to the dramatic ability of a newly arrived English actor, who at that time was attracting considerable attention in this country; but in vain, so we will leave the young ladies to their discussion, and devote ourselves to the hero of this narrative.

Gilbert Thorndyke, at the time of which we write, found himself in a very embarrassing

position. A few weeks before he had been invited to the house on Beacon Street by Miss Dexter, whom he had met accidentally at a friend's house one evening. At first he had been pleased by the great beauty and varied accomplishments of the young lady, but was dismayed and annoyed when he perceived, after a few calls, the extent of the feelings he had already caused. Gilbert could not fail to admire the talents and grace of Maude Dexter, and it gratified him to be noticed by such a lovely woman; for all men, no matter how philosophical they may be, are pleased to become the object of interest to beautiful women.

Well versed in all the peculiarities of the feminine nature, he soon saw that she was madly in love with him, — a love which he well knew he never could reciprocate, and yet dared not slight, but at the same time pitied and feared it, for it had been drawn as a rope across the pathway that barred him from his new goal of happiness. This goal was Ida.

On his first call at the house of Mr. Dexter, he saw in Ida Sherman the affinity which his whole life had been spent in seeking. In the very first glances of her wondering eyes, he experienced the soul of beauty that flashed forth to meet his own, and already he was involved in a kind of intrigue, from which he could not recede without seriously wounding and offending her whom he had to thank for the introduction of his newly-discovered idol.

What a strange thing love is! How often the philosopher has tried to explain or define it, but always in vain! If it is the question of harmony between two souls, it naturally follows that genuine love is apt to be instantaneous. We love a kind which is, in reality, an ideal reflex of our own hearts. Nearness to that kind affects us as one harp-string is affected by the vibration of another. Hence the more perfect the accord, the louder and stronger the sympathetic vibration.

Gilbert believed love to be a pre-existent

harmony, therefore that love at the first sight was the only real love.

Gilbert Thorndyke was an unusual man. Gifted by nature to a remarkable degree, he saw and felt what many more did not. He was not what many would call good, yet his friends said he was far more than good, — he was a manly man, truthful and kind, generous and brave, always possessing that rare but noble trait, gratitude. He had had his faults, and serious ones, for his whole life had been passed in wild roving from country to country, from science to science, and from profession to profession, until at last he acknowledged no law but his own will, and vice and virtue were mere nominal distinctions. Therefore it is not surprising to the reader to be told that the only religion he had was the worship of beauty. If he ever prayed, his prayers were the words of entreating love. Familiar with the theories of the ancient Hindoo philosophers, the English, the French, the Greek, the German schools of all shades; equally well

versed in material facts and fancies, without bias or prejudice, and seeking only for knowledge and truth, he was as ready to follow Berkeley the bishop or Spinoza the Hebrew, as August Comte or Baron von Reichenbach ; as ready to listen to the inductions from Harley's experiments as to the superb doctrines of Fichte or the audacious logic of Hegel. He was very popular as a writer and a philosopher. His vast reading and profound knowledge filled his enemies, as well as his friends, with surprise and admiration. But withal he was a man, as well as a scholar. He well knew what life was, and what it was to live. He had seen and experienced much. He knew as well what it was to suffer the pangs of poverty as to feed at princely boards. He had been an employé as often as an employer. Above all, he had ever been true to himself. His soul was his own. He would never bend to men nor to their opinions. Wherever he was, he was the leader, the directing power. No matter to what he turned his attention,

his logical mind would at once grasp the principal facts. Like every true philosopher, he had no master and knew no fear.

Such was Gilbert Thorndyke as a man. As a member of society he was an adventurer. Fortune after fortune he had squandered, and at present was penniless.

He would often say jokingly, "There is enough money in the world; when I need any I will make it. The world is my bank; I can draw on it at any time, and my check will always be accepted."

Having thus given the reader a vague idea of the central character in the scene I am describing, I shall resume the thread of active narrative without further digression. The conversation, sustained for some time with little interest to any of the parties engaged in it, was interrupted by the entrance of a servant who wished to speak with Maude on some household matters. Maude rose and left the room. The moment the door began to close upon her form, a sudden change took place in

the expression of the faces of both Gilbert and Ida. Their eyes were fixed on each other: the man admiring the innocent beauty and sweet intelligence of his lovely companion; and the girl drinking in with avidity the torrent of thought, of intellect, and noble manhood, which the gaze of Gilbert poured in a flood of light upon her. Both, being, for the instant, carried away into contemplation by that loveliness which they found realized in one another, did not notice the return of Maude, who stood gazing on them pale with anger. Anger first, anguish afterwards. But Gilbert was a man who had seen too much of this world to be taken unprepared while a chance of escape yet remained open for him, so in a natural calm voice said, —

"Miss Dexter, we have a matter to refer to you: which do you admire most, dark or light complexioned people?"

"Dark," promptly responded Maude.

"That is not the general rule. People usually prefer the opposite," said Ida.

And so the conversation was continued, until Gilbert rose to take his leave, when the look he exchanged with Ida was understood. Thereafter, he decided that disguisement of his feelings was useless.

CHAPTER IV.

IS IT FATE?

GILBERT had left the house of the merchant prince. It was already growing dusk. He soon found himself on Washington Street. How strange it is what an attraction a crowded thoroughfare has for some people! All the life of Boston seems to concentrate itself on that street.

Gilbert was a man of the world in its truest sense. He was a great observer of characters. He read faces like books. Every person he met was to him more or less of a study, a subject of speculation. This habit of observation was with him instinctive. However, he had progressed considerably down Washington Street before any of the passing promenaders had sufficiently arrested his attention to cause him to give them a second thought, when suddenly three men of unusual appearance came

before him. Other pedestrians on either side prevented him from immediately passing the three strangers. The most noticeable in appearance of the three had the air of a sporting man, while his tall friend looked like a hotel lounger. The third might have been a cheap theatrical man. These well-dressed promenaders are no new characters to our readers: they were Joe Greenfield, Tom Hobson, and Crooked Jim, mentioned in our first chapter.

"If those fellows," thought Gilbert, as he quietly moved out of the way, "are not three rascals may I never speak to a pretty girl again!"

"Hallo!" cried a voice behind him. "Gilbert, my dear fellow, I am delighted to meet you!"

"What, Royal? Royal Hall, you here! Where do you come from?"

"Oh, from Paris."

The speaker was a young man of medium height; slender yet graceful figure; large, bright eyes; fair complexion; careless, yet

elegant dress. He might have been thirty-four years of age. In turning to greet this newcomer, Gilbert lost sight of the three men.

"My dear Royal," said Gilbert, taking his old friend — for such he evidently was — by both hands, and regarding him most affectionately, "how fortunate it is we have met at this time. I have been wishing for some one to confide in, and all my friends seem scattered everywhere. James Blair is married and moved to California. Fred Stinson is dead, and George Andrews has an appointment as consul to South America, — Venezuela, I think it is, — and the rest are everywhere; so, old boy, you are about the only one left."

"I, for my part, know of no one in the world I wished more to see. I have much to say also, but where can we go and sit down quietly by ourselves and talk at our ease? That last rowdy who ran against me nearly dislocated my shoulder. Washington Street is too narrow for dialogue. Where can we go and rest ourselves?"

"Suppose we go down into the Argyle Saloon and take some supper. It is as quiet and well-conducted a place as any in the city. Besides, the landlord is a gentleman."

"The Argyle!" said Royal — "with all my heart. The name has a romantic sound which I fancy. It is Scotch, and you remember my mother was a Scotch lady. By the way, Gilbert, why do you not become a great unknown, and astonish the world by some great invention, some great work on science, or something of that kind?" asked Royal as they threaded their way through the crowd.

"Because, in the first place, the world would not be surprised, and even if it was, some one else would receive all the praise, as things in this world do not work by merit but by favor and fate."

"True! true enough," replied his friend. "But let us not discuss such unfairness. I have more important matters to talk over with you."

By this time, the two friends had arrived at

the entrance to the saloon; they descended the stairs and were soon snugly ensconced in a private box; their supper was ordered, and the curtains pulled together. As the gas-jet blazed up into full flame, Royal Hall observed that the face of Gilbert was pale and weary-looking, as though with many days of care and sadness.

"Have you been happy since we parted?" asked Royal.

"Oh, yes, as happy as could be expected in this vale of tears," answered Gilbert in a tone tinged with melancholy. "Fate has treated me as kindly as usual," he added.

"And are you still as much of a fatalist as you used to be?" asked Royal.

"More than ever. The older I grow, the stronger the conviction grows on me; for how could I think otherwise, unless guided by fancy instead of reason?"

"Well, we shall all know sometime, for the irrevocable day must come at last," said Royal thoughtfully; "for none may enjoy the pleasures of sin, without, sooner or later, suffering its punishments."

"Sin and punishment!" echoed Gilbert in musing, saddened accents; "what are these but idle words? terms without meaning, invented by hypocrisy for the profit of the politician and of the priest. Fables to grind the poor, and glorify the rich. Does not the viewless hand of an unknown and unimaginable destiny shape all our actions as much as our features or our limbs? Do not all our thoughts ebb and flow according to the eternal and unalterable laws governing the association of human ideas, with the same regularity which guides the pulsations of the heart and the circulation of the blood through the arteries?

"Can the fire at will change itself to frost, or the snow-drifts dissolve themselves into rain? Can that monarch of the forest transform his terrible nature into the timid, gentle lamb? Can a Christian be brought up under the *régime* of the Crescent, or a turbaned Turk in the nursery of the holy Cross? If man be too feeble to change even the color of his hair or eyes, can such a helpless creature be rationally

expected to change the color of his profound, mysterious passions, or the natural tinge of his instinctive disposition? No, there is one great gloomy word, that explains all philosophy, religion, law, ethics, ideas, and actions — every problem of life, and every fact of nature — and that word is Fatality!"

"Your theory of itself is but a film of foolish abstraction," replied the other. "Besides levelling humanity with the atoms of the earth, and with the lower animals, it ignores an essential part of his mental and moral constitution, denying the existence of both the will and conscience. Gilbert, if you really believed the way you talk, what need would you have to devise any precautions against impending perils, but let the iron wheels of destiny roll on, without help or hindrance from your ineffectual fingers? For what good? What will avail the efforts of an insect's wings to stir or stay the whirlwind that tosses the world like a feather? If you truly had faith in your strange creed, why would you ever know remorse?"

"It is all the result of the same endless, all-embracing Fatality," urged Gilbert; "that has given us the power of imagination to picture these things."

"Your reasoning is powerless to satisfy either the head or the heart," answered Royal. "It is utterly incredible that the Author of the universe, in a world of such endless, unbroken, sublime harmony, should have interpolated such an anomaly as your cruel hypothesis would make man. For, there is not one instinct, desire, or innate passion either in the human or brute creation which does not find its fitting sphere of objective enjoyment Throughout the woods and waters, populous with all kinds of life, not a single bird, beast, insect, or fish can be found with an appetite without the possibility of gratification. And does not this general rule hold good equally in the case of man? The eye delights in colors. Well, everywhere in nature we see all that is beautiful. The ear asks for melody. Nature answers it through the birds and in many more ways,

most especially in the human voice. And so of every other principle inherent in our mysterious organization of mingled mind and matter. All the flowers of the soul bear their proper fruit in the season of their happy harvest, unless blighted by sin or false education. If such, then, be this universal law, without one single failure, whenever we have the means of verification, is it not madness to distrust it in the only case where the object of the desire lies beyond the reach of the senses? For there is no passion at once so profound, general, and all-enduring as this want of perpetuity of existence; if it be, indeed, a delusion, then the Creator himself must be cruel as well as false to break before our eyes these glimpses of immortal light, only to render the thought of darkness and annihilation the more unendurable!"

"Creator!" echoed Gilbert with a smile; "do not terror and imagination make the gods?"

"It would be much nearer the truth to say

that fear forms the unbeliever," retorted the other.

"If your sentiments are so orthodox, why do you not put them into practice?" urged Gilbert, resorting to the final argument.

At this moment, perhaps fortunately, the discussion was put to an end by the entrance of the waiter with their suppers.

CHAPTER V.

RICHARD ARKWRIGHT.

"I DO not wish to sentimentalize," said Gilbert thoughtfully to his friend, when they had finished their supper; "but it seems to me, judging from all I hear and read, that a deep-seated and gloomy discontent pervades the minds of most of the young people of the present age. Every day I hear men — yes, and women — even fair and lovely girls, express an indifference to life, a disgust for the world, a dissatisfaction, that is utterly depressing and discouraging."

"It is probably because you associate with literary people, and the misfortunes of young authors are proverbial," responded Royal.

"Not so!" said Gilbert, brightening up and speaking with animation. "I have long since abandoned the idea of becoming a literary man. If I can originate a thought, I care little for

the mode of its realization. At present I am ruined, as usual, to all appearances."

"You are not prospering, then, in a pecuniary way?" said Royal.

"Not at all," replied Gilbert coolly.

"What are you doing?"

"Not much of anything."

"What do you live on?"

"Credit, chiefly."

"What are your prospects?"

"I do not know."

"Not know!" exclaimed Royal, astounded at the recklessness of this accomplished man.

"Of course not," said Gilbert: "how should I? There is no sail in sight, but I have not cruised these long years on the ocean of adventure without learning that prizes often turn up when we least expect them."

"Ah, Gilbert! Why, how are you?" said a voice. "I have not seen you for an age."

"Why, Hugh, how are you? Pray sit down. — Mr. Royal Hall, Mr. Hugh Riordan. How have you been getting on lately, Riordan?"

"Splendidly!" said Riordan, who had not paid his board for two months, and had borrowed of every one he knew, till his list of friends was exhausted. "Splendidly! I am now at work on a book for which the publishers have offered me two thousand dollars when finished."

"How many pages have you written already?" asked Royal, who, from a long experience with Gilbert, detected in his immovable gravity the spirit of irony, which in this strange man took so many varied forms of expression.

"Not exactly written," said Riordan, slightly disconcerted; "but I have the plot mapped out. It is a good one."

"Pray let us hear it," said Gilbert, with a side glance at Royal.

"Nothing would delight me more," said Royal politely.

"Of course it must be in confidence."

"Certainly," assured his companions.

"I wonder who is in the next box to us," said the to-be author suspiciously; and, hearing a peculiar noise, Mr. Hugh Riordan sud-

denly sprang on the seat and looked over the partition. Strange to say, he found himself face to face with a man who was also looking over the partition on the other side. This curious personage was no other than our already familiar acquaintance, Crooked Jim, who had taken up that position more conveniently to overhear the conversation of the party, with what object in view would have been difficult to have told. But he was equal to the occasion; therefore, in his coolest and blandest manner, he said, before Riordan could utter a word, —

"Excuse me, sir; did you call to me?"

"No, sir," said Riordan very sharply, descending to his seat. "Some fool thought we called him," he explained to Gilbert and Royal.

"Well," said Gilbert, "to return to your story."

"Yes, to return to your book," said Royal.

"In the first place, I flatter myself that the idea of the story is original. There are two rivals in love with my heroine."

"There generally are," said Royal dryly.

