



AN ODD FELLOW



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. PZ7 Copyright No.

Shelf H705

①

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.







Mr. Outwright was a welcome caller everywhere.—Page 64.

AN ODD FELLOW

A Tale of To-day

BY

CARLISLE B. HOLDING



19295-aa'

CINCINNATI: CRANSTON & CURTS
NEW YORK: HUNT & EATON

1895

— N

P 27
H 705
©

COPYRIGHT
BY CRANSTON & CURTS.

1895.

12-34421

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
I. STARTING A NEW PAPER,	5
II. LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM,	19
III. THE TRUTH,	29
IV. FOREWARNED,	36
V. ONE DEGREE HIGHER,	50
VI. TWO ODD FELLOWS,	63
VII. IN THE TOILS,	76
VIII. THE BURGLAR CAUGHT,	89
IX. THE SELECT SCHOOL,	109
X. A PLAUSIBLE PLEA,	121
XI. CONSIDERING THE EVIDENCE,	133
XII. A FLOOD OF LIGHT,	141
XIII. PLOTTING MISCHIEF,	153
XIV. BUILDING ON THE SAND,	161
XV. A PLEASANT PRISON,	169
XVI. BITTER-SWEET,	180
XVII. CROSS PURPOSES,	188
XVIII. THE PRAYER MEETING,	197
XIX. EXPLANATIONS,	210
XX. MR. CHRISTIE,	220
XXI. A POLITICAL SCHEME,	229
XXII. A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE,	238
XXIII. PLOTS,	246
XXIV. TEMPERANCE MEETING,	262
XXV. APPEARANCES DECEITFUL,	269

	PAGE.
XXVI. VIEWS AND INTERVIEWS,	279
XXVII. A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE,	290
XXVIII. AN UNMATED PAIR,	301
XXIX. THE CONVENTION,	310
XXX. JENNIE JESSUP,	326
XXXI. TWO CALLS,	335
XXXII. SEARCHING THE RECORDS,	343
XXXIII. AN UNEXPECTED RETURN,	355
XXXIV. THE DAY-DAWN,	363
XXXV. MISHAPS AND HAPS,	373
XXXVI. A DOUBLE ACCIDENT,	385

ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE.
MR. OUTWRIGHT WAS A WELCOME CALLER EVERY- WHERE,	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
“NEVER YOU MIND DAN. LEAVE HIM TO ME,” SAID THE CHIEF OF POLICE,	41
“WHY, WHAT HAS HAPPENED NOW?” SHE ASKED, IN SOBERED EARNESTNESS,	143
“NOW, WHAT, MOTHER?” SHE SAID, TURNING ROUND ON THE STOOL TO FACE MRS. JESSUP,	210
“HELLO, SETH!” THADDEUS EXCLAIMED,	275

AN ODD FELLOW.

I.

STARTING A NEW PAPER.

“JUDGE, do n’t you know I am getting awfully tired, do n’t you know, of the poky way the *Gazette* is run, hey?”

“I believe I have heard you say so before,” Judge Tracy replied, with a smile.

“Well, do n’t you know, if a few of us fellows, do n’t you know, should chip in a hundred or two all around, do n’t you know, we could get up a respectable paper—something Brambleville would be proud of, do n’t you know, hey?”

“Perhaps so, Thompson; but who would edit it?”

“Never mind that. Do n’t you know there are plenty of young fellows—bright young scamps—who would make things hum, do n’t you know, if we would give them a chance, hey? Do n’t you know, we need n’t go very far from the *Gazette* office to find one, either,

do n't you know? Now, there is Throckmorton, do n't you know?"

"Perhaps, Thompson; but Brambleville has as many papers now as it can support; more, in fact, than it needs. How they all live is a mystery to me."

"But, do n't you know, there is n't a decent paper in the whole lot, do n't you know? If we had a paper with snap and sparkle, do n't you know, all the others would die out, do n't you know—a survival of the fittest, do n't you know, is about what it would amount to, do n't you know?"

"Then, what would become of the other fellows, Captain? Old Uncle Monmoskin has been in the business here ever since long before the war."

"So he has; and to tell you the truth, Judge, he has stuck to Brambleville; and, as for that, Brambleville has stuck to him, do n't you know? But he is a fossil, do n't you know?"

"There comes Charlie Christie. I know his jump on the stairs. He usually comes up two or three steps at a time. See what he will say about it," the judge said, eyeing the door.

"Charlie is pretty spry, do n't you know, for one of his age? But say, Judge, they tell it on Charlie that he has a soft spot for a relative of yours, do n't you know, and is spryer than usual,

do n't you know, trying to discount forty-odd years, do n't you know?" the captain replied, teasingly.

"He is not coming here. Stopped in the first office, I guess."

"He did, did he? That settles it! Do n't you know, gossip says that Mr. Lysander is not averse to the matter, do n't you know?" the captain persisted.

"Mr. Lysander? Not averse? I do not understand you, Captain."

"Why, Charlie is courting the eldest daughter, to be plain about it."

"That child? Here he comes now."

"How are you, Judge? Good-morning, Captain! Fine day again! Remarkable weather, all in all! Ought to please everybody! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Glad to see you! Have a chair, Charlie. We were just wishing you would come in."

"Thanks, Judge. O! ah! Wanted to see me? Then I am not interrupting you, Judge?—Captain? Do n't let me, I beg you." Charlie bowed to each profoundly, and took the offered chair.

"No; no interruption, Charlie. No one ever interrupts me, you know." Saying this, the judge lighted another cigar.

"Thanks! O! ah! I was just thinking of—

ah!—a scheme that might be worked to our mutual benefit. Ha! ha! ha! I tell you, Judge—and Captain—I do n't know—ha! ha!—how you stand, either of you, on the subject; but Uncle Monmoskin has been a very good editor—ha! ha!—in his day—that is to say, before the war—ha! ha! But times have changed since then—ha! ha!—and you must have noticed how awfully dry the *Gazette* is.”

“The very thing, do n't you know, Charlie, I was just saying to the judge, do n't you know, when we heard you coming up the steps, do n't you know?”

“Coming up the steps! Ha! ha! ha! That's pretty good. Do you recognize—O! ah!—anything peculiar in my coming up the steps? Ha! ha!”

“We all have our peculiarities, do n't you know, Charlie?” the captain said, soothingly. “And when you come up the steps, do n't you know, you come like thunder, do n't you know, Charlie—two steps at one time, do n't you know? A body would n't think it, either, seeing, do n't you know, the gray hairs—an *occasional* gray hair—do n't you know?”

“Early piety, Captain—O! ah!—but—ha! ha! ha!—I do n't walk on my head! It is n't coming up-stairs two steps at a time that makes gray hairs!”

“But, say, do n’t you know, we *must* have another paper. Uncle Monmoskin has outlived his day, do n’t you know? And, say, Charlie, do n’t you know, I believe the judge, here, is with us, do n’t you know?”

The judge smiled broadly, turned his chair toward the window, and watched the clouds go by, saying nothing.

“Silence—ha! ha!—gives consent, Judge—ha! ha!—and we—ah!—well, we know you will help us out. Ha! ha! ha!

“Have you spoken to any one else about it?” he asked, wheeling about to face them again.

“No, Judge; for—ah!—to tell you the truth—ha! ha!—I knew it was n’t much use to talk it up, unless you were in it. Ha! ha! ha! You know—ah!—how that is, yourself.”

“It does n’t matter much about me,” Judge Tracy said, modestly, though he knew it all rested with him; for while others would give their money, he must give the scheme stability by his hearty indorsement. Indeed, only a few could be induced to act independently of him in any public or private enterprise.

“But, do n’t you know, it makes all the difference in the world, do n’t you know, whether you are with us or not, do n’t you know? Of course, you know it!”

“Suppose you call Simon up; and send for

Major Morrison. We might have a little talk about it, whatever we do," he suggested, quietly.

"I will go right off—ah!—if you will wait here, Captain. I will be back in ten minutes, or less, with Simon and the major, too. They are both in Simon's store. Ha! ha! ha! Judge, I see you are with us—ha! ha!—and the scheme is bound to win. Ha! ha! ha!"

Mr. Christie bounded out of the room, and his feet beat the long-roll on the stairs as they rattled down to the street.

"By the way, Captain, did you find a buyer for that house and lot on Cherry Street?"

"Not yet, Judge. The fact is, do n't you know, I am not anxious to sell, even at that figure? Everybody seems to be in a selling mood, do n't you know? Guess I will keep that piece, and buy next to it, do n't you know, and hold for a rise, do n't you know?"

"I thought you and Charlie were on a trade for the Wentworth property."

"We were, do n't you know; but Charlie is going to build an extension to his drug-store, do n't you know, so as to have entrances on both streets, do n't you know, and he backed out, do n't you know? Glad he did, for I will take it all myself. A smashing good piece of property, do n't you know, that Wentworth corner is?"

“Pretty soon you will own all the town, Captain.”

“Guess not, Judge. I am only picking up what other folks throw away, do n't you know? Can't blame me for that—nobody can, do n't you know?”

Then they puffed their cigars in silence, and waited.

“They are coming! Hear Charlie's laugh!”

“Simon is telling one of his funny stories, do n't you know? The only funny thing about Simon's stories, do n't you know, is Simon himself, and his innocent laugh, do n't you know?”

“Pretty good Jew, for all that.”

“Judge, I wish we had just a thousand Jews like Simon in Brambleville, do n't you know?”

“Very few like him.”

“The last of his tribe, do n't you know, and no one to take his wealth when he is gone, do n't you know?—not a chick or child, and no near kin.”

“Can't buy that block of stores of him, I guess?”

“Not for twice its value, do n't you know? Simon is queer about some things, do n't you know, and will not sell a foot of Brambleville property, do n't you know?”

“And buys all he can get?”

“Yes; and, do n't you know, he learned that

trick of me, do n't you know? I happened to tell him one day, do n't you know, something about my scheme; and here he goes, do n't you know, and beats me at my own game, do n't you know? A sly coon is Simon, Judge."

"Sly? Yes, but in the better sense. He would not take advantage of a child. He is perfectly transparent in his dealings; but shrewd, nevertheless."

"Well, here we are, Judge. Ha! ha! ha! And, what do you think? They were actually talking about the same thing; that is—O! ah!—they were lamenting the lack of a paper in Brambleville that is up to the mark and the times—ha! ha!—as it were, when I went after them."

"Indeed! That is quite a coincidence."

"I did n't tell you, Simon, and Major," with a nod toward each, "what—O! ah!—the judge wanted with you; but you see, we—ah!—that is, the captain and myself—were just discussing the question of—ah! well—you know, the *Gazette!* It is antiquated—ha! ha!—and—O! ah!—we thought another paper might be started to represent Brambleville progress and position; and we—ah!—that is, Judge Tracy here—suggested that we get together, and talk it over—ha! ha!—so I went for you—ha! ha! How does it—that is—ha! ha!—how do you

feel about it, Simon? Ha! ha! It is only—ah!—a little interchange of private opinion. Ha! ha!”

“Az fo’ me,” Simon said, spreading out his hands, and extending his arms in a gesture of sincere frankness, “awf c’os’, annudder baper means more eggsbense for advurtidesment wid no addigate redurns for the oudlay; fo’, awf c’os’, de *Gayzette* reages all my gustomers, and more, too; bud I am for ’t, ef thay rest of thay boys air. P’raps we kin hev lots ov fun findin’ oud w’are all de eggsbenses come in, eh, Judge? I am in fur annyding thay rest of thay boys air in tur, from a noosebaper to zygloramy of Adlandy.”

“As for advertising, Simon—ha! ha!—I will just withdraw from the *Gazette*, and double up on our paper, ha! ha! for—O! ah!—I, ha! ha! look upon such expense as—ah—just so much contributed to the press, anyway—ha! ha!”

“And the judge, don’t you know, could throw all his legal ad’s to our paper, don’t you know, and never feel it? His clients have to pay all advertising bills, anyway, don’t you know; and, don’t you know, the Judge would make them help us that way, don’t you know?”

“Guess my clients and Simon’s customers, and Charlie’s too, are all in the same boat. They all have to pay a little more for what

they get to make up for advertising expense. Is n't it so, Simon?"

"May be so, Judge, may be so! Id maygd no diffrunce to me-e-e w'ere I advurdize, so I *advurdize*."

"But say, boys, why not get Uncle Mon-moskin to brush up the old *Gazette*—get a new editor, buy new type, and so on? Then we could get along without a new paper. To tell the truth, I dislike to go back on the *Gazette* at this late day. It was a blessed good thing to get hold of the *Gazette* down at the front in war times. I used to read it through, advertisements and all, especially home advertisements, if I do n't *now*. Why, when we were about to go 'marching to the sea' with Sherman, I remember I read Charlie's drug advertisements, and wished I had a drink of his soda-water; for he had a picture of the fountain in the paper," Major Morrison said.

"Soda-water! Now, Major, do n't you know that is a little thin? Not many soldiers, do n't you know, ever broke through the guard-line, do n't you know, to get soda-water? Was n't it the 'pure drugs, etc.,' of Charlie's ad. that caught your eye? That *etc.* means a good deal, do n't you know, in a drugstore ad., do n't you know?" Captain Thompson said, with hilarious laughter.