At this moment, a stranger who had entered the saloon suddenly perceived Gilbert, and, turning away from the bar, directed his steps towards the box, of which the curtains had been left partially open by the last waiter.

The new-comer was a pale, thin man, slightly above the ordinary height, erect in form, stern in mien, and of striking appearance. Beneath his dark, massive brows flashed eyes cold and penetrating as a hawk's. He stretched out his hand to Gilbert, who took it very coldly, and smiled with that faint, sad smile which had yielded to a more genuine one during the commencement of Riordan's recital.

"What, Mr. Hall also!" said the stranger. "I am decidedly in the way of meeting old friends. When did you return from Paris?"

"A short time since," answered Royal shortly.

"Sit down, Mr. Arkwright," said Gilbert, "and let me make you acquainted with Mr. Riordan. Mr. Riordan, Mr. Arkwright. Mr.

Riordan's writings must be familiar to you, if you read the popular publications of the day."

"Both the name and the writings of Mr. Hugh Riordan are very well known to me," said he whom Gilbert had introduced by the name of Arkwright, with great gravity.

"A perfect gentleman," thought Riordan to himself; "decidedly aristocratic air, in fact;" and the young Irishman was captivated by the stranger, to whom his writings and name were apparently so familiar.

"A conceited dude," was the reflection of the other. "I wonder what he has ever written: occasional poems and sketches, I suppose; in love with himself; fond of dress, but can't do it. Besides, he looks curious, with those selfish, watchful eyes of his."

Like a flash these thoughts passed through Arkwright's cold and calculating mind.

"Suppose we adjourn to the street," said Gilbert, preparing to rise.

"And how is the young lady I met you with last summer at Saratoga?" said Arkwright.

"Oh, *that* girl!" said Gilbert, laughing. "I had almost forgotten. She married a man in Philadelphia. I had a letter from her a short time ago."

"What was she?" asked Riordan.

"An experiment," replied Gilbert gloomily, "and, as usual, a failure."

"Woman is a mistake," said Royal; "a sort of a fascinating fraud."

Royal at that time did not happen to be in love.

"I wonder if there will be different sexes in the world to come," said Gilbert.

"I hope so," sighed Royal, thus giving a contradiction to his former statement.

"The world to come?" said Arkwright. "I thought you did not believe in anything, Thorndyke."

"Nor do I. Perhaps, though, that is next door to believing in everything."

And the agnostic arose, and, followed by the rest of the party, approached the desk for the purpose of paying his check.

As they crossed the room Arkwright said carelessly to Gilbert, "Do you know Miss Maude Dexter?"

"Yes; a most charming girl," replied Gilbert indifferently. "Do you know her?"

"Intimately," said Arkwright, and his voice trembled slightly.

Gilbert looked the speaker full in the face, and said with an affected enthusiasm, "She is very handsome."

"*Very!*" replied Arkwright, and his quick glance betrayed to Gilbert a jealous rival. At once the idea of making this affair a safeguard for his own love crossed the mind of the sharp student of human nature.

"What do you think of her cousin, Ida Sherman?" said Gilbert, with difficulty disguising his own feelings.

"A pretty enough girl," said Arkwright indifferently.

"He loves Maude, and not Ida, thank fortune," reflected Gilbert. Poor Amos S. Dexter, how little you know that those that are so near

and dear to you are entering into the calculations of such men!

Meanwhile their neighbors in the next stall had come out and advanced towards the desk.

"Jim," said Tom, nudging his friend's elbow, "Jim, there he is."

"Who? Where?"

"The Master — he — there."

And the two crooks fixed their eyes on Arkwright, who cast towards them a piercing look of menace and disdain. At the same time Riordan turned and surveyed the three with an air of contempt so little disguised that Crooked Jim, being somewhat under the influence of liquor, rudely demanded, —

"Who are you looking at, you dude?"

Riordan's first idea might have been to crush his insulter by a terrible look. That proving a failure, it occurred to the angry Milesian to draw a revolver which he had in his pocket. Prudence, however, restrained him. While he was thinking what was best to do under the circumstances, Crooked Jim, whose courage, like

that of most rogues, was very variable, mistaking Riordan's hesitation for a sign of timidity, puffed his cigar-smoke very coolly into the face of the aspirant for literary fame, seeming to consider that he held trumps.

He was destined to be mistaken.

Riordan's eyes flashed fire. Whatever else he was, he was no coward. Quick as thought he struck the rogue a terrible blow squarely between the eyes, which sent the confidence man reeling dizzily against the bar.

"Stand up to it, Jim, and do him up!" roared Joe, whose unworthy pupil in sparring that personage had been.

But Riordan intended business. His blood was up.

"Good! Well done!" cried Gilbert, as at the second round Mr. Jim Hobson measured his length on the ground.

"What have *you* to say about it?" grunted Jim's ex-teacher, squaring up to Gilbert, bent on redeeming the honor of the party to which he belonged.

"My good man," said Gilbert quietly, in that tone of confidence which to the ignorant is a mystery, "beware — I advise you."

"You are armed, I suppose?" retorted the ruffian scornfully, as he drew a wicked-looking knife.

"Stand back!" shouted Jones, alias Arkwright, springing forward to throw himself between his confederate and Gilbert, who had quietly stepped back one step, and drawn a small, richly made pistol which was suspended by a fine steel chain to his waist. At the same instant Royal Hall, who had smoked calmly during the whole scene, seeing the knife drawn, and filled with apprehension for his friend's safety, sprang forward, and, regardless of his own danger, laid, with one crushing blow of his heavy blackthorn cane, the huge athlete prostrate. Simultaneously with this unexpected demonstration of Royal, the sharp report of Gilbert's pistol was heard, and all in the saloon were suddenly awe-stricken. Every one crowded around the fallen man, who lay still and bleeding on the floor.

"You have shot him," said Riordan.

"I am afraid you have killed him!" said Arkwright anxiously.

Gilbert said nothing. He knelt down before the wounded man and sought hastily for traces of his bullet; in so doing he accidentally exposed the ex-circus-performer's belt, and in the very centre of its buckle was a deep dent where the ball had struck, showing that it was the cane and not the bullet that quieted him. Accordingly Gilbert examined the cut inflicted by Royal, which proved to be an ugly one, from which the blood ran copiously.

"I fear he is seriously injured," said Gilbert.

"I did it to save your life," said Royal.

There was no doubt whatever but that he *had* saved his friend's life, for, as the bullet had failed to take effect, another second would have seen the knife buried in the side of the man's antagonist.

"Thank you, my dear friend, you did nobly," said Gilbert; "still I should feel very badly to

have the man die on account of such a slight affair."

"Who is he? Where is his home?" said Riordan, looking around for his companions.

But they were nowhere to be found. At a sign from their Master they had quickly disappeared. He thought it best to get rid of them, for fear something might be said that would compromise him.

During the whole affair, Arkwright had been filled with the utmost anxiety. His arrival in the saloon had been purely accidental. There was nothing that could have annoyed him more than to meet his agents in so public a place. What was he to do with the man? He was wounded, might have a fever, become delirious, and in his ravings tell all he knew; yet Arkwright did not wish to take him to his own home for many reasons, especially as it might attract attention and surmises. The counterfeiter was in a quandary and had about resolved to take him, when to his consternation Gilbert said abruptly, —

"I think it is best to keep this unfortunate affair secret. It is now late. At any time strangers may enter. I will take this man to my own boarding-place in Cambridgeport, and nurse him. Royal, will you call a hack while I bind up his head? On our way we will take in a physician."

So in this peculiar manner Joe Greenfield, the ex-burglar and acrobat as well as the confidential agent of Arkwright the counterfeiter, became the guest of Gilbert. The Master walked home in a very unhappy state of mind, after promising to call and inquire regarding the condition of the sick man soon, accompanied part way by Riordan, who was fighting the battle over and over again verbally.

"Call in and see me," said Riordan cordially as they parted.

"Not much!" thought Arkwright. However, he bowed very politely, and replied, "Nothing would afford me more pleasure, Mr. Riordan. Many thanks! Good-night, sir; I trust your

rest will not be disturbed by the excitement we have undergone."

And with that parting wish Arkwright left him at the corner of Washington and Dover streets.

CHAPTER VI.

THE WOUNDED MAN.

IT was perhaps an hour later than when Arkwright and Riordan separated the same evening, that a hack drew up in front of a large, old-fashioned wooden house located on Magazine Street, in that suburb of Boston known as Cambridgeport. Two men alighted from the carriage, supporting a third, whose head was all bandaged up. These men were Gilbert, Dr. Browne, and the confidential agent of Arkwright. This house was situated on the corner of James Street, on a slight elevation, from the sides of which a grass lawn, carefully kept, sloped downwards to the streets. The outside appearance was very prepossessing and homelike. At one time it had been the residence of one of Cambridge's old and aristocratic families, who had followed the tide of

fashion and moved up on to North Avenue. It was now kept as a quiet boarding-house by a Mrs. Wedger, who was a fine-looking, matronly widow of English birth, whose father had been an officer of rank and distinction in the English navy. She possessed one of those natures so rarely met with; so noble and kind that her chief mission on earth seemed to be to assist and console those in trouble. Married unfortunately when young, and disappointed in her love, she had faced afflictions with such a lofty and steady heroism that it won for her the admiration of all who knew her. She had but one child, — a little son, — whom, thus far, she had maintained in a most respectable manner. Mrs. Wedger, in addition to much experience and powers of great observation, was a fine judge of human nature. In her bearing she was easy, and in her language free, but her tender heart rendered her incapable of injuring even an enemy. She was extremely fond of children, and always had a lot of young friends around her. All her boarders became her per-

sonal friends, among whom was Gilbert, who had for a long time made his home with her. Between this strange but gifted man and his landlady a friendship founded on mutual respect and esteem had long existed. They understood each other thoroughly, for neither one could be mean or deceitful. She often made a confidant of Gilbert, and Gilbert of her. In regard to his board bill, Mrs. Wedger gave him unlimited credit, knowing full well that he always took the first opportunity of settling his debts. Nothing that Gilbert ever did met with any opposition from Mrs. Wedger. So that when Gilbert brought to his rooms, in the hack, the wounded man, and told his landlady that he wished to nurse him there until restored to health, she asked no questions, but took it for granted that he had good and sufficient reasons for so doing, and offered to assist him in every way that was in her power. Truly the injured man had fallen into good hands.

After a careful examination, Dr. Browne, who was a personal friend of Gilbert, pro-

nounced the wound a severe one, but not necessarily a fatal one.

"A strong fellow," he said, looking at the solid build of the man and the large, muscular neck, "and will probably pull through all right."

He left, promising to call the next day, after leaving a prescription and some directions.

When Joe Greenfield came to himself, after a period of mental confusion accompanied by a slow fever, he found Gilbert standing over him with a glass of cool lemonade in his hand, gazing with a calm, grave face on him. The poor fellow, who had scarcely taken anything but medicine since his arrival there, eagerly seized the glass and drank its contents at a single draught.

"Thank you, sir — thank you, sir," he murmured faintly. So weak was the once herculean man that a child could have overcome him. Everything around him was so clean and tidy, it almost made him think he had been transplanted to another world.

Who knows but that recollections of his early

childhood days came to the wayward man—days when he lived at home and knew a mother's fond care and a father's wise counsel? Long forgotten impulses, long crushed boyish sentiments, which never were to find the reality, stirred the depths of his soul, and sincere gratitude shone from his dark eyes as they rested admiringly on the manly countenance of our hero. With its lofty air of command, its white, massive brow, its regular features, it was a countenance to command attention and respect anywhere.

Nor did the tall stature and powerful physique of his benefactor by any means diminish his feelings of admiration, which were of a very different kind from those the counterfeiter had caused.

By one of those inexplicable impulses, the man determined to devote his future life, if spared, to the service of Gilbert, who, sitting down by his bedside, took his right hand kindly in his own.

"How are you feeling, my friend?" asked Gilbert.

"Weak and sick," answered Joe — "thanks."

"Do you feel like talking a little?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let me, then, ask you if you have a family, or any friends to whom you wish me to communicate your whereabouts."

"No one, sir," replied Joe sadly. "I know of no one that would care whether I live or die."

"Poor man!" said Gilbert, "I can sympathize with you in that respect, for I, too, am alone in this world. I am going in town. What can I bring you: some fruit, wine, and flowers? and what do you want for reading matter?"

"Anything, sir, you wish."

"Well, good-day. I will leave you in good hands. You will be on your feet again in two or three days," said Gilbert cheerfully.

Joe said nothing, but looked his gratitude.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DISCUSSION.

GILBERT, leaving Joe in Mrs. Wedger's good care, started for Boston, ostensibly to call on Ida. As he expected, she was delighted to see him. He was much pleased to hear that Maude had gone for the day to see a sick relative at Melrose.

Ida, in the eyes of Gilbert, looked as charming as ever, and indeed in the eyes of any one she must have been very beautiful. The telltale blush that rose to her face on greeting Gilbert would have convinced any one well versed in the ways of a woman's heart, that Ida loved Gilbert, and it was equally true that Gilbert loved Ida. Day and night the image of each was present to the other.

Purified by her love, Gilbert Thorndyke saw the clouds of disappointment and the shadows

of experience pass away as the morning dew disappears before the sun's rays. His imagination became purer. The sins of his adventurous and reckless youth were forgotten. His will once more became strong and imperial. His hope and courage once more bade defiance to the world. Once more he was prepared to renew that gigantic struggle which genius forever must maintain against ignorance and superstition.

Gilbert's first impulse, after finding himself alone in the drawing-room with Ida, was to declare his great love for her: taking her hand in his and placing his arm around her waist, he looked down into her glorious dark blue eyes, and said with great earnestness, "With my whole heart I love you, Ida."

"He truly loves me," thought the lovely girl; and yet she showed no alarm or surprise. Perhaps it was not entirely unexpected.

Ida not making any response, Gilbert continued, "I am now situated in a position where I feel that I could make you very happy. I may

not be as wealthy as some of your other admirers, but no woman will ever marry a kinder, truer, or more considerate husband than I shall try to make you."

"I can hardly answer you yet," said Ida, with emotion, after a long pause.

"You do not, then, dislike me — I mean, I am not disagreeable to you?"

"No, no; I like you as a friend — I admire your great ability; but I should take time to consider it."

"Very well," said Gilbert, "I will wait your pleasure, and will not refer to the matter again until you give me your decision."

She loved him as few love at the present time, but still she hesitated to surrender herself to another.

Her life had not run in the ordinary channels. She was an orphan, both her parents dying when she was very young, and she became dependent on her uncle for a home. For years his health had been poor, and she well knew that should anything happen to him

she would be alone in the world, without home, near friends, or money: her aunt and cousin she never liked; and was satisfied that it was owing to her uncle's influence that affairs were made so pleasant for her at her adopted home.

It may possibly have been that that fact acted in Gilbert's favor, for she decided to give him an affirmative answer the next time he called; but we must not anticipate.

After Gilbert had offered himself to Ida, an embarrassing silence ensued. Gilbert endeavored to relieve it by discussing other matters, and consequently the conversation drifted along in an unusual manner. As the conversation of two people like them is always interesting from an opposing similarity of their characteristics, we will partially repeat it, trusting that it may possibly interest some of our readers.

First, let me say that by paths peculiar to each they had arrived at the same and yet different crossroads.

Ida, the delicate student, reading and studying with intensity the literature of the past as

well as the modern ages, had yet lived in comparative seclusion from the world, although she understood life; knew what it was to live; knew men and women and their frailties; judged calmly, clearly, and justly of life and its evils and troubles with a sadness unembittered by the experience of personal suffering.

On the opposite hand, Gilbert, though a student, had seen, felt, and done enough in his life to throw into the shade all his reading. His observations of men and customs had been great. In that way he learned far more than he ever could have by reading.

On the occasion referred to, Ida asked her lover, "Do you read much now?"

"I do not," answered Gilbert. "I am tired of reading."

"Tired of reading! Why, how can any one tire of reading?"

"Easily enough, when authors simply repeat old and familiar ideas. What we want is new and original ones."

"I think I understand you: you are a philosopher."

"Hardly, for philosophizing is only repetition."

"What do you do, then?"

"Well, if nothing better presents itself, I build castles in the air for the future; for if I ever could erect them in reality, I should then have both the anticipation and realization; but should nothing ever come of them, I at least would have the anticipation, which is half."

"Well, there is something to that," said Ida.

"I observe facts," continued Gilbert. "I read everywhere the book of Nature. Chiefly I read men, and, like a mineralogist, classify my specimens. Every variety of organization is to me a new study, its characteristics the handwriting of Fate. Every face is a dial, every feature a number."

"And what is your object in this scientific criticism of mankind?" asked Ida, becoming more and more interested in this strange but gifted man.

"To know men is to rule them. Knowledge is power."

"Then your aspirations are to rule men?"

"I do not aspire. It is my nature. I love freedom beyond everything. In order to be free one must be master, for are not all the world either masters or slaves?"

"Then," said Ida, with restrained interest, "you would rule men with your thoughts?"

"My dear girl," said Gilbert, pausing, "I am afraid I am becoming conceited, and you know that true merit and modesty always go hand in hand. Besides, I am running the risk of being misunderstood. Suppose we change the subject."

"No, no," said Ida eagerly; "I shall not misunderstand you. Go on."

"I cannot really tell," said Gilbert, "why I should speak to you to-day as I have perhaps never spoken to any living being before," and he looked at Ida with such sincere admiration, for an instant, as to embarrass her; noticing which, he continued, "He who takes the first

steps in science must be followed by all men, therefore he is the ruler of the world. The ambition of the wise, therefore, is to aim at the discovery of higher truths and greater facts than have yet been known. In this respect I would rule. It is my destiny to rule. I *must.*" As Gilbert finished he looked so lofty and noble that Ida sat as if entranced: finally, regaining herself, she asked, —

"Do you think that want will ever cease to exist?"

Gilbert, with effort repressing a terrible desire to defy propriety by clasping Ida to his heart and kissing her a hundred times, replied, —

"Yes; it must end some day. The day must come when even the poorest classes will rise above the stupidity of fostering, instead of preventing, crime. For what is crime? Mental disease, produced by want. A rich man that is dishonest is a very foolish man, for he has no need to steal. In the Old World ages of ignorance, selfishness, and poverty have created an army of these outcasts. Emigration to

America furnishes hordes of these unfortunates as a nucleus for home production of the same kind. In Boston and in New York the miseries of London and Paris begin to re-appear, accompanied also by the same luxury and extravagance in the opposite class."

"Do you not become disgusted with this world?" asked Ida.

"I do," said Gilbert, and his face resumed a look of great earnestness as he said coldly, "Sometimes I look forward into the future till I forget the past, and then I forget to despise mankind to the degree it deserves."

But the time for Gilbert to go had come, so he arose to take his departure. The clock on the mantel struck six as he was leaving.

"Good-night, Ida. I will call Friday for my answer."

After Gilbert left, the young beauty rose and stepped before a mirror, in which her whole form was reflected. She stood there, tall, graceful, delicately voluptuous in the rounded outlines of her neck and shoulders, from which

she had now removed the lace that till then had shrouded their beauty. There she stood, with an innocent yet imperial pride, and in her inmost heart a little voice whispered, "For *his* sake, I thank God that I am beautiful."

When a brilliant woman is beautiful, it is the beauty of another world. Unfortunate are those on whom its rays shine coldly.

Far better never to have scaled the walls of Paradise and gazed upon its matchless delights, than, having seen it, to be driven back by the flaming sword of despair into eternal gloom.

CHAPTER VIII.

TROUBLE BREWING.

THE day following the episode related in the last chapter, Richard Arkwright presented himself at No. — Beacon Street, and received, to his joy, a cordial welcome from Maude. Miss Dexter was in some respects a remarkable girl, one of those rare women who, when they meet with men of a certain class, become very fascinating; a power that is the gift of but a very few. It is a strange quality, depending for its existence on the possession of unusual sympathies, and is generally a sign of some superiority very difficult to explain, yet of great influence on certain minds that come within its circle. It is often accompanied, even in those that are bad, by an internal harmony, a grand self-reliance, that is in itself an element of greatness.

With all the fascinating qualities she possessed, she well knew in her own heart the immense gulf existing between her own acquirements and those of Ida. While jealous of her beautiful cousin, she was, for various reasons, anxious to retain her affection and good-will.

All the same, since the calls of Gilbert had become so frequent, she had begun to conceive a strong dislike for her more victorious rival.

She had become infatuated with Gilbert, and was almost beside herself when she realized that it was Ida Gilbert loved, and not herself. In her heart she had said when they first met, "My love shall win him!"

But to effect her object, namely the desire to produce a rupture between the man she so loved and her beautiful cousin, she required an accomplice. Nor was she long in choosing one who was both able and willing to assist her.

This dangerous friend and ally was none other than Richard Arkwright.

Arkwright had long known and loved Maude. Had he been successful in receiving the slight-

est encouragement from her, he would doubtless, at once, have openly declared his love, and perhaps have won her by its intensity and sincerity. His true business was very carefully disguised under the garb of a large and successful stock-speculator. He moved in very good society, for his relatives were highly connected New-Yorkers. Aside from his reserved and severe air, Arkwright's face was aristocratic-looking, and what some might call handsome. His features were straight and classical; his figure well proportioned and graceful. He dressed in the height of fashion, and his manners were dignified and natural.

His age was about the same as Gilbert's. He was, therefore, to all outward appearances a desirable match for a young lady occupying Miss Dexter's position.

As Arkwright usually called in the forenoon, while Gilbert paid his visits late in the afternoon, they seldom met. But after the affair in the Argyle saloon, a new feature presented itself: Arkwright called on Gilbert in reality to

ascertain his views regarding the two cousins. Gilbert expressed himself with great caution, allowing him to go away with a suspicion that he really did care something for Maude, for he thought, "If he has a fancy for her, a little jealousy will make him more attentive and help my case."

Arkwright became terribly jealous, and this, added to his danger of falling into Gilbert's power through some indiscretion on the part of the sick man, was sufficient cause to make the changer of bank-bills the unsuspected enemy of the lover of Ida.

Thus it was, when Maude Dexter confidentially assured her mistrustful admirer of her wish to prevent Mr. Thorndyke from obtaining the hand of Ida, Arkwright promised to assist her to his utmost.

"Indeed I suspect," said Maude, taking a bold step, "that he is a rake trying to deceive the girl; he may be married."

"Who knows?" said Arkwright, with a knowing look.

"And divorced from his wife?"

"Probably."

"It is enough," thought Maude.

The explosion soon came.

Ida had entered the room. A conversation on general topics followed; Arkwright was, as usual, polite and fluent.

"By the way, Mr. Arkwright, what a charming man is Mr. Thorndyke," said Maude.

Arkwright was personally brave, though generally careful. He answered quietly, —

"Are you not aware, Miss Dexter, that Gilbert is married? What is the matter? Are you ill?" he asked Ida, pretending to be surprised at her sudden agitation.

"Not at all, sir," answered Ida, rising and leaving the room with a look which terrified her cousin and left her in a very uncertain and frightened condition regarding the success of the cruel strategy. Ida had no suspicion of deception. She had heard Gilbert casually mention Arkwright as one of his acquaintances, but neither was cognizant of the power

Maude had over the man. She took it as a fact; and it was easy for Maude to afterwards fill up the details, and by pretence affect pity and sorrow for her.

Ida, while a brilliant girl, was innocent of the vast amount of intrigue and deception going on in this world. She had not then learned what every true man knows, that your self-professed saints are either the most contemptible of hypocrites or the meanest specimens of humanity.

Love is the master-passion of the world, the elixir of happiness, the secret of power. To how many has it become a scourge and a curse! How often do we see the beautiful and noble driven apart like ships at sea in a storm, by the errors, the prejudice, and the hypocrisy of society!

Thus, because Gilbert had been in his past life a *man*, and not a weak substitute for one, he was condemned as low and wicked. Ida, believing him married, regarded his love as an insult, as any other pure-minded girl would

have done. By a single lie was destroyed, for the time, the happiness of two of the most accomplished persons of their time.

"Maude," said Richard Arkwright abruptly, as soon as Ida had left the room, "this is serious business; did you notice the girl's face? She turned as white as a sheet. I fear we have struck harder than was intended."

"*We?*" exclaimed Maude, resenting the familiarity of her companion. "I did not tell her that Mr. Thorndyke was married."

"That is so; but you know very well that I did it only to please you."

"To please me? Why should it please me? What difference does it make to me?" said the unreasonable beauty, pouting, and looking — in Arkwright's eyes — doubly seductive.

"If that is the case, perhaps I had better correct the mistake, especially as I deliberately risked my life in making it."

"What do you mean by risking your life?" asked Miss Dexter, with an increasing show of interest.

"Do you not understand that Gilbert Thorndyke is not the man to permit such a gross injury to go unrevenged? No, indeed; rely on it, that should the deception ever be discovered, he would shoot me as a dog."

"But how will he ever know it?"

"That remains to be seen. Sooner or later, all things are found out," muttered Arkwright in a gloomy tone. "However, it is said, and let us trust to fate. As for you, Maude, you now know what my devotion will do for you."

"Oh, Mr. Arkwright!"

"One kiss before I go."

"Leave me, sir, I insist."

"My dear girl, think how much I love you."

"There — now go."

"I will call on you to-morrow."

"To-morrow?"

"Good-by."

"Good-by."

And Arkwright left the house in a peculiar frame of mind. The knell of Gilbert's happi-

ness was the signal for his own to commence. He had gained that first step which counts for so much. Past experience told him that the rest must soon follow. Bold as he was under ordinary circumstances, he could not, on calmer reflections, recall without unpleasant sensations the fact that he had done a fearful injury to a man who, under great provocation, was capable of going to the most desperate extremities. Henceforward, not only his liberty but his life hung by a thread, and the terrible arm of the Law was not more certainly suspended over his head than was the deadly pistol of Gilbert hypothetically pointed at his heart. With his art he was sinning against mankind, with his heart he was wronging Gilbert. In short, he had doubled his perils. And the sick man — what if he should betray him? Truly, he was not to be envied.

CHAPTER IX.

A COUNTERFEITER'S HOME.

WHEN Arkwright departed from Beacon Street, after the affair mentioned in our last chapter, he went directly to his residence, which was at the South End, on a street leading from Washington Street, in a locality at that time far removed from all business activity.

There was nothing especial about it to distinguish it from the other houses in the same block. It was a fairly respectable-looking house of brick, four stories high, with a slated roof, and a very small grass-plot in front, surrounded by a little iron fence, which a good coat of paint would have decidedly improved.

All the blinds were closed, and from the outside it had rather a gloomy, forsaken air. The doorplate bore the uncommon name of

Smith. Arkwright, on reaching it, opened the door with his latch-key, and ascended the stairs. He did not stop until he reached the landing of the third story, where a door, at the foot of the next flight of stairs, which were narrower than those below, impeded further ascent.

Since the carpenter had made it, no living mortal but Arkwright had ever passed through it. The lock was a marvel of workmanship, and even if successful in unlocking it, there was another secret in opening it; namely, it must be lifted: otherwise it remained in its place.

After he had passed through this door, he carefully refastened it, and lighted a wax taper which he took from a small silver match-box which he always carried in his pocket. A singular room was that of Arkwright's. It was evidently not intended to receive callers in, as the only piece of furniture to sit on was one large, old-fashioned armchair. Arkwright, who was tired by his long walk, threw himself into it, and, lighting a cigar, fell to meditating.

"Art is long and life is short," he thought, "and a man cannot become the first alterer of his time in one or two days. Let us see. Four years ago I commenced by changing the denominations of the various bills, and by the aid of my knowledge of chemistry I brought it into such perfection that I won the admiration of every bank in the United States. I became the king of counterfeiters, and I deserved the distinction. I have done a great deal of business and done it on a large scale. By referring to my account-book" — Arkwright here examined his ledger — "I have successfully passed exactly two hundred and twenty-one thousand three hundred and fifty dollars, which I have altered over at a profit of over one hundred thousand dollars. Of this I have put into real estate, in the business part of the city, seventy thousand, which to-day would sell for probably over one hundred thousand. The balance I have spent. Thanks to my disguises and care I have never yet been detected. A few weeks more, and then Maude and happiness, or

dishonor and death! But now to business! I must make five thousand dollars before morning."

The alterer had well said that the art of altering the denominations of bills could not be learned in one day. Before he commenced to circulate his changed money, much time had been spent and wasted in practice, engraving plates, and the like, all requiring the utmost patience and labor. As it took a long time to engrave each of these plates, it was necessary to print off a good many of the same kind, which not only was very dangerous but very apt to frustrate its own object.

Industry and perseverance will, in time, overcome all obstacles. Arkwright was now, by the aid of a steel and zinc press which he had invented, enabled to reproduce fac-similes of all the bills issued. Arkwright arose and looked around the room. On every hand were tables covered with engravers' and artists' tools and other materials; shelves laden with bottles, a couple of presses of curious construction; a

camera, a microscope, etc. ; in one corner on a table were a couple of very richly chased revolvers. Near one of the windows lay a coil of rope, one end of which was securely fastened to a ring in the wall. He stepped to one of the tables, and, taking up a plate of zinc which he carefully scrutinized, placed it in the press. The plate contained the impressions of no less than ten different bills, the very best banks in the country being represented. His paper being ready damped and the red parts already printed, our scientific alterer and counterfeiter proceeded to ink the plate with a roller, and slowly to print off about fifty sheets, equal in value to more than five thousand dollars of spurious money. The cutting and separating the bills was soon performed by a pair of shears, and Arkwright now held in his hands as nice a looking pile of money as one would usually care to see. Another hour was spent in dirtying, crumpling, greasing, and tearing the bills into an appearance of having passed through many hands, and the work was ended.

Do not let the facility with which so much money can so easily be made tempt any unscrupulous person to enter into the business, for it is a life of anxiety, fear, and perpetual unrest, for it is a crime, and crime and misery always go hand in hand.