“Perhaps the major’s suggestion is the right thing to do. Suppose we see Monmoskin first. There is no little risk in establishing a new paper, however ably managed,” Judge Tracy said, when all were quiet again.

“It is hard to cure an old dog of his tricks, don’t you know, and the *Gazette*, Judge, has tricks as old as the hills, don’t you know? Washing machines and little liver-pills, don’t you know, are more important than news from Washington, don’t you know?”

“Well, ah—ha! ha!—there is sometimes more stir in washing machines than in Washington—ha, ha! ha, ha! ha!”

“That reminds me, don’t you know, that Uncle Monmoskin is in Washington City this blessed minute, don’t you know?”

“He is? What for?”

“Place and power, Judge. Why he expects the President to do great things for him, don’t you know, because he printed his picture, don’t you know, head of column next to reading matter, don’t you know, all last summer?”

“Last summer! Why, there was no campaign last summer.”

“Of course not, Judge; but, don’t you know, it is a great thing to keep one’s place and face before the people, don’t you know? And then, don’t you know, no other paper in the State

could claim such devotedness, do n't you know, to the President?"

"By the way, Captain, do you hear anything encouraging from your appointment?" Major Morrison asked.

"Not a word, Major, do n't you know? And the queerest part of it is, do n't you know, that no one seems to want the place I am after, do n't you know? I am the only applicant, and it's queer, do n't you know, that I do n't get it " The captain took on a seriousness he did not feel, for life was mostly sunshine with him.

"Well, Judge, since we are all agreed on a new paper, or the *Gazette* rejuvenated—ha! ha!—suppose we all—ha, ha! ha, ha!—happen in on Uncle Monnoskin when he comes back—ha, ha!—and inquire what he will do?"

"What do you say, Simon?"

"Id maygd no diffrence to m-e-e. Awf c'os' I'd radder haf a bran new baper, but id maygd no diffrence."

"But, do n't you know, if we started a new paper, we would have a bright, clean, and attractive page, do n't you know, whereas the other way, we would be loaded down with old patent medicine plates, do n't you know, right from the word go?"

"Second-hand gloading mighty poor inveds-munt."

“Yes; it is a little like taking a case in hand after a jury is impaneled.”

“Or buying pine lands in the stumps.”

“Or, ah—ha, ha!—like putting old corks in new bottles—ha! ha!”

“Well, shall we wait to see Uncle Monmoskin, or shall I write out an agreement to start a new paper as Charlie suggested?”

“Write it, Judge, and we will all sign. That will be a starter, do n’t you know?”

“Yes, wride it, Judge. No use cutting the gahment ’tel the gustomer is measured.”

The paper was prepared and signed, and the company were about to separate, when Seth Russell entered the office, smiled on all, and bowed to each, and slipping across the room in a half-abashed way, sat down in a chair, and without preface or explanatory remark, asked:

“What is the greatest ship afloat to-day?”

“The *Great Eastern*?”

“The *City of Rome*?”

“The *Thunderer*, of the British Navy?”

“All wrong.”

“Then *you* say, Seth, for I know you have a catch in it somewhere, do n’t you know?” The captain remarked, cautiously.

“Friendship!”

“Bah! That’s old!” Major Morrison exclaimed.

“Right you are, Major! Older than Methusalem, and yet as new to-day as when David and Jonathan set it afloat from the dry-docks, or when Damon and Pythias gave it new rigging throughout—but the same old ship that sails the sea forever, though wrecked on every shore! Sail on, thou beautiful ship, until thy prow of love has flashed in every water that man may know, guided safe through shoals and sunken reefs by Truth’s unerring eye! Good-day, gentlemen.”

“Odd fellow!” the judge said, as Seth hurried out.

“He is, indeed.”

“People think he is a ‘little off,’ do n’t you know; but when Seth settles down to sober thought, do n’t you know, he is no fool, do n’t you know?”

“Only odd. He does more good than any half-dozen men in the city. Famine and fever, fires and funerals, always stir him up,” the major said, earnestly.

“I understand Monmoskin will be home next week. Come up, gentlemen, Tuesday afternoon, and we will all go over and see what we can do with him,” Judge Tracy said, as the others were leaving his office.

II.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

“WILL you have a copy of the *Gazette*, not yet dry from the press?” Thaddeus Throckmorton said to Miss Josie Tracy, who had waited for him at the foot of the stairs, while he ran up to the office for a moment before going to supper.

“Thank you!” she said, archly, taking the offered paper. “Is there anything in it?” she asked, mischievously, a moment later, as she glanced down the columns as they walked slowly toward her home.

“Of course! The ‘Boss’ is in Washington City, you know, and *I* got this number out ‘all by my lone,’” Thaddeus replied, with a smile.

“Did you? Then I know it is newsy and nice and all that, if *you* got it out.”

“Thanks!” he said, gayly, and with a happy flutter of his heart. “I will walk home with you, if you do not object,” he added, as they reached the corner where their paths would naturally diverge.

“Object! I shall be only too happy!”

“My! it is a relief to get out of that printing-office awhile,”

"I should think you would be tired, having all the work to do this week. Is that why I have n't seen anything of you since last week?"

"In part. But have you missed me?"

"So much! I can not tell you how much."

"Were you at the *musicale* Wednesday night? But of course you were. The *Gazette* has a full account of it, so I need not ask that," Thaddeus said.

"Yes, I was there; went with Cousin Jennie; she called for me. But it was simply horrid!"

"Why so? The *Gazette* says it was a success in every way, and that the piano recital by Miss Josie Tracy was superb."

"It does n't! But who told you anything about it? How dare you describe something you never saw, and to say playing was 'superb' when you never heard a note of it?"

"I was not there, I am sorry to say, but I have heard you play often enough to describe the performance without hearing a note."

"O, thanks!"

"But, besides that, I asked ever so many who were there, and they all said your playing was just '*too sweet for any use.*' And yet you say it was horrid."

"It was! The music was good enough, perhaps; but then I was miserable all evening."

Thaddeus was secretly glad to hear her de-

clare she was miserable when he was absent, and fondly hoped her misery was due to his absence.

"May I ask the cause of your distress of mind?" he said.

"You may, but I will not tell you! Next time I will let *you* go, and I will make it convenient to be somewhere else, and then you can see for yourself how it is."

"But I will not go next time, since I know you are not to be there."

"Aha! see that! But you didn't let me know you were not to be there this time, or I would not have gone either."

"And would you have let your Cousin Jennie go alone, after stopping for you?"

"She did not need to go alone, nor stop for me, either."

"Why?"

"Mr. Morrison was with her. I do not know why they stopped for me. I wish now they hadn't."

"Was Wendell Morrison with her? Did you go with them? I wish you hadn't!"

"Why? Did you call and not find me at home?"

"No, I didn't call; for I worked like a slave until ten o'clock that night."

"Then why do you wish I hadn't gone? Because Mr. Morrison was along?"

"If I must say it, Josie, that is exactly why. But then it is impertinence for me to express a wish about your escorts."

"I do not like Mr. Morrison very much. He is quite entertaining when he tries to be, and one can hardly help liking him, just a little bit. He is brilliant, too. Papa thinks he will make one of the most successful lawyers at this bar."

"He is brilliant; no one can deny that," Thaddeus said, rather sadly.

"Now, do not worry, Thad. I told you I was lonely all the evening, and so I was. He did not pay one bit of attention to me after we got there."

"Is that why you were lonely?"

"You mean thing! You just want to make me come right out and say I was lonesome because you were not there, do n't you?"

"No, I do not want to *make* you say such a thing, Josie; but if you could say it, and would say it, without being made to say it, I should feel happier than I do when I am left to guess at your meaning."

"Well, then, I will say just what is the truth: I was lonesome all evening because you were not there!"

"Thank you, Josie! And I was lonesome all evening because I was not there. I will be there next time. Will you?"

"If I have any one to go with me."

"Leave that to me."

"But you may have a rush of job-work that night."

"Nothing shall interfere."

"But say, Thad, what is this they are talking about? Is there to be a new paper started in town?"

"Not that I have heard. Who is talking about it?"

"I heard papa telling mamma yesterday that a subscription-list was started."

"News to me."

"It is? What will you give me to be reporter for you? I believe I could get more items than you."

"I must see your father about that. Thank you, Josie, for the pointer."

"I heard him say who was to be editor of the new paper; but I suppose you would not care to know his name."

"Would n't I? Why, that is worth more than all the rest."

"What will you give to know?"

"Anything you may demand; for I know I can trust you not to demand too much."

"The half of your kingdom?"

"Yes—the whole of it. My kingdom is 'exceeding small.'"

“But what would Mr. Monmoskin say, I wonder?”

“O, he will be mad—my! how mad he will be!—whoever the editor should be. I wish I had known it this week; for then I could have printed it in the *Gazette*. Next week he will be home, and he will not let me say a word about it.”

“Well, when you get a paper of your own, you can print what you please.

“What do you mean? Not that *I* am to be the editor of a new paper?”

“That is what papa said.”

“Josie, if I only could be, I would be the happiest man on earth.”

“Well, papa is in favor of it, and you know what he indorses generally goes through.”

“How you surprise me! I never supposed such a thought had ever entered a mind in Brambleville but my own. I have been saving a little for a few years, hoping to get enough ahead to start another paper; but I never dared hope Judge Tracy would help me.”

“Now, remember, you have promised me the half of your kingdom; so, if you *do* get the new office, half of it is to be mine!”

“So I said, and so I say now. Shall I make out a contract and a bond?”

“No, thank you. I will take your word.”

Just at that instant they reached Judge Tracy's home, and were about to enter the gate when Seth Russell appeared, and hailed them gayly.

"What an odd fellow!" Josie said, in an aside, as he drew near.

"He is odd; but as true as steel, and as happy as the day is long," Thaddeus replied, closing the gate after them, and pausing to hear what Seth had to say to them.

"Ha! young people, you know the lines about Maud Müller, I suppose?"

"Yes, we know them; but what of that?"

"Well, she captured the judge's heart by a cup of cold water."

"Yes."

"Well, thinking of the judge made me think of the judge's daughter," glancing merrily at Miss Josie.

"Yes."

"And that made me think of 'words of tongue or pen,' seeing an editor here at the judge's gate."

"Yes."

"And that made me wish that no 'sad words' should ever grieve *your* two hearts."

"Ah! thank you!"

"And, say, Mr. Editor, what are 'the saddest words of tongue or pen?'"

“‘It might have been?’” Thaddeus replied inquiringly.

“So the poet says, and truly too. And what word makes all hearts glad, and, in turn, makes all hearts sad?”

“We can not say. You tell.”

“Love! Love is the greatest thing in the world. To love and to be loved is the greatest triumph of a lifetime. To love and *not* to be loved is the greatest defeat. My children, love with a pure heart fervently, and all will be well. But in your triumph or in your defeat—may Heaven save you from defeat!—do not forget old Seth Russell.”

As he hurried away, he left Josie suffused with blushes, and Thad silent with suppressed hope that the blushes meant more than her lips had ever spoken.

Had his twinkling eyes read their hearts?

“I must go, as sorry as I am to leave you; for my mother must know of my prospective good fortune,” Thaddeus said, at the steps of the mansion.

“Must you go? Can you not come in? I will give you one of your ‘superb recitals.’”

“Not now, Josie; but may I call—to-morrow night?”

“Certainly. Good-bye! Hope Mr. Monmoskin will not be *very* mad.”

“That is too good a wish to be realized. Good-bye!”

And so it was.

When the committee called, as they agreed to do, and stated their errand, Mr. Monmoskin's red face grew purple with rage, and his white locks trembled with excitement. He thumped the floor with his stout walking-stick, punctuating his reply in that way with resounding commas, semi-colons, and periods, and said:

“What was Brambleville when I came here? Not one of you can tell. Not one of you were born then. It was only a stopping-place for stages. What is it now? A city that any man should be proud to call his home. It is no longer a stopping-place for stages, but an important station of three lines of railroads, a place of fine churches, excellent schools, a police force as good as earth can afford, a fire department, and everything that goes to make life desirable or home pleasant. It is known far and wide for its business, its beauty, its benevolence, its peace, its prosperity; and yet you would make it infamous for its cruel heartlessness. What was it when I came? A tavern, a cross-roads store, a log church,—a wilderness. I started the *Gazette*; the town grew; the war came; the *Gazette* was fearless; and now, and now, and now! *now!!* y-o-u! y-o-u!! ask me to turn

my back on all this growth, to deny my own children, to let go the helm that has guided us to such renown, to turn over the whole business to a mere tyro! And what is he? A *creature of mine!* You say he has talent; you say he is a favorite; you say he has genius. What if he has? what if he has? *w-h-a-t if—HE—HAS?* He ought to have. He has been with *me* twelve years! No, gentlemen," dropping to a milder tone and a gentler manner, mopping his perspiring forehead and gasping for breath, "you can not dictate to *me!* When I need your help, I will send for you. After running the *Gazette* thirty years, and making Brambleville what it is, I need no advice from men who wore dresses after the *Gazette* was founded."