On the following morning Richard Arkwright, putting carefully into his secret pocket the counterfeit money he had made in the manner already described, sallied out in search of Tom and Crooked Jim. As he went out he met his only servant, an old and hideous negro, who had taken care of his rooms for years. He was very devoted to the man who had provided him with all the necessities of life, — good clothing, good food, and good shelter, — things to which poor Peter had been in earlier days too often a stranger; and with a gratitude that would have been commendable in people far his superior in intellect, he would have given his life at any time to have saved that of his master.

CHAPTER X.

DESPAIR.

AT a supper given by Gilbert to a few of his intimate friends the same evening, while the champagne corks flew, Riordan cried,— "Why, Gilbert, my dear boy, how changed you are! Your inventions must have been successful, for you look five years younger."

Royal Hall did not make any such mistake. He knew that love and love alone had the power to work so great an alteration in his friend, and said to himself as he filled his glass, "It must be that Ida has accepted him."

The next morning Gilbert arose early, and after a bath and breakfast stepped into the room of his wounded guest to inquire concerning his health. He found him feeling much better, and considerably stronger, so well that he had resolved to dress and be up during the

day. Gilbert then turned his attention to some matters that he had neglected long enough. First he completed a story that he had been writing for a popular magazine, which had been delayed by his despondency. Next he wrote half a dozen business letters, which retrieved for a time his almost exhausted finances. In the afternoon he went to Boston and carried his story, then to see his publishers of a new scientific work which he fondly hoped would soon place him in comparatively easy and independent circumstances at least, if not place his name high up on the roll of famous and learned scholars.

Ah! happy is it that for us poor mortals the *to-morrow* is an eternal mystery.

Gilbert retired early that evening, and long lay awake thinking of his future plans; his happiness when he could call Ida Sherman his own; his fame as an author on scientific subjects, the wealth it would bring to him; Ida and he would make an extended tour throughout Europe, visiting Old England and the

scenes of his former days. While thinking these pleasant thoughts he fell asleep.

"Here are three letters for you, Mr. Thorndyke," said Mrs. Wedger, as she handed them to him after breakfast the next morning.

Gilbert took the letters, and experienced a strange feeling of joy as in the handwriting on the smallest of the three envelopes he recognized the straight English style of penmanship which he knew so well to be that of Ida.

He hurriedly ascended to his sitting-room and library combined, and broke open the envelope, carelessly throwing the other two on his table. As he read, his face lost all its color, his hands trembled, his eyes grew fixed, and he reeled into a chair.

He read it again and again, seeming not to be able to comprehend its contents.

It contained these words only:

"Miss Ida Sherman declines to receive any further attention from Mr. Gilbert Thorndyke, and desires him to understand that this note must terminate their acquaintance."

After reading it, for hours Gilbert sat in a condition of dazed thought. He went back to the beginning of their acquaintance, and carefully reviewed every interview, every word and every particular, that he could.

"She never could have loved me!" he sighed at length. "Perhaps she tried to — and it was fruitless; she might have been interested in my conversational powers, but not in myself. Yet she gave me to understand that I could hope! But that might have been an impulse, or it might have been that she pitied me so she could not tell me no. Yet, I fancied that she did love me; that I read it in her every look and action, but how could I have expected it — I, a man of the world, stained with the sin and selfishness of the world; she, so pure and so good? Our happiness is ended. We have met for the last time. Well, such happiness was too great to be real and lasting. I cannot live and wander through this mean, selfish world of trouble and hypocrisy! I will die — die as I have lived, a free man and master of my own

destiny!" Gilbert arose and paced slowly up and down his apartment.

Reader! do not be surprised that a man of the world like Gilbert should, without even mistrusting another cause for Ida's strange conduct or making an attempt to change her resolution, accept her note as final.

But true love is a species of insanity, and beautiful insanity too. Gilbert's love was so great that it demanded reciprocity or nothing. In the excess of his pride and passion he was unreasonable. Thus it was that after he began to recover from the effects of Ida's cruel note, he saw the worst and most hopeless side of the affair. In his terrible suffering he did not at first dream of any outside agency, because everything naturally pointed towards a passional cause.

"Love," argued Gilbert, "can never be forced. It is a wild-flower, and not a hot-house plant. Had Ida loved me at any time, no external circumstances could have destroyed that love, and therefore she would love me still. On the other hand, had she never loved me, —

as I now think, — nothing I ever could have done would have overcome her natural tendencies. A woman never can be won. A fool only will ever try to reason indifference into love. If love is a pre-existent union between two of the opposite sex, then love at first sight is the only true love I know! Alas! into what trouble has my wild infatuation led me, when in the first eager glances of Ida's curiosity at the sight of a stranger I imagined that she cared for me. Fool, poor fool that I have been!" And, in his great agony, the strong man threw himself on the lounge and wept long and bitterly over this the last withered flower of his wild, unhappy, and passionate youth.

He arose at length. He was pale and weak. He staggered to the table, sat down, and wrote these words, and these only, to Ida :—

DEAR GIRL, — Forever farewell. Always yours, and yours alone. GILBERT.

Then folding his arms on the table and leaning his head on them, he sat in that position, in-

different to everything, till it began to grow dark, then he arose. Ida lost, gone from him forever. What cared he now for science, fame, or wealth? His life that day had become desolate. A long and weary life of trouble and contest seemed to loom up before him with terrible strength, and he asked himself the questions that he had asked so many times before in the dark periods of his checkered career, and which you perhaps, reader, have asked yourself — "Why suffer to live? Why live to suffer?" and then he pondered over the great question, "Is the battle of life worth fighting?" and answered himself no, not for him at least.

He again seated himself at his table and wrote lovingly and kindly to his friends. So while with one hand he clutched the bony fingers of Death, the other was stretched out in friendship. He would die, not madly but calmly, in sorrow and in disappointment.

This is a part of what he wrote to Royal: —

"An inseparable barrier exists between Ida and myself. What is there left for me? I

have seen paradise: the portals are closed to me. I can only die.

"To me, philosopher and author of a school yet in its infancy, — the school of passional, intellectual, and moral harmony, — the idea is natural. I never feared death."

Then taking from the table drawer a small phial marked morphine and which contained about fifteen grains, he removed the cork.

"A second's resolution, and all my pains and troubles are at an end, and this strange, sensitive, and miserable organization which is known here as Gilbert Thorndyke is a thing of the past, a topic for the daily papers, perhaps more, a subject for the dissecting student."

He stood up, eying the little bottle with evident satisfaction, for there is an absolute satisfaction about death, that is fascinating.

No worldly after-thoughts are involved. The result, being unknown entirely, must be left to take care of itself. It is a solution of every difficulty; it is, in short, a complete measure.

To die means to die, and dead men are never obliged to answer any questions.

Two thoughts generally come to those that contemplate suicide. One is, What is going to become of them in the future world, which lies hidden beyond the dark curtain of shadows, which we call death? The other is the foolish idea of what people will say and think of them and their act afterwards.

What if Ida loved him after all? What if perhaps she did not yet fully understand him? What if some secret enemy had been at work? How would it do to write to Ida and entreat — no, demand — an interview or at the least an explanation?

No, these were foolish thoughts. Before him was her letter distinctly enough denying further acquaintance, casting him off with indifference and heartlessness. It told enough. A woman who had ever felt one atom of love for a man could never cast him off in such a manner. His pride, too, told him that he would only be received with contempt.

"I have never known what happiness is," said Gilbert to himself; "nothing but disappointment after disappointment, sorrow after sorrow. And yet, O Ida, beautiful Ida, what a paradise on earth we two might have had if you had but"—

Gilbert did not complete the sentence. He was too much overcome at the great happiness which had been so near to him and yet so far. For only those who, in the bright springtime of life, have truly loved and suddenly seen an impassable grief open between them and happiness can realize Gilbert Thorndyke's disappointment. All the dreams of his life, all his future hopes, were based on his love for Ida Sherman. This love had failed him; the enchanted castle which hope had built had crumbled and fallen, burying him in its ruins. He sank into his chair and raised the bottle to his lips; another moment and Gilbert Thorndyke would have carried out his design. Suddenly a groan was heard coming from Joe's room. It is strange, however cleverly we carve the mys-

terious block of which our lives are made, the black vein of destiny ever reappears in it. Gilbert, even in his own terrible state of mind, deferred his intention in order to do an act of kindness to a suffering man. He laid the bottle down and hastened into the sick man's room. He found him restless and wishing a glass of water, which he went for and on his return handed him.

"How kind you have been to me," said the unfortunate man. "And yet perhaps you would not be if you only knew what I had been."

"I do not know or care; you are suffering, and that is sufficient reason why I should assist you."

"When I get well I will show my gratitude to you. I will devote myself to your service."

"You can never do me a service," answered Gilbert, "for I am soon to take a long journey; how long, I cannot say."

"Where? What do you mean?" said Joe, starting up.

"I mean that inside of ten minutes I shall be a corpse."

"Shoot yourself?" asked Joe. "Why?"

"No, not shoot myself. A better way. I am too miserable to live. I wish to die."

"You too miserable to live? then what am I?" said Joe, who had a blunt logic of his own, which Royal's blow had luckily not disturbed. "Are you strapped?" asked Joe, "for if you are, wait until I get well, and I will get the rocks for you. No matter how; that is my business. Men must live."

"Then you would commit crime for me, my friend?" said Gilbert, with a choking feeling in his throat, for he felt he still had one true friend.

"Why not? You stood by me when I was hurt trying to injure you, and I am not the man to forget a favor."

"But I must leave you. Good-night."

"But, Mr. Thorndyke!" cried Joe, at his wits' ends, "what am I going to do?"

"That's so," thought Gilbert, "and my poor friend Mrs. Wedger! It is going to put her in a bad fix; besides, I owe her a hundred dol-

lars." Gilbert returned to his room and once more raised the poison to his mouth, when suddenly he heard a step behind him, and the bottle was violently seized and dashed against the hearth-stone, breaking it into hundreds of pieces.

Gilbert turned quickly, and found himself confronted by Royal.

"How did you get in at this time?" said Gilbert in astonishment.

"I simply told the servant that I wished to come directly to your apartments. I was afraid something was wrong."

"Why so?"

"Because you promised to meet me at the Quincy House, and I never knew you to break your word before."

"Please excuse me," said Gilbert, "I forgot everything about it, but I can never thank you for your interference."

"Tell me everything," said Royal briefly.

So Gilbert told him all. In such cases, when the mind is so burdened, it is a great

relief to find a friend that you can put confidence in and that will sympathize with you. Royal was such a one. What there was about him that made you love him, I cannot tell. I can describe his complexion, his features, his figure; but the irresistible charm about him, I cannot. Every one liked him. Every one trusted him. To the rich and the poor he was equally courteous, kind and polite to all, — one of nature's born noblemen. With his agreeable manners were united an unusually handsome and well-knit form, always dressed in perfect taste, and that face which belongs to every man of the bold, breezy style of beauty. His disposition was frank, cheerful, and kind. Since their college days he had been Gilbert's firm and trusted friend.

Royal listened carefully to all Gilbert said, making no remarks until he had finished; then he said all that ingenuity could suggest, to cheer his friend. "Give me time," he said, "and I will find out the cause, and we will remedy it. Promise me, old friend, that you

will abandon your rash intentions until I see you again. It will come out all right in time." Royal well knew that could he once succeed in obtaining his friend's promise, Gilbert would die sooner than break his word. Gilbert promised, and Royal left the room as quietly as he had entered it.

Gilbert, who had scarcely tasted food since breakfast, fell, dressed as he was, on the cabinet-bed that he had used since his wounded guest had been brought to his rooms, and soon fell into an uneasy slumber. He arose in the morning, feeling much better than he had expected.

He stepped in to see Joe, who was improving fast, and soon persuaded him that the affair of the night before was a slight joke in order to test his friendship.

The next few days dragged wearily by. Gilbert was hurriedly making preparations to leave the city. Where to go, he knew not; only to get away as far as he could from so many things that reminded him of his lost idol.

Once he was walking up Washington Street when he saw her seated in her uncle's coupé, in front of Jordan, Marsh & Co.'s. But Gilbert's bow was met by a look of cool disdain, and no accident occurred to provoke or excuse a closer interview.

Thus it was that these two gifted young people were separated by a vast wall. Of this wall Maude Dexter was the triumphant architect,—she and her guilty admirer and accomplice, the counterfeiter, Richard Arkwright.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE LIBRARY.

A FEW evenings after Gilbert received the letter from Ida, she was seated in the library of the Dexter mansion reading, while her uncle sat at a desk near by, writing. Suddenly he threw down his pen, and leaning back in his chair, said abruptly, —

"Ida, what has become of your friend Mr. Thorndyke? I have not seen him for some time."

"I do not know."

"Has he not been here lately?"

"No, uncle."

"Why is it that he does not come? I would like to see him. A friend of mine, George Mason, is very much interested in a work of science of his. You know George Mason?"

"Yes, uncle."

Ida spoke in a sweet, low tone of voice, trying to conceal her feelings from her uncle, whom she did not care to know about this affair, notwithstanding her intense affection for him for his kindness and unbounded generosity to her in the past.

"They say George Mason is worth two millions," continued Mr. Dexter. "He also has a daughter that would prove a great catch for this erratic friend of yours."

Ida remained silent. Her uncle's careless talk threw her into thoughts that were of the saddest and bitterest kind. She still felt an indefinable interest in the future of her adventurous lover, in spite of her knowledge of his unworthiness.

A woman who has once loved a man can never forget him entirely.

"Why are you so quiet?" asked Mr. Dexter suddenly, looking sharply at his niece, and continuing, "Now, come to think of it, it occurred to me that you did take quite an interest in Mr. Thorndyke."

"I assure you, my dear uncle, that I do not care in the least for Mr. Thorndyke."

"You know, Ida, that you are fast arriving at that age when you will receive many offers from men of wealth and position. Now, I want to see you happy and contented; and if you would be happier by marrying this young writer, why, I never will stand in the way."

Ida was so touched by his unselfishness that she rose and put her arm around his neck, and kissed his cheek, and said in a low voice — so low that it was almost a whisper, —

"Dear uncle, thank you, thank you with my whole heart, but you are mistaken. Mr. Thorndyke is only a mere acquaintance — nothing more whatever."

"All right," said Mr. Dexter, "we will never mention the subject again."

And he never did.

Just as he finished speaking, Maude entered the room. By a strange coincidence Mr. Richard Arkwright was announced by the servant at the same time.

"Why! Mr. Arkwright, how do you do?" said Mr. Dexter, rising and offering him his hand. "I have not seen this evening's paper. How is the market to-day? Is Missouri Pacific off?"

"Missouri Pacific is up three points," answered Arkwright; "I sold at a profit of eighteen hundred dollars."

"Fortunate man you are, always on the right side of the market."

"I hope so," replied the alterer, counterfeiter, and admirer of Maude but enemy of Gilbert, with a peculiar look at Maude.

That look did not escape the sharp eyes of Mr. Amos S. Dexter.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PACKAGE FROM GILBERT.

GILBERT had left Boston (where he went is to be told in another chapter). The day he sailed, a lady stood on the broad steps, ringing the doorbell at No. — Beacon Street; on the servant opening the door, she inquired if Miss Ida Sherman lived there. On being told the affirmative, she asked to see her and was shown into the reception-room. On Ida's entrance into the room, she arose, and placed in her hands a package carefully sealed.

This lady was Mrs. Wedger, former landlady to Gilbert Thorndyke.

"From whom is this package, madam?" asked Ida.

"From Mr. Thorndyke. He requested me to give it to you, and to no one else, myself, as he may never return to America."

"Did you know Mr. Thorndyke well?"

"Very."

"And his wife also?"

"His wife? He never was married."

"Not married, nor divorced?"

"Never married, and of course never divorced. My dear young lady, please pardon the liberty I take as a stranger, but you do not know what you have lost."

"Explain yourself, madam."

"I mean that no woman could ever be loved with sincerer or deeper devotion than were you by Gilbert Thorndyke. He wept like a young child when he handed me this package, yet he is the proudest man I ever knew."

"Madam, will you please be so kind as to leave me your address?" said Ida, trembling with agitation. "I will call on you, if it is agreeable to you."

"Certainly, I shall be pleased to see you at any time," said Mrs. Wedger, giving her a penetrating look of pity. "Good-afternoon."

"Good-afternoon, madam."

Ida at once hurried upstairs to her room. She tore open the package with fingers quivering with emotion; she sat down, after having carefully locked the door to prevent intrusion, to read the following:

My Dear Ida, — for such I ever shall call you, — I shudder when I realize how different your feelings are towards me. A secret instinct tells me that your cousin Maude has been the cause of your hatred for me. It may be mean, it may be unjust and show a want of generosity, but in the depths of my own misery I cannot help but lay the cause upon another. But I forget my fatalism. All is now ended. I shall be far away when you read these lines, and years, perhaps many long, wearisome ones, may pass by before my return. Yet, if you only could give me the slightest cause to hope, and if there was the merest possibility of clearing away the mystery which has overshadowed and darkened our lives — mine at least — always remember that I am firm and immovable in my love towards you, and that love, while Gilbert Thorndyke lives and breathes, is yours and yours alone, Ida.

In you I have found my beau ideal of feminine beauty and intelligence. I desire that you know me as I am and

have been, not as a mere fragment of life. The highest source of happiness is love, but that is now surrounded by restrictions, tending towards baseness and crime. We live, O beautiful Ida, in a world of deception. We are indoctrinated from our infancy with absurd and superstitious prejudices, the result of ages of ignorance. I can have no respect for any doctrine the best reason for the truthfulness of which is its age. We are taught to call one thing virtue and another thing vice, to leave all to the teachings of some one else, and to silence the voices from within. Our minds are narrowed by selfish fears, our intellects are cramped by antique fallacies, and our lives poisoned by conventional delusions.

Therefore, against this world and civilization — which is a great failure — I have been and am yet a rebel. In the brief history of my life accompanying this note I have written what I believe to be the truth, without false pride on the one hand or false modesty on the other. Read, fair girl, and you will then understand better the character of the man who had boldness to offer you his love.

Yours through all eternity,

GILBERT.

After reading every word carefully once, she turned it over and slowly read it again. Ida then opened the second envelope, and, throw-

ing a light shawl over her shoulders, resumed her chair near the open window to read a sketch of Gilbert Thorndyke's life.

Reader, our chapters have been short ones: prepare yourself for a long one.

CHAPTER XIII.

GILBERT'S PAST LIFE.

OF my early childhood my recollections are somewhat obscure. I know I was born on the water during the return voyage of my parents from America, which they visited soon after their marriage. I never knew a brother's love, but I had one little sister two years my junior, a beautiful child with fair complexion, light hair, and blue eyes. I loved her with all the affection that a loving brother can feel for a sister. We had no secrets that were not mutual. We confided to one another all our innermost thoughts and fancies. Regarding my father I will say but little. He was a tall, handsome man with dark hair and eyes. His disposition was proud and overbearing. While he naturally was selfish he was at times generous. Before my birth he inherited a large

estate by the death of an uncle, which placed him in very independent circumstances.

My mother was entirely different in every possible way. My sister resembled her. She also was fair, blue-eyed, and gentle. She was a great lover of the fine arts, and it was probably from her that I inherited my literary talent to the extent I did. We lived, until I was nearly six years of age, in Kensington, a suburb of London, when a sudden and an unaccountable freak of my father's decided him to remove to America. He did so and purchased a beautiful house on Fifth Avenue in New York City. A fortune was spent in furnishing it in princely style, and it soon became the attraction of many distinguished people. For a long time my young life ran smoothly and joyously on until the fatal day occurred that was to be the forerunner of so much misfortune to me.

My mother, one day, when apparently in good health, was suddenly taken with a chill, which rapidly developed into that dread disease pneumonia. Despite all that medical skill could

suggest, inside of three days she died, and I lost one of the most precious of God's gifts, a loving and devoted mother. I was then nearly ten years old, but the terrible grief I suffered will never be effaced from my memory. She was interred in Greenwood Cemetery, beneath a wilderness of flowers, and a costly monument marks the spot where she sleeps the sleep of eternal rest. Soon, very soon I was called again to mourn another loss, that of my sister, who passed away within a year of the death of my mother. Thus I was left almost alone in the world, for I did not see much of my father, who seemed to have lost all his affection for me. I was placed in the care of an English tutor, a graduate of Oxford, I believe, who, one day, for some reason unknown to me, displeased my stern parent, who promptly discharged him. A few mornings after the tutor's departure, my father entered my room, and requested me to prepare for boarding-school. We left that afternoon for B——, a small town in the southern part of Connecticut, where we arrived after a

few hours' journey. We were at once shown into the presence of the principal, Mr. North, who received us with a deference that was almost fawning. Their business was soon finished, and my father took his departure.

My school days I must not linger over too long, or I shall never be able to reach the events which alone can give any original interest to these hastily written pages of my life.

I entered into all the studies and sports of the school with a zeal that soon earned for me the regard of the teachers and schoolmates alike. In six months I was at the head of my class.

The programme of the day was : arise at six, dress till half-past ; breakfast ; study eight to twelve ; two hours for recreation and dinner ; recite two to four ; play until eight, with supper meantime. At nine the great bell would ring, and we were all expected to retire.

I had been only some few months at B—— when my father came to see me. According

to the custom of the school, I was dressed in my best clothes from head to foot, and then sent into the reception-room. My father received me with coolness.

"We will take a short walk, towards the hotel," he said.

After we left the building, neither spoke for some time; finally he said with an apparent effort, —

"I have come to tell you this — for you may as well know it now — the fact is, I am married again."

That was all he said.

My brain refused at first to comprehend it — I felt confused and dull — I could say nothing, but walked along by his side until the hotel was reached.

In the parlor sat a lady of perhaps thirty-four years of age, dressed in green satin. She was of that coarse style of beauty and had the same strange, guilty look which in years long after I always observed in the fashionable demi-monde of Paris, Vienna, and other great Euro-

pean capitals. She looked and acted as though she were out of her sphere. Unfortunate woman! How little she knew what a dark future lay before her; that her whole life was to be one long battle for admission into society, which could and would only despise her.

Young as I then was, I knew only too well that by this marriage, instead of finding a mother, I had lost a father. He told me that he intended to dispose of all his property in this country and to make his future home in Paris. I was to remain at B——, until fitted for college. He would pay all my bills, and provide me with spending money, which would increase as I grew older. Any business or mail would be transacted and received through the banking firm of Henry Gould & Son of New York.

With a few words and a farewell he left me. Many years were to elapse before we again met.

I returned to my dull routine of study, varied only by an occasional trip to New York, always accompanied by one of the professors.

I studied hard and faithfully while at school. If boys ever worked we did, for I really fail to see how we could have done more and survived the operation.

At times I was so lonesome I was on the point of running away and making my fortune as boys I had read of did. At one time, I remember, our plans were all made; we saved our pocket-money and were to make our way to the Sound and watch our opportunity to join a band of smugglers, but it fell through from lack of discretion on the part of one of the boys.

Of my treatment while there I cannot complain. I have never doubted but that Mr. North tried to the best of his feeble ability to prepare my mind for the great struggle of life, and to infuse into me the learning which he had acquired by so much patient and tedious toil. I acknowledge I would to this day put myself out a great deal to do the poor old man a kindness. But I have often pondered why it is that schoolmasters understand human nature so poorly. It must be because this noble and important

avocation is not appreciated socially at its real value. Too often, to keep school is a desperate resource to keep the wolf from the door.

But to return to my narrative: When I was sixteen years of age, I attained the highest classical and mathematical honors, and I am vain enough to think that I should have taken the prize as the best dancer had I not been so foolish as to one afternoon kiss the pretty little daughter of Monsieur Panton, the dancing-master.

The next year, I passed successfully the examinations for entrance to Harvard University, at Cambridge, Mass. My life there was the customary one led by the average student. It was at Harvard that I first met Royal Hall, who was my chum for four years, and whose friendship I still retain. These four years were years of study, mingled with charming associations.

During one of our summer vacations, Royal and myself passed a few weeks in Vermont, on the shore of that beautiful and historical

Lake Champlain. My first love I found there: Grace, the only daughter of the landlord of the hotel where we boarded.

Then a new life was revealed to me. I had imagined what love was, now I knew. I gazed and dreamed and formed plans for the future. Life began to assume a form. With every day the duties and cares of manhood grew upon me. I was then in the first flush of early manhood, with all the bloom of youthful pride and vigor. My complexion was as pure and fresh as a rose, my figure supple and strong. I did not know then what it was *to live*.

Most of my time was passed with Grace, and on my return to Cambridge I wrote to her every day, and soon worked my imagination up to the idea that no love had ever been so strong or so enduring as mine.

Six months later I was infatuated with a pretty girl who sold ribbons in one of the large dry-goods stores of Boston, and Grace was forgotten.

Up to this period I had led a life of prepara-

tion. I had been a child of fortune, raised in the lap of luxury (for my father, whom I had not seen since the afternoon at the hotel, had been very lavish in his allowance); but if the early shadows of my domestic troubles had thrown a gloom over my brilliant student career, it needed but the presentiment of future sorrows to afflict me with that melancholy which subsequently, at times, has been my companion.

Am I alone, an example? I know not. I hope that few have suffered as I.

Pardon me, dear Ida, if I pause here to make one remark, profound and indisputable, in answer to the cant which replies to the agony expressed by the great thinkers of the earth, by a trivial reference to the sufferings of beings of inferior intelligence.

We suffer in proportion to the capacity to suffer. The loftiest intellects are subject to tortures of which the stupid are insusceptible. Feeble natures, under a certain amount of pain, give way; sickness or death come to

their relief; but to the strong the awful privilege to bear unbroken these trials is given.

Well, I graduated from college. I was going abroad to finish an education that destined a man to fortune and high social position. I arrived in Paris, and met with a cold reception at my father's house. Not a week elapsed before I sought lodgings outside. I was without a home. I felt myself a stranger in a great city. It was my experience yet to learn how lonely a person can be, surrounded by luxuries, among strangers.

Already I felt my dependence on my father to be an oppression. In my loneliness I turned my attention to literature. How well I remember my first attempt as a literatus! Imagining novel-writing an easy task, in my utter ignorance of the difficult art, I soon scribbled off a dozen chapters, with as many different titles for the book that, in my mind, was to bring me in fame and fortune. I sent the manuscript to a prominent publisher in London, and was dismayed to receive it back in a few weeks,

with the words, "Respectfully declined." I was not discouraged, but wrote an article for a magazine, which, to my delight, was accepted, and I was notified it would be published in due time. I was intoxicated by my success.

My father, who had regarded my attempts with mingled surprise and annoyance, informed me that if I persisted in my profession, he would disown me forever, doubtless encouraged to do so by my stepmother, who was my secret and determined enemy. What little affection my father ever possessed for me was thus fast being destroyed. My books now were my only friends. I studied and wrote. All my pride and independence asserted themselves. I separated from my father in anger, and have to this day never seen or heard from him. Perhaps I may yet live to enjoy the vast wealth which rightfully belongs to me, and spend it in relieving honest worth and suffering genius; but for the present I, the heir and hope of my race, must wander in sorrow and poverty over the face

of the earth, with no fortune but my courage, and no companion but my knowledge,— a friend and treasure of which death alone can rob me.

From Paris I went to Vienna, where I lived in humble circumstances, boarding with a German named Johann Schwarz. It was at Herr Schwarz's house that I had an opportunity to see what an unfortunate affair an unhappy marriage is. Why are people so stupid as not to understand that the moment a man and wife cease to be happy in each other's society, then that moment should be the time for separation? Why is marriage, which should be a union for the noblest joys, so often converted into slavery and punishment? To throw obstacles in the way of divorce, or endeavor to prevent it, is a mistake. There is but one great law that should bind man and wife together, — the law of love. Let those who love be united, those who hate be parted. All other systems are erroneous, the superstitions of ages past.

From Vienna I went directly to London, where I supported myself mainly through the pawnbroker, who soon owned books, pictures, and other souvenirs of mine.

But I was yet young. One day I awoke to myself, and resolved to turn schoolmaster. With the small proceeds of a manuscript, I rented a couple of rooms in a respectable part of the city, and issued cards — I owe the printer still — proclaiming that Gilbert Thorndyke, A.M., LL.D., graduate of Harvard University, U.S.A., would condescend to receive a limited number of select pupils in Latin, Greek, and the sciences; French, German, and painting extra. I could not but smile as I wrote the last, for I was, of course, the only professor. I had after a time pupils enough to barely keep body and soul together; still, I lived with a certain kind of determined pride. My greatest sufferings, these years of such extreme poverty and wretchedness, were the appeals of the poor whom I could not assist. At the end of two

years I had become a better financier, so I did not suffer quite as much.

I had had so much else to think about that my flirtations had been very limited, when one day the janitor's daughter brought a note to my rooms. She was a girl of about seventeen, and as beautiful as a fairy. I loved the fair stranger at our first meeting. The second time we met, I felt the thrill which love and real love alone can inspire. She was tall, but she looked well, owing to the fine proportions of her figure. If, Ida, you wish to know how beautiful she was, picture a reflection of yourself, but with hazel eyes instead of blue, standing like a Grecian statue before you, and you will then see her as I first saw her.

I asked her name.

"Helene Davenport."

I repeated it with delight. We looked and loved. A few confused words; a parting kiss, and Helene disappeared, leaving me happy — yes, happy for the first time for years.

I could hardly believe my happiness to be

lasting. I had always been so miserable from the cravings of one to love, that I hardly dared to think it real. Yet it was to be so. Helene came again, and from that day on our love grew and our happiness increased. Thus matters continued until we became everything to each other. We were to be formally married, and the day had been appointed, when one of the most infernal conspiracies that ever had its origin in the human brain was formed, owing to the jealousy of her cousin.

In a fit of rage and pride I saw Helene, who was also distracted almost beyond herself, and without making explanations or giving the details, which each seemed to think too undignified, we parted — the victims of plausible lies and our own unreasonableness. God alone knows what I suffered.

While walking up the Strand one fine morning, soon after the above happened, I encountered my old chum and classmate, Royal; — pride had kept me from corresponding with him. After a little persuasion on his part, I

resolved to accompany him to America. We left England and arrived in New York, where for the next few years I supported myself fairly well in various ways, principally by contributions to various scientific magazines.