And then, as the committee stood silent, he remarked sarcastically, as he drew his chair to his desk:

"This is my busiest day!"

III.

THE TRUTH.

AT the time the committee called on Mr. Monmoskin, Thaddeus was out of the office, having gone to secure, if possible, a column of live advertisements, to take the place of "dead plates," as patent-medicine electrotypes were called, after running the time contracted for by the agencies.

He was surprisingly successful, and returned jubilant over his work, whistling a lively tune that was finished at the very threshold of the office by a few steps of a "hoe-down" dance.

"Mr. Monmoskin, see this! How is that for advertisement copy?" he said, as he unrolled the sheet of wrapping-paper on which the merchant had hastily scrawled his copy for a whole column advertisement.

The editor took the copy, crumpled it up into a wad, tossed it in the waste-basket, and roared fiercely at his astonished assistant:

"I want to hear nothing from *you* on any subject. I want you to let advertisements for this paper alone. I have made up my mind that such as you shall no longer disgrace my office. I am done with *you*!"

Thaddeus was dumb with surprise, and choked by sudden uprising of passion. For a moment his heart stood still, and his face was white as death. After a strong effort to be calm, he said, with difficulty :

“I do not understand you, sir.”

“Do not understand me? Then, in the name of all the gods, who sent Judge Tracy, and a pack of his willing tools, to me, to ask that you—think of it!—that *you* should be made editor of *my* paper? *You* an editor!”

“I do not know—”

“Stop! Stop right there! Do not put lying on top of your base ingratitude.”

“Sir!” Thaddeus said, with energy, “no man shall accuse me of lying without proving his charge or retracting his words.”

Thaddeus was so thoroughly mad that he was scarcely aware of his actions. He advanced threateningly toward his employer; but he did not intend to do him bodily injury, though the latter thought he did.

“Stand back, or I’ll let this stick take its course!” the editor said, brandishing his cane.

Some good angel whispered to Thaddeus, and he paused in his steps, and with wonderful calmness, that came to him as suddenly as a flash of light, he said :

“I do not fear your cane, nor need I heed

your words. Twelve years of service proves to you, I am quite sure, that I am neither a coward nor a liar."

"And you did not send those men to me, you insolent hypocrite?"

"I did not, nor did I know they were coming. But you shall not have occasion to repeat your abuse. I will leave you. Good-day!"

The editor scowled, and hissed vengeance through set teeth; but nevertheless he shouted, as Thaddeus closed the door behind him:

"Never enter this office again, at your peril!"

At any other time, Mr. Monmoskin would not have been so irritable, nor so vehement and unreasonable, perhaps; but his visit to Washington had not resulted as he hoped; and no Government appointment obtained, he came home disheartened, disgusted, and full of vindictiveness. The committee and Thaddeus were the victims of his pent-up wrath and resentment.

An hour after Thaddeus left the office, Mr. Monmoskin would have welcomed his return, and he hoped his faithful helper would forgive his harshness, and would return the next day to "make up." Vain hope!

That very night, just before twelve o'clock, Thaddeus entered the waiting-room of the railway depot, accompanied by Judge Tracy and

Simon Hunter. He was starting for Chicago to buy a new and complete newspaper outfit. In his pocket was a bank-draft, payable to his order, sufficiently large to cover the cost of such an office, and his own savings were ample to meet the incidentals of such a trip.

In Judge Tracy's pocket was Thaddeus's note for the amount of the bank-draft.

"What value has my note?" he asked, in surprise, when his friends proposed to let him have the money to buy the office, taking his individual paper in return. "I have nothing with which to secure it." He said something of the same import at the depot.

"Yes, you haf someding—you haf whole lots someding. Someding more waluable dan moonee. You haf a good name, an' Solomon say dat ish bedder as grade ridges all de time, alretty."

At this, Judge Tracy smiled broadly, smoked his cigar vigorously, gently swung his cane behind him, and then said, his eyes closing to shut out the smoke of his fragrant weed:

"If *we* are satisfied, you ought to be."

"I am glad you gentlemen think so; but I am overwhelmed by this unexpected kindness. It is the realization of a hope I have long entertained, but which I dared not look for these many years."

“How mooch Thad looks like his fadder, Judge! Brambleville lost a fine man when Richard Thruckmoortun died.”

“That is true; but let us hope Thad will make up by extra ability and intenser devotion what we lost in his father. Dick was a brilliant fellow though. He and I started in the law together, though I was several years older.”

“Were you and father in partnership?” Thad asked, in surprise.

“Yes, for a few weeks only; but in that time I learned to love him, and expected great things of him if he had lived. Wendell Morrison reminds me of him in his dash and daring and his rare eloquence.”

“But, Joodge, Wendell has nune ov the stay-bileetee and solid sinse ov Ridgeard.”

“That is so.”

“Excuse me; but am I to understand that your interest in me and your kindness in this business enterprise are due to my father’s memory?”

“In part, yes; but, of course, had we not discovered in you some of the qualities that endeared your father to us in our younger days, we would not have trusted you quite as much as we now do.”

“But, say, Joodge, nune ov us haf got such avvecting vays in the lodge-room as—”

"There 's my train! Good-bye, Judge! Good-bye, Mr. Hunter! I will be back day after to-morrow. Be sure to lease that room over the post-office for me. I will buy enough type to run a daily, too. It is a little risky, but other places make it go. Why not here?"

"As you think best," said the judge, as a parting injunction; "but be careful not to overdo the matter at the start."

When the day dawned that September morning, Thaddeus descried in the distance the blue waters of Lake Michigan standing up like a low hill, over which were flying white birds, their feet touching the earth, and their pinions piercing the sky that bent over them. As the rushing train bore him rapidly toward the great city, the hill melted into a broad expanse of sparkling water, and the birds swelled into masted ships that sailed before the wind into the harbor of the metropolis of the West.

"It is very odd that I should be here with two thousand dollars in my pocket, when last week I should have staggered under the task of raising two hundred dollars."

"It is odd that Thad should be in Chicago buying a new press for a new paper, when a few days ago he was wishing he could start a little job office of his own," said Miss Josie Tracy at the breakfast-table.

“So it is, my daughter, but when you are older you may learn there are very many odd fellows in this world, and there is no telling what odd things they will do.”

As the judge walked leisurely down to his office that morning, he was overtaken by Seth Russell, who slackened his short, quick steps to suit the judge's slow but stately stridings, long enough to say:

“What are the poet's words about Truth, Judge?”

“‘Truth crushed to earth will rise again?’”

“Yes, that's it. ‘Truth is mighty, and will prevail,’ is another. Is that in the Bible, Judge, or is it one of Davy Crockett's wise sayings?”

“Neither, Seth, as far as I know.”

“They say we are to have a new paper, and a daily at that. Is that the truth, Judge?”

“From present appearances it will be the truth before many days.”

“And Thad Throckmorton is to edit it?”

“Yes, that is the scheme now.”

“May the spirit of his murdered father be with him! The truth about that awful crime will come out yet, Judge. Remember, Seth Russell told you so. Good-day!”

“As odd as ever,” the judge said, and slowly walked on to his office.

IV.

FOREWARNED.

THE *Daily Banner* was a decided sensation in Brambleville, and leaped at one bound into popular and permanent favor.

The merchants liked the little paper, because in it they could announce daily bargains, and proclaim the arrival of new goods, and not wait a week for the tardy appearance of the *Gazette*.

The young people liked the paper, for it put them in possession of the latest gossip, the comings and goings of society, at the very earliest date.

The old folks liked it because it printed daily predictions of the weather, as well as forecasts of the political world.

Nearly everybody liked the paper because they liked the young editor, and discovered in all his projects and prophecies the excellency they had learned to ascribe to his character. He was evidently getting on in the world, and they were all glad that the son of Richard Throckmorton prospered in life.

Except Mr. Monmoskin, who was fearfully afflicted with jealousy on account of the sweeping conquest of the *Banner*, only one other per-

son was annoyed by its success, or felt hostile toward its editor, and that person was Wendell Morrison.

But as he was a member of the Legislature, and an aspirant for further political preferment, he very discreetly kept his annoyance to himself, and only spoke to his intimate associates of his hostile feelings.

A year rolled by, and the *Banner* was firmly planted in Brambleville, and had made for itself an enviable reputation in adjoining counties, and even in the principal cities of the State. It was no uncommon thing to see quotations from the *Banner* in the great dailies.

The meanwhile Thaddeus developed much self-reliance, and by his position as editor of the most vigorous paper in the county, came to be sought out by politicians generally, and by local leaders he was frequently mentioned as an available candidate for office at the approaching election.

He was not averse to serving a term or two in some office—for the sake of the salary attached, for one thing, but more especially for the standing among men it would give him. He looked forward to a day when he could dispose of his newspaper-office, and give his whole attention to the law and politics.

“Father was Judge Tracy’s partner once,”

he said to his mother, when discussing the question one day, "and who knows but that some day I will take father's place!"

His mother made no reply, but excused herself from the breakfast-table for a few minutes. Had Thaddeus seen her agitation he would have known that such a turn in affairs was not a pleasant prospect. The new paper did not interfere with his persistent reading and studying law under Judge Tracy's tutorage.

Wendell Morrison was ambitious to be Judge Tracy's law partner also; but he sought it not so much as an end, as did Thaddeus, but as the means to an end, and that end still further glory and power in the political field.

Neither knew that the other coveted partnership with Judge Tracy; but both knew that the other aspired to political honors.

Wendell smiled on Thad's ambition when in his presence; but when elsewhere, and with those he could trust, he unbosomed his bitter hostility to the young editor's aspirations.

A favorite resort for Wendell and his coterie of helpers was the corner where the big tree stood—a corner as noted as any place in the village; for a huge tree grew up from the sidewalk, and spread its heavy branches in all directions, making a grateful shade in the day-time, and at night affording a darkened spot where a

half-dozen men could congregate unseen by others, but in a position to see all that occurred for squares down each of four streets. The spot was known as "The Big-tree Corner."

It was here that Wendell stood one night, discussing, with a few friends, the political outlook, when he said, hissingly, just loud enough to be heard by those near him:

"Thad is as ambitious as Satan; but I will pull some strings he does not suspect I can touch, and then there will be music in the air!"

"The major seems to be friendly to his plans," suggested Billy Barnwell, chief of police, who was one of Wendell's trusted lieutenants.

"Father? O yes; he is friendly. Has to be, you know. He was Throckmorton's bosom friend—one of them, I mean—Thad's father, you know—and is friendly to Thad on his father's account. Father is an odd fellow anyway."

"But I should think he would be for his own kin. Does he suspect Thad's intention to run against you?"

"No!" contemptuously. "The fact is, father thinks I am solid all over the county. May be I am; rather think so myself. But in time of peace prepare for war! See?"

"What will you do?"

"Clip his wings," he said, viciously. "What's this daily for? Wings! That's all. Gets into

homes every day instead of once a week. Comes into notice in the city dailies. A daily, though ever so small and inconsequential, outweighs and outruns a weekly five to one. Clip his wings! See?"

"That's so," assented Billy, striking his club against the heavy sole of his upturned shoe. "That's so, Wend. But how? The daily is in the hearts of the people as well as their homes."

"Do n't work against it openly, for then everybody would drop to our game; but let it alone, and quietly get others to let it alone. Get people to read the *Herald*, from Riverton. I am going over there, and will get the manager to have a special letter from Brambleville every day. It will cost only two cents. I can get him a correspondent here who will work for nothing, if he will send him the *Daily Herald*."

"Then there is the *Review*. That is more popular here than the *Herald*. Work that the same way," urged Sam Slimkins, another willing doer of Wendell's work.

"Do n't know about that," Wendell said, meditatively. "He is correspondent for that paper himself. It would be hard to get him out."

"Nonsense!" said Billy, positively. "I can get him out."

"*You!* I would like to see you. How would you go about it?"



“Never you mind Dan. Leave him to me,” said the chief of police.”—Page 41.

“Well, not me, but I know a fellow who can.”

“That is likely; but can you use him? Who is he?”

“Dan Habberdown, the news agent. He is down on Thad because the *Banner* has cut into his sales. He does n't sell nearly as many dailies as before, and he won't touch the *Banner* with a ten-foot pole, he is so sour on Thad.”

“What can Habberdown do with the *Review* people?”

“Everything. He can write the *Review* that their sales are falling off because Thad is their correspondent here, and tell them if they want to hold their own they must get another correspondent. Of course they will ask Dan to name a man who will take with the people. He will come to me, and I will come to you, and you can name the man you want, and Thad will have to walk the plank.”

“By jingo, Billy, you are a schemer! I never thought it was in you. But will Dan do that?”

“Never you mind Dan. Leave him to me,” said the chief of police, confidently, whacking his gloved hand softly with the handle of his club. “You would n't ask such a question as that if you knew where I caught Dan just the other night. I did n't ‘run him in,’ as I ought to, may be; and now he is my man, you bet, just as long as I want to use him.”

Then all laughed uproariously, for a laugh would not reveal any of their secrets, and they enjoyed Billy's cuteness in getting a string on Dan Habberdown.