One more fact I wish to relate before closing this brief and hurriedly written sketch of my life.

It was one Sunday that I was walking up Fifth Avenue, near Union Square, when I felt a hand touch my arm, and, turning quickly, perceived at my side a veiled lady, dressed in black.

"Pardon me," I said, "I do not" —

"Not know me?" said a voice that penetrated to my very soul.

"Helene Davenport!" I cried in bewilderment.

"It is I," she answered with dignity. "I desire to converse with you; walk with me."

We walked along together, she unravelling the mystery of our quarrel, and telling me of

the mean deception that had been resorted to in order to separate us.

We had by this time arrived opposite my rooms, and I invited her to enter. We sat down opposite each other, both sad and uneasy.

"Helene!" I said, "if you had only known how much I loved you!"

"*Loved?*" she asked.

Briefly as she spoke, I understood all; in another instant she was in my arms.

"Helene," I said, "we will get married at once!"

"It is too late," she said sadly; "I am already married. But, Gilbert, in my *heart* I have always been true to you."

I have not much more to say of her.

. . . . .

Consumption! Blaster of hopes! Destroyer of youth! I will not, cannot trace its deadly work.

. . . . . .

She died in my arms, and with my last remaining dollars I buried her.

I was now more lonely than ever. A mere trifle decided my destiny; for fate is fate, and the man who runs runs quickest into it. I resolved to leave New York and settle in Boston, which I did.

But the time is now drawing near for me to bring these memoirs to a close, so of the rest of my career I will speak in a few lines. I have travelled and seen much. I have filled desirable positions for the government. I have been at the head of a large commission house. I have been editor of magazines, and have studied no less than three regular professions.

It is true that I am now too sensible to suffer, but Boston has not at all times been kind and friendly to me.

Such, O Ida, peerless girl! is but a very brief outline of my history. Some day I may fill in the details that I have passed over so hastily in these pages. Such as I have written is true. You can now know me as I am and have been. While those around you may wear the mask of cant and hypocrisy, I stand

before you as a man who has lived, loved, and suffered.

Fare thee well, my idol! I have been rejected and condemned, perhaps unjustly, perhaps not. Time alone can tell.

Again fare thee well. I feel that some day I may return; it may be after many, many years.

GILBERT THORNDYKE.

For long hours Ida sat pondering over the strange and sad story of her former lover's life.

It was evident that at times he had led anything but a saintly or correct life, but was it not owing somewhat to the fact that he had never had the advantages of a mother's care and love? Should she not find some excuse in that?

Then she remembered many proofs of his delicate and tender love; how generous, how devoted he had been to her; and in spite of herself she found the tears rolling down her flushed cheeks.

"He is far away," she murmured, "gone, it

may be, for ever and ever! Oh, if I had only known what I now know! Why could I not have received this package before the steamer left, — one day even!" But a voice whispered to her, "Too late — too late."

CHAPTER XIV.

MONTE CARLO.

SEVERAL months have passed since Gilbert left Cambridge. Royal, that friend who had ever been so true to Gilbert, had persuaded him to accompany him abroad, paying all expenses, including those of Joe, who, ever since Gilbert's kindness to him, had refused to separate from him — who had acted in the capacity of a favorite servant to both; and there is no doubt but that he would have at any time laid down his life for either if the case required it.

It is autumn — the beautiful autumn of Southern France. The three travellers had sailed from New York to Havre on the Bordeaux line of steamers, thence proceeded directly to Paris, where they had spent a couple of months, Royal thinking that in the gayety

and whirl of the great metropolis the memory of Ida would soon be effaced from Gilbert's mind. But he was destined to be deceived; although his friend never referred to the unfortunate affair, it was still as fresh in Gilbert's mind as ever. They were now on their way to Italy, where Royal desired to spend the winter, intending to stop over for a few days at Monte Carlo, for Royal was not above a certain weakness of mankind. The train has left the great station on the Boulevard Mazas, of the Paris, Marseilles & Lyons Railway, and is now under full speed for Lyons. Only four stops of any length will be made between Paris and the city so famous for the manufacturing of silks: at Montereau, Tonnerre, Dijon, and Macon. Royal has settled himself comfortably in his seat and is reading the latest New York papers. Gilbert is sitting quietly, evidently in deep thought, while Joe is looking out the window at the flying scenery so new and strange to him. Royal and the ex-circus-performer are looking finely, but Gilbert's face does not

wear the free and natural expression that the others do.

Thus the time speeds by until the train arrives at Lyons, where they drive at once to the Hôtel de l'Europe, where they take supper and retire to sleep until awakened by the porter in time for the four A.M. train. Royal and his friends are aroused the next morning soon after three, and, after a breakfast of hot rolls and coffee, take the carriage that is to convey them to the Nice train.

They were soon safely ensconced in the coaches, well wrapped up by the guard in a lot of railroad rugs that he brings to them warmed by the waiting-room fires.

"Let's try to sleep until we reach Avignon at eight, and there we will find some better breakfast awaiting us, which I took the precaution to order by telegraph," said Royal.

With that he pulls his cap down over his eyes and is soon fast asleep; for Royal is one of those fortunate individuals that can sleep under all circumstances. The others fall to

meditating, and they, too, are soon asleep. When they awake it is daylight, and the sun is shining brightly upon the waters of the great Rhone, that flows by them to the sea.

When they arrive at Avignon they find as good a meal, both in attendance and *menu*, as one could desire. Soon the train is off again for Marseilles, which will be reached about eleven, moving down through the beautiful valley of the Rhone with its olive plantations and vine-clad hills; then eastward across the country. All the party now seem to be in first-class spirits. Royal, feeling musical, sings one of the latest French songs — "*Petits amoureux aux plumes*" (Little feathered lovers).

"Petits amoureux aux plumes,
Enfants d'un brillant séjour,
Vous ignorez l'amertume,
Vous parlez souvent d'amour;
Vous méprisez la dorure,
Les salons, et les bijoux;
Vous chérissez la Nature,
Petits oiseaux, becquetez-vous!

"Voyez là-bas, dans cette église,
Auprès d'un confessional,
Le prêtre, qui veut faire croire à Lise,
Qu'un baiser est un grand mal;
Pour prover à la mignonne
Qu'un baiser bien fait, bien doux,
N'a jamais damné personne,
Petits oiseaux, becquetez-vous!"[1]

Every one seemed to know it by heart. At the stations little children only five or six years old were singing it. There were pretty lines in it, although two out of its four stanzas were ordinary enough, and it must have been the air

[1] "Little feathered lovers, cooing,
Children of the radiant air,
Sweet your speech — the speech of wooing—
Ye have ne'er a grief to bear!
Gilded ease and jewelled fashion
Never own a charm for you;
Ye love Nature's truth with passion,
Pretty birdlings, bill and coo!

"See that priest who, Lise confessing,
Wants to make the girl believe
That a kiss without a blessing
Is a fault for which to grieve!
Now to prove, to his vexation,
That a tender kiss and true
Never caused a soul's damnation,
Pretty birdlings, bill and coo!"

rather than the words that accounted for its great popularity. When Royal had finished his song, the coaches were drawing into Marseilles. A few minutes' stop, then on to Nice, along the shores of the blue Mediterranean Sea, through Toulon, where they find themselves that evening. They stop at the Hôtel des Anglais. Royal writes some letters home to friends; but Gilbert and Joe walk out, as they desire to see the beautiful gardens of Nice by moonlight.

The next day, a carriage was taken for Monaco. Monaco! who has not heard of Monaco, the great gambling principality of all the earth, where princely fortunes are lost and won in a single day, where misery and joy walk hand in hand, where suicides are every-day occurrences; where gambling is not confined to men alone, for women of all ages and ranks can be found at Monte Carlo! As the three friends in whom we are so interested walk through the magnificent gardens of the Casino and enter it, the orchestra playing meanwhile

the most sublime music, Joe, who has never read of Monte Carlo, asks with surprise, —

"Do they allow women in the Casino to play?"

"Certainly; women are among their best customers," answered Royal and Gilbert together.

At one of the trente-et-quarante tables a little white-haired woman is sitting, with the piles of bank-notes and gold scattered around her in such confusion that you wonder how she knows which are hers. She is a duchess, who lost thirty-four hundred dollars in one night last year. She will continue to go there while her money lasts, or while she can borrow any from her friends. She plays recklessly, undaunted by the evil eyes fixed on her.

As the trio move down towards the centre of the room, Gilbert turns to his friends and whispers, "See, there is the notorious Madame Jauvet, who has played here for years, and is very lucky."

Royal and Joe look, and perceive, sitting at

one of the long tables, a woman whom any one in the least experienced in the ways of the world would recognize as a fast character, playing with the utmost coolness and nonchalance, smoking, in the meantime, a delicately flavored Russian cigarette.

The croupiers looked at her disapprovingly, as if afraid she would break the bank. It was said that she won last year over eighty thousand dollars.

At the same table, further down, a young girl is risking her all and losing, and then, with a look sad to see upon so young a face, searches vainly in her purse for another five-franc piece with which to try again. Is she going to learn wisdom from her defeat of to-day? Not at all. She has tasted of the poison which is working like madness in her brain, and if she cannot borrow she will perhaps pawn some of her dress or jewelry, and come again to-morrow, hoping to do better. Were she a man she might, at last, when irretrievably ruined, possibly kill herself, but she is

a woman, and, as such, holds her life more sacred. At the next table is a woman so blind or old, or both, that she does not know when she has lost or won, and has to be prompted by her friend, who tells her where to put her money, and when to pick it up.

"What a pitiable spectacle of womanhood, with her bleared eyes and shaking hands, which can scarcely hold the gold she is squandering so wantonly!" remarked Royal.

"No more so to me than that fair young English girl next to her," said Gilbert.

Beside the old woman was a young girl who was making her first venture with a five-franc piece. She lost, but there were more in her purse, and with the exclamation, "I must win," she threw them down one after another, until she happened to strike a fortunate number, and got back all the money she had lost, while the on-lookers thought it would have been far better for her if every drop of the ball had been against her. Gilbert, feeling an unusual interest in her, inquired of the crou-

pier about her, who informed him that she had been coming there day after day. When she first came she was very pretty and sweet to look at, and apparently so fresh and innocent that she attracted his attention at once, and he watched her as she became more and more accustomed to the place, and, alas! more accustomed to the unhealthy moral atmosphere she was breathing. It seemed to take the freshness from her face, which became flushed and red with excitement, while her eyes had lost their shy, modest look, and met the eyes of those around her unhesitatingly. Gilbert pitied her, for he well knew that no girl could sit at a gambling-table, side by side and shoulder to shoulder with some of the worst men and women in the world, and leave the place as pure as when she entered.

"Do you see the old woman with a face like a Madonna, beside her?" asked Gilbert's informer. "That's her mother."

And there they were, day after day, night after night, winning and losing, losing and

winning, and when Sunday came there was not a more devout worshipper than that young girl, who for days had been found at the tables; and, saddest of all, their informer told them she was always there Sunday afternoon, almost before the prayers she had uttered in the morning had died away on her lips. At Monte Carlo there is no Sunday, so far as the Casino is concerned. The concerts are free, and the play goes on as usual. The trains come loaded from Nice and Mentone, and the tables are just as well patronized with anxious, excited, feverish people, as if there were no God and no commandment to keep his Sabbath holy.

"Suppose you try your luck," said Royal to Joe. "On what day of the month were you born?"

Joe told him.

"Put these five napoleons on the number, — no, put on five of your own."

Joe did so, and in another minute found fifty napoleons added to his stake.

"Try once more on the even chance," said

Gilbert. "I have a presentiment that you will win. On the red."

Joe did so, apparently not caring whether he lost or won. Round and round went the little mill, whiz went the ball, till at last it settled in its place.

Joe had won again. He picked up his gold in a careless way, and said nothing. He did not try again, well content to let well enough alone.

Gilbert, who was beginning to loathe these deplorable sights, which he fully realized would only entail misery and remorse on all the players, begged his friends to depart, and they left the Casino for the hotel with the cry of the croupiers, "Faîtes le jeu," ringing in their ears.

CHAPTER XV.

THE STRANGE BEGGAR.

THE evening of the same day described in the preceding chapter, Royal and Joe left the hotel for a drive. Gilbert, not caring to go, wandered out on the terrace through the beautiful gardens. The air was soft and balmy; the sky blue and cloudless. He seated himself on one of the benches, watching the gay crowd pass him. The music of the band floats around him, but his thoughts are far away. He is thinking of Ida and wondering how she has been and if she ever thinks of him. When in this reverie, a hand is laid lightly on his shoulder, and Gilbert looks up to see one who he thinks is the most abject specimen of humanity he ever met. He was a tall, gaunt-looking, powerful man, with a long, ragged beard, hair long, unkempt, and looking as

though it never had seen a comb. His nose was long and crooked. His mouth was large, and his lips thick and sensual, from between which a few yellow teeth could be seen when he spoke. His jaws were lean and his forehead narrow and wrinkled. But his eyes, covered with long tufted brows, were the striking part of his face, being very blue and bright.

His limbs hung loosely from a body that might have been straight once, but now was terribly bent.

His age might have been fifty or fifty-five. The wrinkles of his face seemed to be wrinkles of care and want rather than those of age. His clothes — well! I will try to describe them to you. A threadbare coat of a faded blue cloth, stained and torn, was tightly buttoned across his breast, in order to conceal, if possible, a dirty shirt (whose original color was hard to tell), and a torn vest almost buttonless. His pantaloons, of a shiny black, were about three sizes too small for him.

His shoes were almost soleless, with heels

worn down and run over — well, well, it was a sad joke to call them shoes at all! They were indeed on their last legs, for it was a conundrum how they could be taken off and put on again without going all to pieces. To crown the rest, on his head was an old felt hat, shapeless and tattered.

Yet this poor wretch was one of the gamblers of Monte Carlo, and a gambler too of no common kind.

The man said humbly, yet squarely, —

"Sir, you are an American; will you give me five francs?"

"With pleasure," said Gilbert, rising and bowing courteously to the strange beggar (for Gilbert Thorndyke was kind and good to the most wretched of God's creatures), "but I fear I have not the change."

"I am sorry you have not!" said the beggar gravely.

"Your sorrow is to be expected," said Gilbert politely; "please to accept my apology for troubling you, but I will be obliged to ask you

to obtain the change from this," handing him a napoleon. "I regret I cannot give it all to you, but I cannot spare it."

"Thank you very much," said the mendicant, rather puzzled by the unusual courtesy of the gentleman; "five francs is all I ask."

"You can go to the next street and get it changed," quietly replied Gilbert.

The beggar eyed Gilbert with a peculiar look that gave a very comical appearance to his strange visage.

"You are," he said, "joking me."

"Not at all; here is the gold."

"I will bring your change correctly," said the beggar. "You put a good deal of confidence in me."

"I have reasons for thinking you will return."

"What are they?"

"You seem intelligent, your frame is strong, you are about fifty, and —"

"In rags, begging," coolly completed the beggar.

"Exactly."

"Well, sir?"

"You must be either a rogue who has neglected his chances, or very honest."