"Where did you catch him?" asked Sam Slimkins, expecting a story of flagrant wrongdoing.

"Never mind where," said Wendell, with a show of impatience. "Let us attend to business, and not waste our time over Dan's departures from right paths. Anyway, Sam, you know enough meanness now, without learning any from Dan."

Again the stillness of the night was broken by uproarious merriment at this thrust on Sam. When it subsided he had rallied sufficiently to retort.

"I bet you can give Dan a pointer, and then beat him at his meanness."

"I never have posed as a saint, and it is not likely I will begin now, seeing that my eye is on a seat in Congress," Wendell said, good-naturedly.

"But I have got it on Dan, and no mistake," interposed Billy, with a chuckle of delight.

"Good for you, Billy," said Wendell, approvingly, giving the chief of police a friendly slap on the shoulder. "But see here," he added, soberly, "do not bear down too hard on the

Banner all at once. I do not want it to come out against me. All I want is to get Throcky's wings clipped, so he will not dare to run against me in the convention for the nomination."

"Perhaps the *Review* had better be left alone awhile," suggested another. "They might write to Thad himself before they appointed another."

"I have got it down fine, and do n't you forget it!" Billy replied. "Just leave that to me, and you will see how I play the game."

"I must keep right on going to the *Banner* office as before," said Wendell, "and if Throcky should ask me to do any little thing for him, why I will do it, just as if nothing is in the wind. See?"

"Promise him everything, and do nothing. That's the ticket," said Sam Slimkins. "Feed him on taffy—he likes it."

"Do n't know," said Billy. "Throcky is nervy. You must not crowd him too hard."

"Do n't crowd him at all," said Wendell. "Let him go along as usual, and stand by him in public, but give him fits in private. See?"

"O yes; we see!" said Billy.

"We see, and will go you one better," said Sam, with a malicious smile.

"Success to you, then!" said Wendell.

And thus they parted for the night; but there

had been set in motion currents and counter-currents that threatened to swamp Thaddeus and his paper in a whirlpool of conflicting and cruel controversies.

More effectually to hide from Thad his part in the matter, Wendell assumed an unusually friendly manner, and frequented the *Banner* office so persistently that observant folks predicted a union of interests, and consequent peaceable settlement of political contention.

Thaddeus, however, noted with annoyance that the *Herald* was giving much space and great prominence to Brambleville news and gossip. It seemed to him unkind to reach over into his field, and seek to glean ahead of the *Banner*.

After a very few days the mail brought this letter to Thaddeus:

REVIEW OFFICE,
Lakeside, October 2, 18—. }

MR. THADDEUS THROCKMORTON, Brambleville:

On and after the 15th of this month, we shall not need your services as correspondent for the *Review* in Brambleville.

Yours truly,

SAMUEL SINGLETON, Manager.

He read the brief note once, and read it again, and then again, and sat down to think. He had wanted to resign, as his own work was pressing and urgent; but kept up the *Review* items as a matter of accommodation to the

paper that had befriended him when he needed the five dollars to ten dollars a month his correspondence brought him. Now, to be dismissed summarily was humiliating. Perhaps there was a mistake that might be rectified. It was worth a trial, at least. Turning to his desk, he wrote:

MR. SAMUEL SINGLETON, Manager *Review*, Lakeside:

Dear Sir,—Please give me cause of dismissal as correspondent of the *Review*, as per your note just at hand.

Sincerely, THADDEUS THROCKMORTON.

With impatience he awaited the reply:

REVIEW OFFICE,
Lakeside, October 7, 18—. }

MR. T. THROCKMORTON:

Sir,—Referring to your inquiry, just at hand, would say our friends in Brambleville think the *Review* will be benefited by a change of correspondent. This is purely a business matter for business ends.

Yours, etc., S. SINGLETON, Manager.

Thaddeus read these lines with amazement. Who in Brambleville could or would take the trouble to oust him from so inconsiderable a place as correspondent of the *Review*? He could fasten upon no one, and least of all did he suspect the chief of police, or even his rival, for he had been so very kind and condescending of late.

He was in no amiable frame of mind when a friend called at the office, and said:

“Suppose you heard about Morrison?”

“No; what is it? The major, you mean?”

“No, not the major, but Wendell.”

“What now?” he asked, and his tone and manner implied that happenings to the younger Morrison were so many that one more could make but little difference to him or to the public.

“He’s a lucky dog, that same Wendell Morrison is,” the friend proceeded to say. “Better lucky than rich, they say; but, then, Morrison is both lucky and rich. It beats all how plums fall in some people’s hands! They say Crickenbaum, the painter, is making a new sign down at his shop, and it reads: ‘Tracy & Morrison, Attorneys at Law.’ ‘How is that for high?’”

“Who told you?” Thaddeus asked, taking up his pencil to write the item of news for the *Banner*; but he dared not lift his eyes to his informant lest they should betray his feeling, and could not ask any further particulars. He trembled with sudden but suppressed emotion. It was the very place he coveted. He was glad his friend left the office at once, before he disclosed his distress. He bowed his head on his desk, and wished he had never been born. Had the tide set in against him? Was he to be lifted and carried whither he would not? Were breakers ahead?

If Morrison was to be Judge Tracy's law partner, it was a foregone conclusion that he would be a privileged caller at the judge's home, and that Josie would be thrown into his company very, very often. He feared Morrison there. Amid these unpleasant reflections the door opened quietly, and an employee of the *Gazette* entered timidly.

"How are you, Reynolds?" said Thaddeus, rising, and extending a hand in welcome.

"First rate," Reynolds replied, grasping Thad's hand heartily. "You were not expecting *me*, were you?"

"Hardly; but you are welcome, nevertheless. How is the *Gazette* prospering?"

"All right. But, say!" and Reynolds put his chair down close beside Thad's, "you need n't be afraid of the *Gazette*. That can do you no harm; but you'd better look out for your *friends*!"

"Explain."

"Can I trust you?" said Reynolds, drawing his chair still closer to Thad. "You won't give me away?"

"Reynolds, you have seen me tried. Did I flinch? My friendship for you, my love for justice, and my high regard for truth, are your guarantee that what you commit to my keeping is safe, whether it be much or little."

“Of course, I know that, or I would not be here. What I say I say on Friendship, Love, and Truth.”

Then he told him of the compact made the night Wendell and his associates met at the Big-tree Corner, and planned his defeat. He overheard the conversation as he sat in an open window just above them, seeking relief from a severe nervous headache.

“I ought to have come sooner,” he said, in conclusion; “but I hated to, seeing I am working for the *Gazette*, and the two offices are not on very good terms.”

“I thank you very sincerely, Reynolds; and do not think for one minute that I am not the friend of every one in the *Gazette* office, no matter how bitter Mr. Monmoskin may be toward me—especially of such as you.”

As Reynolds passed out, Seth Russell slipped in, and, as the door closed behind the departing caller, he said:

“Beware, my friend! beware! Take the advice of an old man, and trust not appearances! Where love is, you are safe. Where truth abides, you are secure. Trust only those who love in truth and in *deed*.”

“That is good advice, I am sure, Mr. Russell; but can you not be a little more explicit?”

“I was coming home from watching by the

sick last night at midnight, and, as I passed the Big-tree Corner, I heard words that made me shudder. You have enemies, my friend, where you least suspect it. Our lawmaker is a law-breaker. Beware! Remember, Seth Russell hath warned you! When you are in danger, do not call the police! A mountain in Palestine has more help for you than they! Good-bye!"

V.

ONE DEGREE HIGHER.

“O IT’S you, is it?”

Miss Josie answered the bell herself; for she was expecting Thaddeus, as it was his evening and his hour, and she delighted him always by meeting him at the door with a hearty welcome.

“Put your hat there, and your coat also,” she continued, pointing to the hall-tree. “I thought you would n’t know!”

“Yes, I know,” he replied, smiling at the absurd suggestion that he was a stranger there.

They passed into the parlor, and were seated, when Thad noticed that Judge Tracy was reading the evening paper in the back parlor.

Usually he was glad to find the judge at home, and generally excused himself from Josie for a few minutes while he chatted with her father about business and politics. But that evening he felt a constraint he had not known before in the judge’s presence, and, instead of going to greet him, he drew a chair to the fireplace, looked steadily into the glowing grate, and drifted off into a reverie that was protracted

and unbroken, until Josie said, with arching brows and a mischievous smile :

“Well, *yes*—if I must say it.”

“Excuse me!” Thad said, startled into consciousness of his surroundings. “I fear I did not leave business at the door, as I should have done. But then, Josie, I have been so indulged in your home, and your father has been so kind to me that I have learned to take privileges here that I would not dare to grant myself elsewhere. And did you know, Josie, that I came down to-night intending to lay my whole heart open to you—my business heart, I mean,” blushing slightly, as he added the modifying phrase.

“Thank you—for your confidence in—my business tact;” and an answering color heightened her beauty. “The daily grows, I see.”

“Beg pardon!”

“The daily grows more interesting. How do you think of so much to say—so much that is really interesting?”

“The ‘much to say’ is easy enough. It is the ‘what to say’ that worries one. There are many items of local interest that come to us as rumors, and which we would be glad to print, if true; but, before we can verify them, the day is gone, and by the next day what was ‘news’ becomes an old story.”

At this juncture, Judge Tracy put down his

paper, came into the parlor, and greeted Thaddeus cordially. Standing in the middle of the floor, putting his glasses into their case, he said:

“I promised to meet Morrison at our office a little after eight o'clock, and as it is nearly that time now, I must go. I am sorry I can not stay and talk over matters and things a little. The daily still flourishes, of course?”

“Yes, sir, thank you. I am sorry you must go.”

“Something particular?”

“No, sir, nothing of importance.”

Thaddeus was indeed sorry that Judge Tracy was going to his office—to meet Morrison; for that confirmed the rumor that Morrison had been admitted to partnership, and it would henceforth be “Tracy & Morrison.”

And, later, might there not appear in his own paper a notice headed “MORRISON—TRACY,” and which should read like this:

“MARRIED—At the residence of the bride's father, Judge Tracy, Mr. Wendell Morrison and Miss Josephine Tracy, all of Brambleville. Rev. Archibald Outwright officiating.”

Thaddeus saw that notice in solid nonpareil type, under the daily announcement of marriages, in his paper of some future date, as clearly and as exactly as the reader of any no-

tice sees the printed letters when the paper is in his hand.

What if that notice should be handed him the last minute before going to press, when all were busy correcting galleys, making up forms, or spreading the paper, so that he would have to set the type himself, as he often did for a belated item!

How would his voice sound? Would it be steady and clear, or uncertain and husky, as he called out to the foreman:

“Kill that four-line ‘Cow for Sale’ to make room for this marriage notice; for it must appear to-day, if ever!”

He wondered if the boys would notice how pale his face was—how his hands trembled—or guess why he went from the press-room to his desk, and did not wait to get the first paper that came off the press, as he had always done.

As he meditated on these things, he rocked furiously before the sputtering grate-fire, unmindful that Judge Tracy had gone, and that Josie sat near him, shading her face from the firelight by the evening paper her father had left in her lap, patiently waiting for her guest to come back from his wandering. He rocked and rocked, and followed himself through a dreary life, repeating over and over “the saddest words of tongue or pen,” of which old Seth

Russell had reminded him that day he and Josie talked at her father's gate, until he stood at his own grave.

Slowly and still more slowly the chair swayed on its noiseless rockers as Thaddeus approached the final scene, and it stood still as he heard the minister say, "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes," and heard the dropping of the handful of dirt that the sexton threw down upon his coffin! Sighing heavily, he aroused from his dreaming, and, looking up with confusion and sincere regret, said earnestly:

"Miss Josie! I beg your pardon for *such* rudeness. It is too much! Here a second time I have utterly forgotten your presence, and have gone chasing after wild thoughts of my brain. Can you forgive me a second time?"

"Do not mention it! No apologies are needed; for I, too, was 'lost in thought,' and for that reason have not felt neglected. So we are even. Now let us both begin at the beginning. Shall we?"

"On one condition," Thaddeus exclaimed, suddenly seized with a determination to risk everything on a bold movement.

"And what is the condition?"

"That we tell each other of what we were dreaming!"

"O no; I can not agree to that!"

“Well, then,” said Thaddeus, reassured by her blushes and her refusal to tell, “let us each hope that what the other saw in our wide-awake dreams may never come to pass!”

“O no, not that! I do not want any such ruthless destruction of my castles. My reverie was of such bright and happy things! Were n't yours?”

“Far from it! I dreamed of buried desires, of wrecked hopes, of a dismal ending to a beautiful day-dawn.”

“Poor fellow! What horrid happenings have set your thoughts awry like that? Where are all the bright views of the future you laid before me just a few nights ago?”

Thaddeus smiled feebly, tried to appear cheerful and to be brave, and said:

“Illusions!”

“But seriously, Thad, I am afraid the daily is taxing you too much. You are losing your buoyancy of spirit. Whatever profit you make will prove dear gain obtained at that cost.”

“Can you read secret thoughts and discover hidden causes? You are a discerner of spirits surely; for the daily does worry me, but not half as much as other things.”

“What ‘other things?’ May I know?”

Her tone and manner were sincerely sympathetic.

“I *would* like to tell you, and yet I do not wish to burden you with personal matters.”

“What other matters would interest me half as much? If you can trust me, I shall certainly be glad to share your burden. Will not two make the burden half as much?”

“You are very kind. Josie, you have helped me more than I can tell, and at more times than you know, by your sympathetic words and very charming manner. Trust you? I can trust *you* with anything—everything; but I do dislike to worry you with so much of my personal affairs.”

“It is no worry, Thad. Not to tell me would worry me.”

“Well, it is just this: I have discovered that I have secret enemies. I mean those who are devoted friends in my presence, but relentless foes when I am not around. A knowledge of the injury they can do me when masquerading as my friends, or when working for the party—to let them tell it, and in such a way that I can not defend myself—sets me wild at times.”

“Perhaps your fears are groundless. Some one may have deceived you just to annoy you.”

“No, that can not be. I have already lost both money and influence through their secret machinations. I know who they are, but dare not open my mouth; for I could not convey to

others the proofs I have, and my assertion would remain unsupported by a single fact."

"Could you not get father to help you? He has never refused you yet."

"That is true, but here he can not help; that is, I can not lay the case before him."

"But will you trust *me* with the facts? I will not demand proof. I will take your bare assertion; for I know, Thad, your word is truth."

"Yes, Josie, I can trust you, but I can not trust myself in this case. I am afraid if I should commence to tell you, I would go too far, and would say things I might regret after it was too late."

"Then I can not help you; but really, you do not do yourself justice. But I will not urge you. When you think you can with safety to yourself, let me help you carry your secret. But, come, let us have a song! Perhaps we can sing you into a happier frame of mind. Songs cure the blues, Thad."

"Do not say 'the blues,' Josie. I hope I am too much a man to succumb to 'the blues.'"

"What shall I say, then? Melancholy?"

"No, not 'melancholy.' Let it drop. What shall we sing?"

He went to the piano, and searched through the music for their favorite songs. By a strong

effort he threw off his sadness, and was himself again in appearance and manner.

With heartiness and with expression they sang together, rendering the duet as faultlessly as they would had they been singing for an audience of critics; but their hearts were not in the work, nor did they heed the words their lips uttered.

When the song was done, Josie softly touched the keys, playing nothing but broken strains of familiar tunes. Thaddeus stood at the end of the piano, apparently studying the score of the music before him, but really thinking not once of the notes, nor of the sentiment of the song.

"Miss Josie, I am no stranger to you. We have been schoolmates; and you know what I am now, and what I hope to be, don't you?"

"Yes, I think I do," without looking up.

"You have encouraged me, and helped me, and sympathized with me, especially since I took the *Banner* office."

"Had to," she said, mischievously, glancing up; but his eyes did not meet hers; "for papa had your note, and wanted you to prosper until that was paid, if no longer."

"But the note is paid. And has your interest in me and the office ceased with the interest on the note?"

This time he looked at her; but she was

busy with the piano-keys, and did not see his glance, though she smiled at his pleasantry.

“It is hard to quit caring for what you have cared for so long,” she said; “that is, right off. Besides, I did not know the note was canceled.”

“It is. Paid the last cent this week.”

“Why did n’t you tell me? Here I have been feeling an interest in you even to-night.”

“Josie, I have cared for you longer than that note has been running. For years, Josie, for years I have cared for you. Josie, I love you. I can not help it. I do not want to help it. Must I quit?”

He closed the music-book with a slam, turned from the piano, walked across the floor, returned, and stood at her side, waiting her reply; for she still thrummed the keys thoughtlessly, but without evoking a single discord. His face burned, and the blood struggled through every swelling vein; for his heart beat violently as he waited for his fate at her hands. Presently she said, shyly:

“You need n’t quit, right off.”

“Do not say that, Josie. Say I need not quit, ever.”

“On one condition,” she said, letting her hands fall into her lap, and looking up at him lovingly.

“And that? But I grant it before you tell

me. I grant *any* condition you may name!" he cried eagerly, taking her hand in his.

"That you tell me truly, *truly*, all you thought and feared to-night when you dreamed before the grate awhile ago."

"I will. And then?"

"You say."

"And then, may I love you always, *always*, as I do now?"

"Yes."

"And, Josie—my own true, true love—my very life—will you give me a corner in your heart for my very own, and mine only?"

"Yes, dear; not one, but four corners."

"And the center?"

"The center, too!"

"And you truly, truly want me to tell you what I was thinking about when I came?"

"Truly, truly! Let me know your very heart!"

Then he told her all he knew of Morrison's schemes against him, not stopping until he had poured into her willing ears all his longing to make for himself a name and a place, and to be found worthy to be associated with her father in the practice of law.

Then she said:

"I have not heard of the partnership, except that papa has said he had been urged to take

Morrison into business. But 'Thad, dear, I am nearer to papa than any law partner can ever be. Trust me!"

Thaddeus went home happy. His losses were trifles compared with his gains.

What if Morrison was scheming against him, and planning his overthrow? One heart, at least, never could be influenced by his sophistry or embittered by his malice.

What if Judge Tracy had consented to a partnership with the brilliant young lawyer? The judge's daughter had consented to a partnership with the hard-working young editor, and that was enough.

What if the *Review* had dropped him, since Miss Josie had admitted him to her heart!

The *Daily Banner*, the next day, contained two items which 'Thaddeus read in the first copy pulled from the press without so much as a tremor of fear or a tinge of bitterness, though he had written them the day before in anguish of soul.

Indeed, the sunshine in his heart could never be darkened by any cloud that might arise in the newspaper or political sky.

"Please, and can Seth have a fresh paper?"

"Indeed you can, Mr. Russell. Good paper to-day, too."

"I see it is by your eye. Old Seth can read

eyes, Thaddeus. You are safe so long as that light shines there. Let love rule!"

"What an odd fellow he is!" Thad said, as the door closed behind him.

But Wendell Morrison had plans other than those that pertained to law and politics. At least he knew that political prospects are always greatly enhanced by a surplus of finance. His fortune as an heir of his father's estate would be ample; but then Miss Josie, the only child of Judge Tracy, would inherit a far greater amount. He might manage to unite the two fortunes.

And then—"Zounds!" he exclaimed as he thought of it; "if I could supplant Thad in her heart, how sweet would be my revenge on him!"

So he determined to leave no work undone that would further his designs.

VI.

TWO ODD FELLOWS.

REV. ARCHIBALD OUTWRIGHT was a popular preacher; but he was far from being an ideal minister in personal appearance, his garb was so queer.

He wore a broad-brim soft hat, which shaded a face that would be taken for that of a prosperous and intelligent German farmer; for it was round, ruddy, running over with ripples of good-humor, and a delight to all his acquaintances.

He wore the conventional black of the clergy; but though his garments were cut so differently, they were made to fit so perfectly that one lost sight of them in considering the person of the preacher. Though he weighed very nearly three hundred pounds, he walked along the street so briskly, and with such a light step, that one was hardly aware of his approach until greeted by his cheery "good-morning!" He carried a cane; but its ferrule was rubber-tipped, and, when it touched the pavement, bounded back noiselessly, as if it knew better than to break in upon the preacher's meditations, or to attract attention from him.

His bright eyes snapped constantly with innocent mirthfulness, and his memory was such that he greeted nearly every one by name, even if he did not pause for further salutation. Mr. Outwright was a welcome caller everywhere—as welcome as a ray of sunshine when clouds are thickest, or a breath of cool air when the sun is hottest; for he was both sunshine and life to every one. He knew quite as well when to leave as when to call; what to keep to himself, and what to spread before his friends. A rare man was Mr. Outwright!

Thaddeus was bending over his table, writing rapidly, much absorbed in his subject, when the Rev. Archibald Outwright entered the office. He paused in the middle of the floor, waiting for an interval of silence in the scratch, scratch, whipity, whipity, whish, whir, whir, whir-r-r, dot, dash, wiglety-wig of the pen, as it swept across the paper, recording swiftly and unerringly the glowing thoughts of the young editor.

“My dear Mr. Outwright!” Thaddeus exclaimed, looking up for an instant, having made on the paper a double loop with his pen, putting two accent marks at the middle, as if to say, “I stop here, but have more to say, and will write it on occasion.”

“I hope I do not intrude!”

“By no means. I am always glad to see you.”

“I thought differently the past ten minutes while I waited in your majesty’s presence—waiting for a sign that I might approach nearer than the middle of the floor! How do you act when you are *not* glad to see a caller?”

“O! I just say, ‘I will attend to you in a minute!’ ”

“Then there *are* fellows that you can sift clean in a minute, eh?”

“Yes; either sift or shift.”

“Which would you rather do?”

“Sift, of course. An editor is always looking for wheat, pure wheat, and looking for it everywhere. Sometimes he sifts a good editorial from a caller who never suspects why the editor takes such an interest in his affairs. By studying individuals, the editor comes to know people, communities, States, nations.”

“But where do you put eccentric folks—those persons who are so unlike other people; are so seldom seen that you do not know where to put them?”

“O, I have a place for all such. I label each one ‘an odd fellow,’ and stow him away in my mind in a corner reserved for just such as they.”

“A motley group you have in that corner, I am sure!”

“Sure enough; and yet so alike that I un-

hesitatingly put them all in the same corner of my mind."

"Cranks, every one of them!"

"Granted! And yet cranks are good for something—indeed, good for much."

"Some are, I know. The grindstone crank is good when you have an ax to sharpen!"

"And the windlass crank, when you want to draw water from a deep well," Thad replied.

"But say, Mr. Editor, could you give me a list of your odd fellows? I should like to study some of them."

"Not a list, Mr. Outwright. That would hardly be fair; but I can tell you one I have put in my corner."

"Well?"

"Yourself!"

"Indeed! Thanks! But why—"

"Now, do not be offended. I think no higher compliment can be paid one than to call him an odd fellow. The thumb on your hand is an odd fellow. No one is with him—he stands alone. But from time to time, as the business of life goes on, every other finger finds its power for usefulness greatly increased by association with the thumb—the odd fellow that stands on a line different from all the other digits."

"But how does that apply to me?"

"First, as to your dress. You do not keep

in line with other men of your calling. They wear tall hats; you wear a low one. They appear in clerical garb always and everywhere; you dress to suit your convenience and taste. They go with the people; but when the people get up on a line with you, the next thing we see, you are away ahead, beckoning them to come and—”

“Hold! Spare me! I am not quite a saint—not quite a Paul or a Peter.”

“For which I am truly grateful. I do not believe the Creator exhausted the variety of good and great men when he set Paul and Peter adrift in the world. But, after all, they were odd fellows. Had they not been odd, had they not stood out alone and for their convictions, they would not have been known beyond their time or their native land, and the world would not be what it is to-day; for their preaching—”

“Then *you* are odd,” interrupted the preacher. “So please step into your own little corner with the rest of your odd fellows; for what can be odder than an editor turning lecturer on theology and Biblical history?”

“What can be odder,” retorted the editor, “than a gray-haired preacher sitting at the feet of a country-town editor?”

“I assure you the minister could do much worse.”

"Thanks! But you are the only minister I dared unbosom myself to. Usually they are so far away, but you are right near me."

"I try to get near every one," the preacher replied.

"So you do!" Thaddeus assented, earnestly.

"By the way, I must not forget my errand here to-day. There's a case of real destitution in the Fourth Ward, which I stumbled on yesterday, that needs immediate help."

"Tell me about it," the editor said, giving close and careful attention to what the minister said.

"A mother and three children and a husband constitute the family. The children have just passed the crises in typhoid fever."

"And the father?" queried Thaddeus.

"Yes," said the minister, with a sigh; "you guess it, I see. I wish it was otherwise, but it is n't. He drinks, and that tells the story."

"Shall I mention it in the paper?"

"If you will, in a general way; but do not give the particulars. Say that food or clothing, left at the parsonage, will be carefully distributed among the needy; and that worthy persons may learn particulars by applying to me."

"Perhaps you would better leave name and address here too, so I may speak advisedly to any who may ask me about it."

"Certainly. It is the Tingleman family, on Chestnut Street, two doors beyond the railway."

"You want these to go in to-morrow, I suppose," picking up the paper on which the minister had written notices of special services.

"If you please. Well, odd fellow, good-bye! and excuse me for intruding."

"Good-bye, odd fellow! I shall not excuse you if you do not intrude just this way pretty often. Now, mind that!"

"I am glad I came, and will come again; for I have gathered material for a first-rate sermon."

"And I for at least three good editorials."

"Good!"

"Come again!"

The minister went away, thanking a kind Providence that had blessed Brambleville with such an editor as that. The editor resumed his work, after meditating a few minutes on the delight of having for a friend so genial a preacher as the Rev. Mr. Outwright.

At nine o'clock that night, Thaddeus stood at the door of the Tingleman home, knocking timidly, and wondering how he should introduce himself; for he had never before gone alone on such an errand, and he felt embarrassed by his ignorance of proper procedure.