"Please wait a few minutes till I return, and I wish to tell you something, sir," said the man.

Gilbert resumed his seat and patiently waited.

A quarter of an hour — half an hour — an hour passed, and no beggar reappeared.

The generous fellow looked at his watch every few minutes. Finally he decided to return to the hotel, vexed with himself at having lost so much in order to experiment in human nature.

Just as he was leaving the terrace he was confronted by the beggar.

"I thought you had given me the go-by," said Gilbert.

"Worse, I have stolen your money."

"How's that?"

"I gambled in the Casino and lost it all," said the man that Gilbert had benefited. "I

tried roulette. Zounds! if I had only tried quarante-et-trente I would surely have won. You will despise me now."

"No, I do not despise you."

"You will not have me punished for stealing your gold, then?"

"I do not believe in punishment. It was my own fault; I trusted you."

"Mr.!" said the gambling beggar, standing erect and folding his arms, "you have treated me better than any one ever did before! What is your name?"

"Gilbert Thorndyke."

"Gilbert Thorndyke!" cried the beggar, recoiling a few steps.

"That is what I said," answered the other.

"Are you a rich man?"

"Not rich enough to continue your friendship," answered the great reader of characters, somewhat puzzled by the audacity of the beggar.

Looking calmly at Gilbert, the beggar said, "Gilbert Thorndyke, I will make you a millionnaire."

"Are you insane?" said Gilbert, looking sharply at him to see if he could detect any sign of madness.

"The fools say so," replied the wretch scornfully. "Will you hear my story and judge for yourself?"

"To-morrow morning at ten o'clock I will meet you here and listen to you," said Gilbert, moving away, for the language and manner of the man impressed Gilbert profoundly.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BEGGAR'S STORY.

THE next morning was a very bright one at Monaco; the sun rises gloriously in all its Mediterranean splendor, perhaps a little warm when not tempered by the gentle sea-breezes of the Riviera; but, under the shade of the olive-trees and ilex the temperature is almost perfect, no cloud in the smiling heavens, and all nature looking fair and tempting. It would have been a beautiful sight to any one not entirely oblivious to the charms of nature, but to poor Gilbert, as he rises and dresses himself, looking out of his hotel window on the quiet scenes below, it seems only dull. He sighs, "Another weary day!" and slowly descends to breakfast.

After breakfasting he starts off alone for the terrace, politely declining an invitation from

Royal to a morning sail. He seats himself on the same seat as on the evening before. Soon he sees the beggar coming, and, sitting down beside him, at once commences.

"I wish," he said, "to preface my narrative by the remark that the story I am about to tell you is a singular one; but years ago you must have learned the great fact that this is a singular world, that there are singular people in it, and that they do some singular things."

"I fully agree with you in that respect," said Gilbert, thinking of his own checkered career.

The stranger's language was so good and his manner so earnest that Gilbert felt at once deeply interested in the story he was about to tell.

"I am by birth an American, as probably you have already surmised. My name is Edward Crosby. Forty-five years ago, or thereabouts, I was born in New York City. Both my parents dying when young, I fell into the care of an uncle, the only relative I had that was then living, so far as I have ever been

able to ascertain. He was a sea-captain, a bluff, hearty man, who, I must say, always treated me very well. He had never married, and I have often thought that might have been one reason why he grew so attached to me. I always accompanied him on all his voyages, and can truthfully say that I have visited every quarter of the globe, and am to-day more at home on the deck of a vessel than on land.

"Well, I continued with him until I was about thirty-two years old, when in the month of September, 187–, we arrived in New York Harbor on our return voyage from Australia. In sailor's parlance, I had climbed through the cabin window and was first mate of the Eagle — that was the name of our fine bark. We were to remain in port about three weeks, unloading, and then loading for the China seas.

"One afternoon, a few days after our arrival, my uncle invited me to go and call on an old shipmate of his who lived on Mott Street, and who was very sick. We put on our best clothes and sallied out. We easily found the

house, and, ascending the narrow and dirty stairway, knocked at the door of the miserable tenement where lived John Martin. Oh, Mr. Thorndyke, whatever did possess me to go there that beautiful day? That one little event, of apparently no consequence, changed my entire life, and is responsible for the poor, miserable, broken-down wretch you now see before you. But to go on. The door was opened by a black-eyed girl of rather attractive look. The first time I saw her I loved her; why, I cannot tell, for throughout all I felt that she could not be trusted. She was Josephine Martin, the only child of John Martin and her father's housekeeper. Mrs. Martin, it seems, had died long before.

"We found the old man in a bad condition. It was evident to us both that he could live but a short time. We did what was in our power to relieve his sufferings, and left promising to call again soon.

"To make a long story short, I went the next day and again and again. When he died

I found I was madly infatuated with Josephine, or Josie, as she desired me to call her. I did not love her because of her goodness, for I saw many naturally vicious traits in her character, but was powerless to resist them.

"Exactly a month from the day her father was buried, we were married by a minister of the gospel of the Baptist creed, named Goddard, and who I have reason to think is still living in New York. I gave up my position on board my uncle's bark and resolved to settle down to the carpenter's trade — a trade that I knew considerable about. All went well for a while until one night I returned from my work and found our pretty little home deserted. On the table was a note. I have always saved it."

Here the man took from his shirt bosom a roll of papers covered with a dirty oilskin. After untying the string, he unrolled the papers and selected a small faded piece of paper, which he passed to his listener with the laconic remark, "Read it."

Gilbert, wondering what all this had to do

with him, but thinking to humor the strange individual, took the paper and read the following:

ED. — I am tired of you and find I love some one else better. Hope you will live through it, for you will never see me again. JOSIE.

That was all.

Gilbert handed it back to the man, who continued, —

"It made me all but crazy. Day in and day out I wandered through the streets of the great city in hopes of seeing or learning something about my wife, but in vain. In despair, I gave up ever hearing from her again, and shipped as a common seaman for a cruise to South America. But my ambition was gone. I was indifferent to my duty and surroundings, and on reaching Janeiro was discharged.

"Since then I have earned my living in various ways. When I had saved up a little sum I would invariably lose it by gambling. Things went from bad to worse, until I got

very low. But my time is yet to come. I was destined again to see her to whom I attribute all my sufferings, under strange circumstances.

"It was in Paris, two years ago. I was standing one evening in the Place de la Concorde, when a beautiful carriage passed me. I glanced up. Seated within were an old gentleman and a lady. Something about her face struck me. I looked again, when to my astonishment I recognized, notwithstanding the changes that time and wealth had made, my lost wife. In a minute the carriage would be out of sight, and I might lose her; — lose her after all those long years of search! never! In the darkness I sprang up behind and clung for life, while being whirled rapidly through the dark streets.

"Finally, finding the carriage was about to stop, I leaped off, and from under the shadow of a neighboring tree I saw *my wife* descend and enter the mansion, for such the house was without doubt.

"By dint of tedious inquiry I ascertained that

she was married, or pretended to be, to a very wealthy Englishman. That Englishman's name was Frederick H. Thorndyke, your father."

Gilbert sat as if stunned. This man's lawful wife his stepmother! could it be? He was too bewildered to speak; noticing which, the man continued:

"Under the guise and pretence of a mechanic I succeeded in forcing myself into her presence and demanded justice. She repudiated all knowledge of me. I threatened to inform her husband: it was of no avail. Finding it useless, I left the house, intending to divulge my secret to the man whose name she now bore, but on after-thoughts I decided differently. He was old and feeble, and must soon die; I could then have my revenge better. I would wait patiently, — wait as I had done these long years.

"I came here, and about five months ago learned that Frederick Thorndyke had indeed gone to his long home. My time had come. I had saved up a little money by working

around these grounds, and was to start the next day, when, as luck would have it, the evening before, I wandered into the Casino and lost all.

"Gilbert Thorndyke, now is your chance. I am satisfied that Josephine Martin never was divorced from me, and, consequently, could never have legally married your erratic father. According to the laws of France, you are his legal heir, for I am satisfied there could be no will made in France that would allow a mistress to inherit in place of a son.

"I have our marriage certificate among these papers, and the proofs will be easy to obtain that will prove all I have said is true. Do you believe me? Your face, the first time I looked upon it, attracted my attention, and when you told me your name I knew, by your resemblance to your father, that you must be his son; and as the One above is my Judge, I swear I am telling you the truth."

It was not strange that Gilbert's face had attracted the beggar's attention, for it was one

that would attract people. Though having a stern air, there was a certain gentleness in it which caused strangers to feel safe against an unkind retort to their advances. To this gift, he was indebted for many a strange tale, told him by people whom he met for the first time, and perhaps never saw again.

A great student of human nature forms his gallery of studies, and completes his knowledge of mankind, by hearing stories from every type of human nature.

As we know, Gilbert was a great character reader, so no wonder, then, that his attention was drawn to a face and figure so striking as those of Edward Crosby, the beggar and gambler of Monte Carlo.

"Do you believe me?" repeated the man, as Gilbert remained quiet, overcome by all that he had heard; for he had made no inquiries concerning his father while in Paris, and consequently did not know of his death.

"I credit all that you have said," replied Gilbert, looking the poor and miserable man

squarely in the eye, and seeing that he had spoken sanely and sincerely, "and will push my rights to the utmost."

"Good!" said Edward Crosby, apparently much pleased.

"We will linger here no longer," said Gilbert. "Come with me and take a bath, and I will buy you some better clothes."

In a couple of hours no one would ever have recognized, in the person walking to the hotel with Gilbert, Edward Crosby, the ex-beggar and gambler.

Truly wonderful is the meeting of the extremes in the great web of Destiny! Man tries to disentangle its threads, gives up the fruitless task, observes, accepts, and wonders.

CHAPTER XVII.

FORTUNE'S WHEEL TURNS STRANGELY.

MUCH has happened in Boston meanwhile. Often we see families that to-day are happy, prosperous, and wealthy, but to-morrow, as it were, are scattered, dead, and in poverty.

So it was with the family of Mr. Amos S. Dexter. Within a week after Gilbert's departure with his friends for Europe, Mrs. Dexter, who had been for years an invalid, died suddenly. Mr. Dexter began speculating in stocks to an enormous extent. His credit always had been classed, in commercial rates, as A–1. Nevertheless, a succession of heavy losses had brought him, in a few short months, to the verge of ruin. At first he could not realize it, but pressing demands being made upon him, which he could not meet, opened his eyes

to the unfortunate condition of his finances. Collecting all the cash he could, he invested it by margins in the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé Railroad stock, as a last resort. Fate continued unkind to him. The shares dropped many points. His margins were swept away, and everything gone. This, coupled with the loss of his wife, to whom he was devoutly attached, caused temporary insanity. When in that condition, on retiring one night, he deliberately blew out his brains. The next morning the Boston newspapers announced his death by apoplexy. Maude, throughout all her father's misfortunes, had shown a selfishness and an indifference that were simply astonishing. Everything had devolved on Ida, who, after Gilbert's departure, had lost ambition in everything, attending to her affairs in a sort of mechanical way. She scarcely ate or drank, and seldom spoke. This mysterious illness continued several weeks. She was convalescent when the death of her uncle occurred.

Ida was now alone in the world — alone, without means and without friends. She had no relatives, and those she counted on as friends could not be found when adversity came. She had no intimate friends of her own sex, owing to her peculiar intellectual character.

There was no one Ida knew, of whom she dared asked assistance. She sold all her books and jewelry to pay her board at the hotel. Richard Arkwright had paid all the funeral expenses and was to marry Maude in a few days.

Still, one vague hope sustained her — Gilbert might come back — back once more to offer her his undying love and great devotion. Her great beauty and her unhappy life excited deep interest. A wealthy and brilliant young man called upon her and placed his fortune at her service, with a delicate hint that he was anxious to throw himself into the bargain. But Ida, with magnificent pride, which grief only exalted and intensified, firmly but gracefully refused all offers of pecuniary assistance.

In her trouble the fine face of Mrs. Wedger, whom she had not seen since the day she brought Gilbert's memoirs, rose before her, and one day she rode out to Cambridge, and, quietly going to Mrs. Wedger's house, said briefly, —

"Madam, will you take me to board?"

Before Ida had half finished her story the amiable and pretty former landlady of Gilbert was crying.

"You are welcome to board here, and I will try to be a mother to you — for, poor as I am, you will always be welcome."

"You are too young, dear lady, to be my mother," said Ida, wiping away her tears, "and I am too proud to remain here without paying my board."

"As you please," said Mrs. Wedger, regarding her beautiful visitor with the utmost admiration. She conducted her upstairs. "I must give you these rooms," she said; "they are the ones Mr. Thorndyke occupied, and the only ones I have vacant at present."

Ida blushed and trembled. The idea of

living in the same rooms formerly occupied by Gilbert was to her a strange sensation.

"I intend to write," said the young authoress, "to write for my living, as I used to for my pleasure."

The next day found her hard at work, at the same desk where Gilbert had written such profound thoughts. She sat in the same chair that he sank into on the evening he received her letter. Strange world, this.

While she was writing, Mrs. Wedger, so kind and thoughtful, entered the room and laid beside her a small blue velvet case. Ida opened it. It was a splendid daguerrotype of Gilbert. "It is for you," she said, "do not refuse it," and left the room.

Ida started up with joy. She looked long and sadly on the noble, manly features of her lover, then kissed passionately the glass which covered it, murmuring, —

"I am so glad to have his, for I know he took mine off the drawing-room table — for no one else wanted it."

What would poor Gilbert have given to have seen her then! Everything he possessed or ever expected to possess.

Thus Ida sits down to write while Gilbert is far away, intent on securing the fortune which is rightfully his.

If he had only known, how quickly he would have left everything and started homewards!

But who is bold enough to arraign the unknown gods of Time? Let the anarchs of eternity pass judgment on them!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FALSE WIFE.

ON Gilbert's return to his friends he repeated carefully what he had been told, and after a consultation all decided it best to start for Paris the next day, as action could not be taken too soon in the matter.

The ex-beggar was much pleased at the kind manner in which he was treated by the rest, and often spoke his gratitude. Once he asked Gilbert if he always treated every one as well.

"I try to, for I never have and never shall respect the cruel laws of caste. In what is one man superior to another, unless he be more virtuous or more intelligent?" answered the manly man.

In Paris they stop at the Hôtel des Anglais, and the following day Gilbert and Royal ascertain Madame Thorndyke's address, and in

company with the wronged husband visit Monsieur Rondelle's office — the great French authority on matters appertaining to probate affairs. After carefully hearing their story, and examining the proofs, he pronounces the case a most excellent one, but advises, if possible, a compromise. Acting under his advice, Gilbert and Edward Crosby present themselves at the woman's house, Gilbert sending up one of Royal's cards, fearing that otherwise he could not see her.

In a little while he is shown up to her luxurious parlor and confronted by madame.

"Do you wish to see me?" she says, speaking between the puffs of a cigarette, while reclining in a languid manner in a large red satin armchair. "Take a chair, Monsieur Hall. Shall I ring for a glass of wine?"

"No, thank you!" replied Gilbert coldly. "I am here on business, disagreeable business."

"You? On business?" The woman opened her eyes in astonishment. "I do not know you."