"Come in," said a mild-voiced old lady, who

opened the door, and stepped aside for the caller to pass into the room. She manifested no surprise at seeing a stranger, and showed no timidity in admitting him.

Thaddeus stood awkwardly at the door, which she closed behind him, while she crossed the room to get a chair, and place it before the little square stove that was doing its best to heat the house, fed by fuel of mixed wood and soft coal, with an occasional handful of corncobs. Thaddeus took the offered chair, put the basket he had brought on the floor beside him, and deposited thereon his hat. Presently he unbuttoned his great coat, ran his hand around his collar, pulling it away from his neck; for he was stifled by the impure air of the room, and was sure he was breathing poison at every inspiration.

“I have brought you a few little things that may please the children,” he said, handing the basket to the old lady, who had stood by the stove a few minutes, silently looking at the editor. “How are the children now?”

“They is doin’ well now; but their mammy is down now, an’ their pappy is comin’ down, tew, ’pears like; fur he’s feelin’ awful downsey.”

A moan startled Thaddeus, for it seemed to be right at his elbow. Looking around, he discovered that his chair almost touched the foot-

board of a bedstead, until then unnoticed by him in the very dim light of the room. The moan was followed by a cough, a gasp, and a distressing but apparently vain effort to clear the throat, and then came another moan and a gasp.

He sprang to his feet, waited a second in indecision, and then advanced to the head of the bed, finding Mrs. Tingleman leaning over its edge, face downward, struggling for breath, and choking with the obstruction in her throat.

With one hand he held her head, and with the other gave her his own handkerchief, which he took out of his overcoat-pocket; for she was vainly feeling around over the bed for hers.

"Doctor?" she said, faintly and inquiringly, as Thaddeus helped her back on the pillow, after the exhausting contest with her foe.

"No, not the doctor, Mrs. Tingleman; but a friend. What can I do for you?"

"Nothing," she answered feebly, and lay there gasping for breath, almost dying from sheer exhaustion.

"Wuz she stranglin'?" asked the old lady, returning from emptying the basket of its contents. "Poor thing!" she added, pityingly, bending over the bed, and touching Mrs. Tingleman's forehead with her bony but mercy-tipped fingers.

“Yes; but I helped her a little, and I guess she will rest now awhile.”

“She will sleep a little now—allus duz.”

“Where is Mr. Tingleman?”

“At the yard. Watchman, ye know, at the lumber-yard.”

“I see! How is he now?” Thaddeus asked, moving away from the bed again.

“’Bout drinkin’?”

“Yes; does he keep straight since his wife is sick?”

“He’s better ’n he wuz. I hain’t seed him tech it fur nigh onto a week.”

“That’s good. But who will stay with you here to-night. Mrs. Tingleman is very sick.”

“La! I know she’s sick. Nobody’ll stay but me. Ther’ ’s nobody tu stay.”

“Would you mind having me here? Could I help any, if I staid?”

“You?”

“Yes; I would like to try to help you, if you will let me.”

“I’d be monstr’us glad tu hev ye; but ’pears like ye do n’t mean it. I hain’t seed a bed, in no proper shape, fur more ’n a month. Ef ye jist set here, and call me whin needed, I’d sleep something like. But could ye?”

“O yes, I can, and I will; but where will you sleep?”

“Right in this here cheer. I c’u’d sleep standin’, I reckon, if she wuz off my mine onc’t.”

“Rest easy about her. I will watch her very carefully, a little while any way. You may go to sleep any time.”

“Who sent ye here any how?”

“Mr. Outwright, the minister.”

“An’ be ye a servunt uv his ’n?”

“Yes,” said Thaddeus, smiling at the question. “I work for him part of the time.”

“He ’s bin here heaps o’ times. His wumun wuz pow’ful kine tu the chil’un. They ’re in the bed thar’ with the’r mammy.”

“That ought not to be!” Thaddeus said, quickly; but remembering their destitution, he checked himself, and said, “Well, you go to sleep now, aunty, and I will see to everything.”

“Who tol’ ye I wuz called aunty? Ev’y-body calls me thet.”

“O, I guessed it!”

“Dear, dear! it seems gude to sleep with both eyes shet onc’t again.”

The aunty sank back in the little rocker, and was asleep in a minute; and Thaddeus was virtually alone, in the house of a stranger, keeping watch by the bed of a dying woman!

There was nothing for him to do but to sit there and wait for the oft-recurring struggles

with the tenacious cough. She seemed hardly conscious at any time, and most of the time was certainly wholly unconscious.

Thaddeus knew his mother had gone to bed and to sleep, and would not miss him until she went to call him to breakfast; but he meant to be home before that time.

Night was giving place to the dawn of day when he called up the aunty, and stole noiselessly out of the house, and hurried home.

Though the hour was so early, it was not too early for Seth Russell to be out, old and presumably feeble as he was; for he intercepted Thaddeus at a street-crossing, his merry eyes twinkling like stars, his soft voice sounding like a lute, while his benign countenance radiated the kindness of his kind soul.

"What errand of mercy takes you out in this wee hour?" he asked of Thaddeus.

"I might answer by asking you the same question," Thaddeus replied, grasping heartily the extended hand of his friend.

"I will tell you if you will answer me this: How do you suppose I know you are a born writer?"

"Indeed, I can not tell," Thaddeus said, with a smile, and a glow of pleasure at the implied compliment.

“Because you have such good ears for holding the pen.”

Thaddeus stood watching the fast-retreating figure of Seth, and finally burst out laughing at his joke, and hastened homeward, refreshed in mind by that little pleasantry at such an unexpected hour.

Not only Seth Russell had noted Thad's departure from Tingleman's house, but Billy Barnwell, the chief of police, had also noted it; and as every movement of the young editor was something for him to report to Wendell Morrison, he remembered that Tingleman had an unsavory reputation in the town, and was suspected of having been a hard case before he came to Brambleville.

Thaddeus left his handkerchief with Mrs. Tingleman; for he did not care to take it again after her use of it. It was marked with his name; but it did not occur to Thaddeus that it could ever come up as evidence against his good name. But it did.

VII.

IN THE TOILS.

BUT Thaddeus did not need to keep up his vigils at Tingleman's home, though he was a frequent caller there, having become deeply interested in the case. His mother and some of her lady friends relieved Thaddeus of the immediate care of Mrs. Tingleman.

Mrs. Tracy and Miss Josie were enlisted in the behalf of the poor family, and were assiduous in their attention. One afternoon they called just as Tingleman was leaving for work. Their elegant wraps, the sparkling of the diamond pins they wore in their scarfs, and the richness of all their attire, attracted his attention, and aroused in him a passion that had a long time been dormant. Ever since he had a wife, Tingleman had been an honest man in practice; for her influence had kept in subjection his true nature.

“Why should they have all that superfluous wealth, and I and mine in want?” he asked himself that night. “They would not feel the loss of their diamonds, and what a fortune they would be to me! What comforts I could buy my wife!” The thought grew upon him, and he

decided to have those diamonds that very night. His wife would never know!

Thaddeus called to see Miss Josie, and was beguiled into staying until the clock in the church-steeple struck eleven. Wendell Morrison was there, too; but he was closeted with Judge Tracy, discussing an important case in hand, and had not left when Thaddeus quietly withdrew.

Tingleman made a hurried visit to Judge Tracy's house in the early evening to take observations, and was almost caught by Morrison as he came up the walk; but quickly hiding behind an evergreen, he saw Morrison enter, and then returned to the lumber-yard in time to register at the watchman's post. At eleven o'clock he came back, and seeing Thaddeus leave, concluded the way was clear, and waited until all should become quiet in the house.

When he saw the light flash out of Miss Josie's window, and heard her close the shutters of her bedroom window, careless as to the noise she made, he boldly advanced to the parlor windows, which opened on the porch, reckoning that what noise he made there could not be distinguished from the noise she was making above.

He had masked his face by tying over it a handkerchief—the very handkerchief that Thaddeus had left with Mrs. Tingleman the night he

first called there. Who could have guessed that an act of kindness could be so used as was Thaddeus's wholly unselfish ministering to the need of that afflicted mother and wife?

Tingleman opened the shutters, slipped into the parlor, leaving the window up to insure an exit if he should be hurried in his leaving, and pulled down the inside blind to hide his movements from outside observation.

Judge Tracy, in his study, heard the noise in the parlor, but supposed it was his daughter preparing to retire.

In her room above, Josie heard the noise below, but knowing that her father was down there, supposed it was he closing the shutters before he came up-stairs, forgetting that they had been closed early in the evening. She forthwith fell asleep, and dreamed sweetly of future events, not one of which gave her a hint of what the future really held in store for her.

Tingleman was motionless at the window for several minutes, straining his ears to catch any danger-signal from any part of the house.

He reckoned the valuables he sought were up-stairs, but he determined first to make a hasty examination of the down-stairs apartments. The information gained thereby would stand him in hand in future operations.

He softly crossed the floor, gently opened the

door, and slipped into the hall, his shoeless feet making not a sound on the rich carpeting.

A light flickered under the door at the farther end of the hall, where Judge Tracy and Morrison were silently reading legal papers; but after a moment's hesitation, Tingleman concluded it was light from a grate in an office or the library. He listened. Not a sound from the room!

He struck a match, and lighted a point of gas in the burner overhead. The match snapped viciously, and sounded like a small firecracker, and he was for a moment alarmed; but when no sound of life followed the snap, he grew bold, and moved softly toward the door, beyond which the two men were reading.

When Judge Tracy heard the window-shutter open, he thought it was Josie, and quietly read on. Nevertheless his ears were alert; for a vague fear seized upon him, and he heard the match snap.

Morrison heard the window-shutter open, and thought it queer; for he remembered they were closed when he came, and the judge had said Thaddeus was in the parlor. Though apparently reading, he was listening, and he heard the match snap in the hall.

Both looked up at the same instant, and together turned their eyes toward the door, listen-

ing breathlessly, and found their fears confirmed by the streak of light that lay just under the door, out in the hall.

Both men sprang from their chairs, and both made signs for the other not to speak.

Morrison took his place against the wall, so the least opening of the door would reveal the intruder to him at once.

Judge Tracy stood behind the door, facing Morrison, his hand on the door-knob, ready to fling it open at first alarm.

Tingleman, unsuspecting the presence of the two men, advanced cautiously, and pushed open the door boldly.

"Villain!" muttered Morrison, springing forward, and grasping at the neck of Tingleman.

Though surprised, Tingleman did not run, but dealt Morrison a heavy blow that staggered him a second.

"Scoundrel!" called Judge Tracy, grabbing at Tingleman from behind the door.

Seeing he was overmatched, Tingleman turned to flee, but not before Morrison returned to the attack, and sought to close with him in a catch-as-catch-can wrestling match. Tingleman nimbly evaded the embrace; but Morrison caught the handkerchief off his head as he fled, and so he escaped through the parlor window, as he had come in.

Cries of alarm and screams from above-stairs told the men that Mrs. Tracy and Miss Josie had been awakened by the brief struggle, and were thoroughly frightened.

“Be quiet, dear! be quiet, Josie! We are all right. It was a burglar, but he has gone now.”

In a very few minutes both ladies were at the head of the stairs, in their wrappers, listening to the story of the attack and escape of the thief.

“Papa,” called Josie anxiously, “do have Mr. Morrison stay until morning. The burglar might come back again!”

“Hardly to-night, my dear.”

“But I am afraid!”

“Yes, have him stay,” pleaded Mrs. Tracy. “He might come back and bring help.”

“Foolish women!” said Judge Tracy.

“You would just as soon, would n’t you, Mr. Morrison?” Miss Josie added.

“Yes, indeed; I will find pleasure in staying, if it will relieve your fears.”

“I scolded Thad for staying so late to-night,” Josie said, in an undertone to her mother, while the men were talking below; “but I wish now he had n’t gone so soon.” And then she called down again: “You will stay, won’t you, Mr. Morrison.”

“Yes, indeed,” he said, quickly.

The ladies returned to their rooms, not to

sleep, but to talk over and over the exciting episode.

"I shall keep the handkerchief as a trophy of this affair," Morrison said, as he examined it carefully in the light of the office lamp, when he and Judge Tracy returned there, after securely fastening the window that had been opened.

It was large and of soft texture,—almost silken, so fine was the linen of which it was woven.

As he rapidly passed the edges through his hands, he discovered the name written in a bold hand in indelible ink on the border. The discovery made his face flush, but he discreetly held his tongue.

"I would, if I were you. You are certainly entitled to that much of a reward for your promptness. But did he strike you?"

"I should think he did. Is n't there a mark here?" baring his forehead by lifting the heavy lock of hair that lay just above his eye.

"There is, indeed. Let me call the ladies, and have them bathe it in arnica."

"No, no! This is nothing. I will bathe it in some cold water before I retire, and that will be quite sufficient."

"A fine handkerchief," the judge said, taking hold of the article, Morrison the meanwhile

holding in his hand the corner, near which was written "THADDEUS THROCKMORTON."

"He must be a toney fellow, judging from this," Morrison said, and then put the handkerchief away.

The next morning, on his way home, Morrison met Billy, the chief of police, and to him he related minutely the details of the affair of the night before. Finally, swearing him to secrecy, he showed him the handkerchief and the name thereon, and asked triumphantly:

"Now, what do you think?"

"That beats my day!"

Then they walked off together, and what schemes they devised, only the future could tell.

That morning Thaddeus said to his mother at breakfast:

"I guess I will walk over to Tingleman's to-night after supper. You have n't been over lately, have you?"

"No, not for two days. I wish you would go, son. I am afraid she can not live long."

"I will, mother. It is only two days until Christmas. I wonder if anybody has thought about Christmas for her children."

"I suppose not. They are quite comfortable now, though, thanks to Mrs. Tracy and Josie. There is hardly a thing they really need that they do not furnish them."

The day ended in a snowstorm of great violence, the wind piling up great drifts wherever it could; but that did not deter Thaddeus from carrying out his intention of seeing that Tingleman's children were provided with Christmas gifts.

He scarcely knew the place when he entered the door, so great had been the improvements made by the ladies who had cared for the family.

Mrs. Tingleman was hopefully counting on another Christmas with her children, but Thaddeus felt that that was to be denied her.

His heart grew warm with sympathy, and his generosity outstretched the contents of his pocket-book. So taking out his check-book, he wrote a check for ten dollars, and handed it to Mrs. Tingleman, having made it payable to Henry Tingleman.

The dying mother's look of thankfulness was all the pay he needed for that night's walk through the storm.

As he turned from the door into the street, bowing his head to shield his face from the blast, the chief of police called to him:

"What on earth brought you into such a neighborhood such a night as this?"

"O!" said Thaddeus, surprised by the unexpected meeting, and not wishing to advertise

his benevolence, "I came over to settle a little bill Tingleman had against me."

"Do you owe Tingleman? I supposed *he* owed everybody."

"Well, his family are sick, and I owed him a little. So I came over to settle, thinking they might need it this awful weather."

Thaddeus thought that a legitimate explanation. He felt that he did owe Tingleman, as he owed every other human being in distress, such help and comfort as he could give.

"He's a hard customer—a regular suspect. I have to keep my eye on him. That is why I am out here to-night," the chief said, as they plunged along through the blinding storm, and waded through the growing drifts.

At the corner of the square they separated with a simple "good-night."

Tingleman knew Billy, the chief of police, and Billy knew Tingleman. More than once had they drunk at the same bar, and at the expense of the same person. But it must be said of both that lately they had seldom met in the saloons; for Billy had been informed by those in authority that his star depended on his keeping perfectly sober, and Tingleman loved his wife too well to grieve her last days on earth by drunken indifference; and more than that he intended to commence his old business again soon,

and a thief must have a clear brain and a steady hand.

The next day, however, just at nightfall, they met.

"Hello, Billy!"

"Hello, Henry!"

"Cash a check for me, Billy?"

"How much? If it is not too big."

"Ten dollars, only."

"Yes; step inside this store, sign it on the back, and I will cash it for you," Billy said, after looking at the check.

"What luck!" exclaimed Billy to himself, after Tingleman had gone. "Just to think! I have Thad's check to Tingleman in my possession! Well, well; that is a good ten-dollar investment." He hurried to Wendell Morrison with the news of his good luck.

"Can you cash a check for me to-night, old fel?" he asked Wendell, as he rushed into his office.

"Guess so. How much?"

"Only ten," handing the check to Wendell, and then stepping back to study the expression of his face when he should see what check it was.

"Great guns! Where did you get this?"

"Of Tingleman!"

"And Throckmorton was at Tingleman's house, you say?"

"He was. I saw him come out myself."

"Bully boy, Billy!" Morrison said, handing him two five-dollar bills in exchange for the check. "Now if you can catch Tingleman breaking into a house, the handkerchief and this check will make Throcky sweat!"

"You bet!"

"Of course we can not come out and accuse him of anything; but we can get up an awful smoke, and can arouse suspicion."

"And it *does* look suspicious," Billy urged.

"It does, for a fact. And the looks is all we need at present."

"I'll catch 'em yet."

The chief of police went out chuckling with delight, intent not so much on catching a real thief as on mixing an honest and unsuspecting man with disreputable characters, and thereby ruining him politically and socially.

The door had hardly closed after him before it opened again, and Seth Russell slipped in noiselessly, and, approaching Morrison as he leaned back in his office-chair, said earnestly:

"I heard you sing at the *musicale* the other night, my son!"

"Were you there, Seth? I am surprised! Good time, though!"

"Yes, I was there. Do you know what I would do if I had a voice like yours?"

"No. What would you do, Seth?" Morrison asked, flattered by the question and its implication, knocking the ashes off his cigar with his little finger, and holding it poised in mid-air for a second.

"I would come in heavy on the refrain!"

Hurrying to the door, Seth disappeared downstairs, and was out of hearing before Morrison comprehended that the compliment was left-handed.

VIII.

THE BURGLAR CAUGHT.

MR. LYCURGUS LYSANDER was a well-known character in Brambleville, and enjoyed the distinction of being brother-in-law to Judge Tracy, for the wife of the latter was Mr. Lysander's sister.

He was a lawyer by profession, and a dignified but eccentric gentleman by practice.

He was inheritor of great possessions, and needed no income from his business, having plenty of time for his practice, and large leisure for his profession.

He was small of stature, but had a large head, on which he wore a broad-brim soft hat. He wrapped his body in a huge cloak that nearly reached his heels.

His feet were small; his steps short, quick, and decided, but exceedingly light; and his movement suggestive of thoughtful unconcern.

In manner he was formal in the extreme, but rather diffident. In conversation slow, precise, and pedantic.

Mirth was a stranger to him, and intentional flippancy a disgrace, if not a sin; and yet no one

man in Brambleville was the cause of so much mirthfulness, and no one the subject of so many flippant remarks.

A broad, high forehead made his small eyes seem smaller, and his little nose look less than it really was. Thin lips marked the boundary of a wide mouth that stretched beyond the sides of a pointed chin which glistened like a ball of polished ivory.

His undertakings were always important, because he would never undertake an unimportant work; and every task essayed received his undivided attention and best endeavor.

Mrs. Tracy was devotedly attached to her brother, and was blind to his eccentricities, and keenly alive to his acquirements in science and law; for he was well read, and moreover a constant student of books.

The judge was tolerant of his brother-in-law, and sometimes condescended to be amused by his quibbles and quirks.

Their residences occupied adjoining grounds, which were of park-like dimensions, abounding in shrubbery, and traversed by intersecting paths and driveways, which curved and twisted around mounds and between trees and flowering plants.

Mr. Lysander went to his office regularly at nine o'clock in the morning, took lunch down town at noon, and returned home at five o'clock

in the afternoon for dinner. From this program there was no deviation.

After dinner he gave personal attention to one Jersey cow and one very gentle horse. That was his diversion.

"I find," he often said, by way of explaining the reason for this work, "it very conducive to the restoration of my mental equilibrium after exhaustive application to the intricacies of jurisprudence to contemplate the confiding and constant character of bovine and equine natures. To administer to their wants, and witness their silent but effective thankfulness, tends to the abatement of selfish sentiments."

No lady attiring herself for a brilliant reception gave greater care to her dress than did Mr. Lysander when arraying himself to go out to feed his cow and horse. His costume for this work had been made to order, and was never worn on any other occasion. It was made large, so he could put it on over his other clothes, after removing his coat. The hat was a palmetto that had belonged to a Southern planter before the war.

The burglarious attempt on Judge Tracy's house greatly incensed Mr. Lysander.

"A most ungentlemanly procedure," he asseverated the next morning, when Mrs. Tracy told him about it.

“So it was, Lycurgus,” she assented; “but I am glad he did not succeed.”

“Was the perturbation of James very marked, as you now recall the scene?”

“O, he was excited, of course, but quite cool and collected nevertheless.”

“From your account of the affair, I infer that the behavior of Mr. Wendell Morrison was commendable in the highest degree, and worthy the honor of knighthood, if it could be bestowed in this age of the world.”

“Indeed, Mr. Morrison was more than brave. He was valiant and energetic. He insists on keeping the handkerchief as a trophy of the contest.”

“I sincerely trust the ungentlemanly person or persons were so completely terrorized by Mr. Morrison as to be deterred from burglariously entering my residence. He probably is aware of my comparatively defenseless condition; but I believe I would defend my castle with my life, were he or they to come.”

“What would you do, brother, if you should find some one in your house?”

“If he should not escape by precipitous flight, after having received due warning of the consequences if he did not flee, I believe I should assault him with whatever murderous weapon I could seize upon at the time.”

“Well, I hope you will not have an occasion to prove your courage and strength,” Mrs. Tracy said, and the conversation drifted into other channels.

That night supper was late at Mr. Lysander’s—a very unusual occurrence at that home—and Mr. Lysander donned his stable costume, and went to feed Lady Jane Grey and Pegasus.

He returned just as supper was announced, and hastily removed his costume, and deposited it on a high-back arm-chair in the sitting-room—a very careless act that was not at all like him; but he chose that in preference to being late to the table.

After an hour at the dinner-table with his family, discoursing learnedly at intervals upon every subject mentioned, he excused himself, and returned to the sitting-room, dimly lighted by the hall gas that shone through the transom.

“Good-evening, sir!” he said, bowing to the figure his cast-off clothes made when he had put them on the chair. But the figure was powerless to return the polite salutation, much to Mr. Lysander’s regret and surprise.

“What gives me the honor of this unexpected visit?” he ventured to remark.

He felt his hair assuming an erect position, and chill after chill chased each other down his back; but he stood his ground bravely.

“May I take your hat, sir?”

He stretched out his hand to receive the palmetto; but the chair was unable to give it to him.

“Would you dine with us? Dinner is just ready,” he stammered.

His own shoes creaked as he moved uneasily; but he thought it was the creaking of the chair where the clothes hung. The gas flared and flickered, and the hat and coat seemed to move; but no voice was heard. Mr. Lysander felt it was time for vigorous measures.

“I am amazed at your utter indifference to all rules of politeness!” he said, with stronger voice and some show of asperity.

But the hat said nothing.

“Sir, I shall be obliged to ask you to withdraw at once!”

But the breeches made no attempt to move.

“In the event of your refusing, I shall be obliged to go for the police; and prudent care for your reputation, if not personal comfort, would suggest avoidance of that trouble,” he said, huskily.

The figure did not feel alarmed at this threat, and was silent and motionless as ever.

He retreated until he was near the dining-room door.

“Mrs. Lysander!”

"Yes, dear."

"Do not come in, Mrs. Lysander; but lock the door from that side. I have a burglar trapped."

"O Lycurgus!" screamed his wife.

"O papa! papa!"

With screams and cries of terror, his daughters rushed about the dining-room, wringing their hands, and adding to their father's fright by their very extremity of fear.

"O dear! O dear me! What shall we do? O dear!" they cried.

Mrs. Lysander locked the door and bolted it, and, to make it more secure, held the knob with both hands, and pressed against it with all her might, forgetting that she was locking her husband in, as well as locking the burglar out.

After a time the ladies became quiet, and ventured to ask, through the locked door:

"Papa, are you there?"

But there was no answer.

"My dear," pleaded Mrs. Lysander, "*do* answer us! Are you there?"

But there was no response from beyond the door, nor any noise to indicate there was any life there.

"Is my papa killed? O!—what was that?" one of his daughters cried.

A voice from the door-yard reached their ears. It was their father's.

"I have left the door open. If you wish to escape the vengeance of the law, now is your chance!"

"It is papa calling to the man to come out. Papa is safe anyhow! I am glad of that!" the other daughter exclaimed.

"Police! *police!* POLICE! *p-o-l-i-c-e!*"

Mr. Lysander was lifting up his voice in a very undignified manner, and with something of fright in its tremulousness.

"Where are you, papa?"

"Here I am, behind this evergreen, my dear. I am willing the burglar should have a chance for his life. If he will let me alone, I will not disturb him."

"Has he hurt you, papa?"

"Not much, daughter—not any, really; and I am willing to let him off at that."

"Has he gone, papa?"

"No, daughter. He still sits there. I see him from here."

"Go, call the police, papa!"

"I can not, dear. My duty is here. I *must* defend my home, and protect my family. I will not run from any danger while they are exposed!"

"Papa, come in here! Come in here, papa!"

"I can not. He will not let me, I am sure. I wish I could. Police! police!"

“Well!” a voice called from the street. “Who wants police!”

“Mr. Lycurgus Lysander. I have a burglar caught, and can not let him go. Are you a policeman?”

“No; but I am Thaddeus Throckmorton. What can I do for you?”

“Would you mind asking that burglar in the house to come out, before the police come and take him out?”

“A burglar? In the house? Why are you here?”

“Lycurgus, is that you? What *is* the matter? We heard the girls screaming, and have come down to see what *can* be the matter here.”

“O my sister!” he said, answering Mrs. Tracy’s question, “Heaven has sent you, I am sure. A burglar is in our house, and *will* not come out.”

“A queer burglar! *Ours* would not stay. You must be mistaken, Lycurgus!”