"Perhaps not, but you are going to. Royal Hall is not my name. It is Gilbert Thorndyke, son of your supposed husband."

"But I thought you dead," stammered the woman, completely unnerved.

"You are decidedly mistaken. I have come determined on obtaining my share of my father's large estate."

"I do not fear you," said the woman, beginning to recover her usual self-possession. "Do your worst. I was his legal wife, and, as such, by these laws inherit his property."

"Ah, but you were not his wife."

"Prove it," said the woman, beginning to become very much enraged.

"I will," said Gilbert, stepping to the door and calling his companion, who promptly responded, and in another minute was with them.

"So, it's you, you miserable dog?" and she works herself into a terrible rage, and calls them both some very hard names.

They stand before her and take it all in

silence until she exhausts herself; then Gilbert, starting forward a step, says, —

"These are my terms of settlement. The appraised value of this immense estate is ten million francs or thereabouts. I will settle for exactly one-half, otherwise I commence suit for the entire amount. I have made you a magnanimous offer. Refuse it at your peril. Should you decide to act wisely and accept, write me at Monsieur Rondelle's office before Thursday noon. Good-day," and the two men left her to her thoughts.

Before evening the next day Gilbert receives by a messenger the following note:

PARIS, Jan. 17, 187–.

MONSIEUR THORNDYKE, — Your offer is accepted. I will meet you at your lawyer's office to-morrow, at three.

JOSEPHINE THORNDYKE.

Gilbert had won. He was not without his share of exultation, for he knew too well the annoyance poverty brings and the trials that the poor suffer. He had seen too much of life not to appreciate the power of gold. The next

day she kept her word, and was there ; but why go into all the details ? It was months before the entire matter was fully settled, and the one who was instrumental in Gilbert's obtaining so much money was rewarded in such a substantial way that he could live thereafter in abundance. Gilbert wisely counselled him in regard to its investment and his habits, and had the satisfaction of seeing him well started on his new and now prosperous career before leaving France.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

ABOUT a mile down the River Mersey from the Cunard dock in Liverpool lay the magnificent steamer Oregon, which met such a peculiar fate years afterwards. On the upper deck stand two men waving farewell to a third, who is on the little tender which brings the passengers down to the steamers of the Cunard line. The two men were Gilbert and Joe; the third was Royal, who was to remain abroad. They were about leaving for New York. Nothing occurred worth mentioning until the third evening out, when the sea was as calm as a lake; the dark sky was studded with golden stars; the light of the brilliant moon seemed to throb with the waves; strange shadows from swiftly passing clouds seemed to dance over the silent water while the figure of

the stately steamer stood out in bold relief. There were not many passengers on board, and two of them were leaning over the side, watching the trail of the silvery foam behind, when one of these men turned to his companion and said, —

"I have never known real peace of mind except when at sea, unless when a boy I used to wander up and down the beach, watching the waves as they rolled in at my feet."

He was Gilbert talking to Joe.

Evenings, when all were asleep but the watch, Gilbert would remain on deck, seemingly to be studying the heavens. "Every knot we run lessens the distance from my idol!" sighed the adventurer, leaning over the rail to the leeward and watching the phosphorescent atmosphere on the water. "Will Fate ever permit me to see that beautiful girl again? Yet, why am I so foolish as to wish only that which would increase my misery? She cares nothing for me — and I, have I no will, no pride to live down my infatuation? Is it possi-

ble that Fate is so cruel as to leave her utterly indifferent to such love as I offer her?"

And Gilbert, pacing the deck, repeated to himself, a hundred times, "Idiot, she never loved you;" but a silent voice would whisper, "She loves you, she loves you."

Time alone would reveal if the silent voice whispered correctly.

When the voyage was half over, an incident occurred that cast a gloom over all present.

One of the firemen died of apoplexy and was buried at sea in the early morning, before the passengers were astir. Gilbert and Joe witnessed the sad scene, for a burial at sea is indeed a most solemn affair. The body was put into a rough pine box, in which holes had been bored in order to sink it, and long after it was slid off the plank into the water our two friends could see it bobbing up and down far away on the waves.

"I have no pity for the dead," said Joe, "especially in this case, as there was no one dependent on him."

"What a strange thing life is!" sighed Gilbert. "Monte Carlo, Paris, all seem to me a dream. There is only one thing real."

"You mean Love?"

"Yes, Love. If unsuccessful in my endeavors the second time, farewell to all! At the worst, even my enemies cannot deny that I have lived and died — a free man!"

. . . . .

About a year after Gilbert's departure from Cambridge, the New York fast express is rolling into the station of the Boston and Albany railroad on Kneeland Street, in Boston.

In the Pullman car Waverly, two men are hurriedly gathering their baggage together, preparatory to leaving the car. They are bronzed and travel-stained, but we can easily recognize them. After leaving the train, Gilbert stops to buy a copy of the *Boston Herald*, to read on his way to Cambridge. They enter a hack; Joe to be left at Young's, and Gilbert intending to go directly to Mrs. Wedger's.

When comfortably seated, he opens his paper, and to his utter astonishment, in large headlines, reads the following: —

A DESPERATE COUNTERFEITER AND HIS WIFE CAPTURED.

SUPPOSED TO BE THE MAN SOUGHT AFTER BY THE SECRET SERVICE OFFICERS.

OVER $10,000 IN SPURIOUS MONEY FOUND IN HIS ROOM AND ON HIS PERSON.

HIS WIFE ARRESTED AS AN ACCOMPLICE, BUT AFTERWARDS ALLOWED TO DEPART.

GREAT CREDIT DUE TO DETECTIVE BURNS.

For over five years the country has been flooded with counterfeit money of all denominations, so well executed as to deceive any one save an expert. Although some of the finest detective skill in America has been brought to work on the case, the bold rascal has until to-day escaped detection, owing to the great care he has used in passing the spurious bills. About a week ago Detective Burns's attention was called to a bill received by a friend of his through a well-known man about town, by the name of Richard Arkwright. The bill was pronounced a counterfeit, and having the appearance of newness, the detective resolved to endeavor to trace it. Suspicion was fastened on Arkwright. He was arrested, searched, and bills of all

denominations were discovered in a secret pocket of his coat.

After great difficulty, an entrance was effected to his room, in a house owned by himself on D—— street, and then it was proven beyond all doubt that for years he had been carrying on his nefarious business.

Everything of the best and most valuable make used in engraving, printing, etc., was found there, together with a large amount of counterfeit money nearly finished.

His wife, after careful questioning, proved her innocence, and was permitted to leave the inspector's office, almost heart-broken. She is said to be the daughter of the late Amos S. Dexter. The greatest sympathy is expressed for her in her deep trouble.

Gilbert read and re-read the article. How much must have happened since he left. Richard Arkwright a counterfeiter! Well! he never liked the man. Amos Dexter must be dead, Maude married; and where was Ida? What had become of her? Was she too married? He would be patient and soon know all.

. . . . .

To return to Ida. How had she fared all these long, weary months? She had worked,

hoped, dreamed, and despaired, alone and in poverty.

Pride alone sustained her. Mrs. Wedger kept her word, and her kindness and cheerfulness did much to assuage Ida's trials.

Mrs. Wedger scouted the idea that any accident had befallen Gilbert. He would return soon, rich and successful. Had he not said as much at parting? It was nothing strange that she had not heard from him, as he never was given to letter-writing.

Ida wrote story after story, and sent them to various papers, some of which were accepted, but more refused as "not available."

Ida, who was very generous, and who could never listen to the story of a poor unfortunate without opening her purse, began to find herself getting behindhand. She could not replace her dresses that were beginning to decidedly show signs of wear, or pay her board bill promptly.

Things began to look dark and gloomy. Day by day she became more indifferent to her ap-

pearance. How the poor girl suffered, — suffered as many more have, fighting the battle of life, and dying with the eternal watchword, "Victory or death, and even in death, victory."

"I am not fit to struggle in this world," sighed Ida. "Its trials and perplexities are too much for my strength. I have stood great griefs, and borne them with fortitude, but these petty stings are more than I can endure. Let people say what they may, I feel that woman is intended to lean on man for strength, and that man's noblest duty and mission in this world is to support and encourage her." Then she fell to thinking of Gilbert, wondering many things. "Oh, if I could only see him once again, how willingly I would die and be at rest!" then continuing to murmur, "Rest! — vain demand, there is no rest even in eternity; but if there is no rest, there is happiness somewhere, or Nature is herself a falsehood and a delusion."

At this moment she was interrupted in her meditations by a knock on the door. Rising

and opening the door, she was surprised to see her cousin Maude standing before her, whom she had not seen since her uncle's funeral.

"Oh, Ida, have pity on me; I am in terrible trouble!" gasped her visitor.

Ida invited her to enter, and listened in a dazed way to the story she told of her husband's arrest, as substantially told in the *Herald.*

"But I have more to tell you," she continued. "I have wronged you and Mr. Thorndyke beyond all reparation, for I was deceiving you when, with Richard's help, I made you think he was married. It was false. I loved him, and wanted him myself. A truer man I never knew. Can you ever forgive me?" and the unhappy woman threw her arms around Ida's neck, and wept bitter tears of shame and remorse.

"I can forgive you," answered Ida, "but God alone knows the sorrow your heartless deception has caused me."

Just then a footstep was heard in the entry. The door was thrown open, and — Gilbert Thorndyke stood on the threshold.

The gaze these two persons bent on one another may be half imagined, it can never be described. Ida is looking somewhat changed from the beautiful girl of former days. She is thinner and paler. The violet eyes look as if tears had dimmed their lustre, the fair rounded cheek has partially lost its delicate contour, and there is at times a suspicious quivering of the sweet lips, as though she had learned to subdue sorrow and tears.

Each looked at the other, too amazed to speak, almost thinking they were beholding apparitions.

Gilbert was the first to break the silence. His voice was low; his face, though pale, did not have a stern look. "Why! — Mrs. Wedger — said nothing about you. She told me to come to my old rooms — and I" — the returned traveller stopped, almost overcome by emotion.

"I did — not — know — know" — stammered the girl, trying to rise from her chair.

"Ida, my Ida!" exclaimed Gilbert, springing towards her and clasping his idol in his arms, and kissing her over and over again before she could resist, seeming not to notice Maude, who sat crouched in the corner.

"Gilbert — dear Gilbert!" said Ida, bursting into tears, and weeping long and joyously in the arms of her lover.

"She called me dear Gilbert," murmured Gilbert in raptures.

"Mrs. Wedger always said you would return."

"Do we understand each other?"

"Now and forever." And thus lover and loved met again, — met, by some strange caprice of Destiny, on the very spot where Gilbert had received Ida's note.

We will leave them together, and draw the curtains around them. It had surely been a day of surprises.

. . . . .

"Have you kept your word, Mr. Thorndyke?" asked Mrs. Wedger, when she had waited as long as her woman's curiosity would permit.

"I have, and have returned a rich man, madam."

"Do you really mean it?" asks Ida, who, notwithstanding her great joy, was still haunted by the fear of want.

"Seriously, we are rich beyond all want."

"*We!*" said Ida. "Oh, Gilbert! what is money to us? Yet I am glad it is so, we have both suffered so much."

"That is true. It is so strange I should find you here. About yourself — your uncle is dead?"

"My story can soon be told, but tell me yours first."

So, with Ida sitting near him, he related all the minute details of his long and eventful trip, with which the reader has already been made familiar.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

IT was a beautiful day; such a perfect June day, people declared, had never been known in Boston, when, a week later, a young couple were walking up Commonwealth Avenue, so radiant with happiness that all who passed them turned to look back with involuntary admiration.

They were Gilbert and Ida.

"After all," said Gilbert thoughtfully, looking down into the beautiful blue eyes of his affianced, "the reward of suffering is sometimes very great."

"At least," answered Ida, "it teaches us to sympathize with all those who are suffering."

"But, to change the subject, when is the wedding day to be? Royal cabled me from

Liverpool that he would be here Monday, sure."

"Suppose, then, that we make it Wednesday," replied the prospective bride.

"Very good, but you must stop smiling at me. It is too much for my philosophy," said Gilbert, gazing enraptured at the remarkable beauty of his graceful companion.

"You flatterer!" said Ida playfully. "And after our marriage where shall we go?"

"I propose that we go abroad, to be gone a year."

"Charming! I want to see everything."

"I want to see nothing but yourself," said Gilbert.

"There you are again flattering me."

"Of course; it is my duty to flatter."

Thus, in talking over their plans for the future, walking, riding, and enjoying themselves in various ways, the happy days glided swiftly past. Of Gilbert's life I have little more to say, save that ambition stirred again within him, and a craving for hard work, that his faults and

follies in the past might be atoned for by worthy achievements in the future. Doubtless many have wondered who was the author of that profound and scholarly work, "The Investigation of the Heavenly Bodies." Gilbert Thorndyke could easily answer that question were he disposed; but not so, he prefers to remain *incognito*.

I will leave for the readers who, like them, have loved and loved nobly, to imagine their great happiness. A few lines concerning the other characters may possibly interest the reader.

Royal returned in ample time for the wedding, and officiated as the best man. "You know," he laughingly said to Gilbert, "I always said it would turn out all right." He is now married, and is very happy, spending his time between Boston and Paris.

Joe is still with Gilbert, and few people imagine that the plain, quiet man who is so attentive to his master's wants has been a passer of counterfeit money.

Richard Arkwright, the counterfeiter, alterer, and stock-speculator, was convicted of making and passing counterfeit money, and in spite of what all his friends and their political influence could do, was sentenced to fifteen years in the State Prison. Gilbert obtained his revenge in that unexpected way. Who will deny that those grand old words are true that say, "The wages of sin is death"? Maude, his wife, with the balance of her husband's property saved from the heavy expenses of his trials, removed to New York, where, according to the latest accounts, she was keeping a fashionable boarding-house in Waverley Place.

Mrs. Wedger, enriched by Gilbert's gratitude, opened a large millinery establishment on Temple Place, Boston, and was very successful. Her store is very popular with the *élite* of the city. She never loses an opportunity of relating to her friends the romance of her two former literary boarders: their troubles, their love, and ultimate happiness. She never fails once a month to write Gilbert and Ida

a letter full of her kindest wishes and regards.

Gilbert never met Mr. Hugh Riordan after the eventful evening in the restaurant, but heard through a third party that he finally succeeded in obtaining a position as reporter on the *New York Times.*

Crooked Jim was injured in a bar-room quarrel, and died at the hospital after lingering a few hours in great agony.

EPILOGUE.

ALL my story has been told, and it is well, for I am now so weak that it has been with the utmost difficulty that I have dictated the last pages of this book. Nearly six weeks have elapsed since I wrote the first words of the prologue of this story, and to me, at least, it has proved a great satisfaction.

In this narrative I have endeavored to give my readers a slight idea of the character and the unusual life of Gilbert Thorndyke. That such a character did exist to a certain extent in real life, is a fact, but the best of us would need the finishing touches of the romancer to appear attractive in the cold pages of print.

Much more I might have written, but I have

written what I thought it best to write and what I thought I could write best, and now close these pages forever, believing that of men, as of nations, it can truly be said, "Happy are those who have no history."

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