The meantime, Thaddeus advanced to the open door, and entered the dining-room. For a second he was startled by the outline of a man sitting in a chair, and he hesitated; but only for a second. Going up to the chair, he discovered the real cause of the alarm, and called out:

“Bring a light, Mrs. Lysander, or open the door, and I will show you the burglar. But it is no burglar at all.”

Reassured by his confident tones, Mrs. Lysander opened the door, and brought a light, followed timidly by the girls.

"Is that all!"

She sank into a chair, and was dumb with confusion.

"Come, see your burglar, papa!" one of the girls called to her father, who was yet in the darkness, behind the evergreen-tree, giving his sister a minute account of all the happenings of the few preceding minutes. There was laughter in the voice, and Mrs. Tracy said:

"It was all a mistake, I am sure, Lycurgus," and at once hurried into the house, closely followed by Josie, and after her, Mr. Lysander.

"It fooled *me*, in the dark," said Thaddeus, gallantly, noticing how ashamed Mr. Lysander looked, as he saw the cause of his fright clearly revealed in the glare of the gas now lighted in the room.

"Burglars are either just ahead of you or just after you," Mrs. Tracy said to Thaddeus, referring to his presence at their house the night of their experience in that line.

"But this is *not* a burglar," Thaddeus said, coloring visibly, in spite of his effort not to; for somehow Mrs. Tracy's manner, as well as words, impressed him as expressing suspicion. But why should they? At once he was uneasy, and

wished he had not answered the call of the frightened lawyer.

"It is nice to have you around," whispered Josie, as she came to his side, "whether with burglars or alone."

"Thank you! But I must go."

"Go with us, will you?" she said, earnestly.

"Not now, Josie. Wish I could."

His heart was heavy as stone, but he could not tell why. He wanted to go with Josie; but Mrs. Tracy's remark had wounded him so sorely that he must needs go off alone for his hurt to heal.

"I will bid you good-night!" he said, bowing and stepping back toward the door.

"Good-night!" said Mr. Lysander.

But no one thanked him for his services, nor asked him to stay longer. Josie turned a loving glance upon him; but Mrs. Tracy looked coldly indifferent, he thought, and so he hurried away.

A small boy, passing toward town when Mr. Lysander was most lustily calling for police, gave wings to his feet, and sped on, hunting for a policeman until he found one, and brought him to investigate the cause of the outcry, going with him to share in the honor of coming to the rescue.

"For heaven's sake, Lycurgus," said Mrs.

Tracy, "do not let this get out! Think of what a laughing-stock we will all become!"

"I will not speak of it, my sister," he said, humbly.

"And I will not," she said, "nor Josie, either; and, of course, your wife and daughters will not; so I guess it is safe with us."

"But, then, Mr. Throckmorton knows it, and he will put it in the paper," said one of the young ladies, in horror.

"No, he will not," said Josie, decidedly; "I will guarantee that. I will ask him not to."

"I wish you would," Mr. Lysander said, almost pleadingly.

"Did you call for the police?"

The voice came from the yard, where the policeman stood, looking across the porch through the open door into the room where all were seated.

"No! yes! why—that is, we had a little scare; but it is all over," Mr. Lysander said, going to the door.

"What was it all about?" the officer asked, in lower tones.

"Well, we thought there was a burglar here, but we found out better."

"So no one has been here but your own folks—your family, and Mrs. Tracy and her daughter?"

“No; that is, only one other. Mr. Thaddeus Throckmorton was here, in the midst of our fright; but he has gone.”

“And there was no burglar that you could see, and no one here but Thad?”

“That is all.”

“But you thought you saw some one prowling around?”

“No, not prowling, but in the house.”

“And what was it?”

“Well, you see, when I got in from the yard, Mr. Throckmorton had the gas lighted, and he was the only one I saw here.”

“I see! But he was in the house?”

“Yes, when I came in.”

“Who was first in the room after you saw the burglar, or thought you saw him?”

“As I said before, Mr. Throckmorton was the first.”

“I see!”

When the *Banner* came out next day it had no mention of the affair; for Josie had kept her promise, and had asked that no reference be made to the episode.

But the police and their friends had a story to tell, and they told it with much gusto and many a sly wink. In substance it was, that Mr. Lysander's house had been broken into, and the only person seen near there that night was Thad-

deus Throckmorton. To this they added that the chief of police knew something about the attempt on Judge Tracy's house that reflected no honor on the young editor.

But Thaddeus was giving his attention to acts of mercy the meanwhile.

"Will you—tell me—good-bye, dear?"

Mrs. Tingleman turned her head slowly toward her husband, as he was about to leave the room.

"I did tell you good-bye, my little wife; did you forget?"

"Yes—I—know. I—did—not—forget, dear; but I—am—going—to leave—you, and—I want—to tell—you—good-bye again."

"No, no, little one; don't say that. *You* must not leave me! Who will love me then?"

"God, my dear. God loves you now, and—will always—love you."

"No, no; God hates your Henry, little wife. No one loves me but you; and now you are going away!"

"God loves you, Henry,—my dear—husband. He sent his—children—to us,—Mr. Throckmorton, Mrs. Tracy, and Miss—Josie—and all,—because he loves you."

"*They* came to *you*, my little wife, not to *me*."

Then Henry Tingleman's heart smote him hard. He remembered how he had repaid Mrs.

Tracy's kindness by attempting to rob her of her diamonds.

"They—came to you—too," she said, faintly.
"My Henry is *so* good to me."

Henry Tingleman bowed his head and wept. His wife's words were true. He did love her tenderly, and he cared for her in her sickness with all the thoughtfulness possible.

"Henry?"

"Yes, my darling."

"Do—not—go—away from—me—to-night!"

"I will not. I will not!" His heart was breaking.

"Henry?"

"Well, wifie, my little one," he almost sobbed.

"Do n't drink any more, will you?"

"No," he answered quickly; but his heart was not in his word, and she knew it.

"*Don't* drink any more. The—children,—Henry; the—children!"

Her voice was husky, and her eyes full of tears.

"No, little one. I promise you, *no!*" and his voice betrayed the depth of his feeling quite as much as the tear that glistened for an instant in his eye.

"Will you stay—to-night?"

"Yes; I will not leave you; but I must go and tell them to get some one else."

“Yes, go,” she said contentedly, and then made herself comfortable to await his return. As he was about to pass out she called: “Henry? Will — you — ask — Mr.—Throckmorton — to — tell — me — good-bye?”

“Yes, my little one,” pulling his hat close down over his eyes.

“And — Mrs.—Tracy — and — Mr.—Mr.—the minister?”

“Yes, yes,” he said, his hand on the door-knob, anxious to be away that he might get back before the death angel called, for he knew he was coming that very night.

The children were in the other room with Aunty Day, who had been their nurse since the first one was taken ill.

Henry Tingleman closed the door behind him, and went directly to the office of the lumber company, knowing they would not leave until six. He found the clerk in, and easily made arrangement for some one to watch for him that night.

“How is your wife?” asked the clerk, as Henry was about to leave the office.

The words were cold and formal, spoken out of a sense of propriety rather than from a feeling of sympathy. Henry paused, held the door-latch a moment, rallied his senses, beat back his emotion, and said, with an effort to be calm:

“She will soon be well—I hope!”

He left the office, and started for Thad's house.

When he left his own house, a policeman, who had been waiting, hidden from view, followed him to the lumber-yard, and kept close behind him as he hurried to Thaddeus's home.

He was not at home, but his mother recognized Tingleman, took his message, and said she would herself go for the minister.

That was the night Thad's weekly went to press, and he was always late that night.

Henry Tingleman went directly home, and was shadowed all the way by the policeman. When he entered his house, the officer secreted himself to await his coming out. He had no doubt he would appear after a little. While he waited, Thaddeus came. The policeman saw his face distinctly in the light from the door when it was opened to admit him.

The minister was out of town. Mrs. Tracy had not been called by Tingleman. He could not find it in his heart to go there for her. His wife did not notice the omission of that part of her request.

The policeman waited for an hour, for two; but Tingleman and Thaddeus did not come out. He left, and reported to the chief what he had seen. It was enough.

In the last hours of her earth-life, Henry's wife committed him to the care and help of Mr. Throckmorton.

"He," she said gaspingly, her thin and fever-scarred lips trembling under the burden of the message they bore, "has—never—*never*—been cross—to—me. If—he—would—never—drink again,—all—would—be—well. Help—him,—for—the—children's sake. You—will; won't—you?"

Thaddeus could not keep the tears back, as he watched the face of the faithful wife, and noted the love-light that beamed just a second from the eyes fast losing their power to see, and he said, earnestly:

"I will help him, Mrs. Tingleman. God being my helper, I will help him."

"You," she said to Henry, who knelt by her side, "will—let—him—help—you. He is—God's—child—I know! Will—you?"

He bowed his head, kissed his wife's hand, and rained tears upon it.

"The—children? I—"

She looked at Thaddeus, and then at her husband, seemingly in doubt what to say.

"What—is—it—wife, my little one?" Henry asked.

"The—children,—his mother," looking toward Thaddeus. Rallying her fast-failing

strength, she said: "Will—she—take—take—take—the—children?"

"The children will be taken care of, Mrs. Tingleman," Thaddeus said.

"Will—your—mother—"

"Yes; mother will see to them."

"And—you—will—see—to—my—husband?"

The last word was spoken so tenderly—was uttered with so much soul—that Henry groaned aloud in agony, realizing that soon that true heart would be still in death.

"Let me go for some one?" said Thaddeus, rising hastily.

"No—no!" Mrs. Tingleman said, pleadingly. "You—and—Henry—enough."

"Do n't go," said Henry. "It is no use. She does n't want any one. I would rather be here alone with you."

"My dear man, your wife is dying. Let me call in some of the neighbors. Wake up the children, or Aunty Day!"

Mrs. Tingleman shook her head, and said again: "You,—Henry."

"She must have her own way," Henry said, soothingly, kneeling and pillowing his head close beside that of his wife, clasping her two hands in one of his, while with the other he softly stroked her face.

"She is asleep," said Thaddeus, presently.

“Go sit by the fire. You must be tired, kneeling there so long.”

Henry arose, and went away a few minutes, leaving Thaddeus to watch. After a little while he returned, and together they sat until the gray dawn tinged the east with light. Then Thaddeus went home.

Before he left he called the neighbors; for Mrs. Tingleman's voice could no longer protest. She had gone away forever.

“What unearthly hours you keep!” said the chief of police, as he overtook Thaddeus just as the gaslights were being put out along the streets.

“It *is* rather suspicious,” Thaddeus said, laughingly, and passed on, not heeding the chief's words as he called out:

“I will have to keep my eye on *you*.”

IX.

THE SELECT SCHOOL.

BRAMBLEVILLE had a school that received no State or county aid, graduated no students, gave no diplomas; but yet was popular and well attended, and was a feature of the town—quite as much so as its court-house or its jail, its cemetery or its system of water-works.

The school was known as Professor Heart-breaks's Academy, because the professor owned the building in which the school assembled daily, and because he kept the books. He was not a professor of languages, nor of sciences, but of art; and his especial work lay in the direction of broken pumps, all of which he restored, on short notice, to their original usefulness. Or, failing in that, he substituted a new pump for the broken one. Therein was his gain. His business was to keep school, but he sold pumps to pay expenses.

The professor was an oddity. Look at his picture. He was tall—quite tall—and bent a little in the middle, as if his life had been spent in walking in places too low for him. His form was spare, and his arms and legs seemed like

gas-pipe appendages. His head was long up and down, rather broad at the top, and decidedly narrow at the chin, tapering down to a point at the extremity of his auburn whiskers, which depended from his chin.

Whoever took the professor for a novice or an easy victim to any scheme, reckoned always without his host.

His favorite position was on his high stool at his high desk in one corner of his shop. Sitting on this perch, his feet on the rungs of the stool, he whittled away at a piece of soft pine, grinding slowly between his teeth a generous supply of best fine-cut tobacco. His whittling was not the aimless cutting of a stick, but was the work of carving out some tool or toy—a knife, a shovel, a chain, or a gun. The only condition imposed on those who attended his school was that they should not sit idly by, but should whittle; and should not whittle aimlessly, but must whittle something out of the soft, straight pine which he furnished.

Hence the sides of his shop were covered with specimens of the handiwork of the pupils. These consisted of boats, chains, swords, guns, puzzles, pumps, balls, bats, barrels, and so on, and so on, and so on.

The seats of the school were trestles, benches, broken chairs, sticks of wood on ends, barrels,

boxes, and boards, the last placed with ends resting on trestles.

The stove, a capacious, oblong furnace, that devoured wood three feet long and one foot through, was the center around which the school congregated in the winter, and against which they viciously expectorated tobacco-juice in the summer; for the school never closed except for Sunday.

Professor Heartbreaks did not join the circle around the stove, but sat on his stool near by, and from this throne ruled the assembly like a monarch, starting and stopping all discussions, directing the current of all conversation, and dismissing the school peremptorily when he had a call to mend a pump or to put in a new one.

The pupils came from all parts of the city, and from all classes of society; so that what did not come up for discussion was not of importance enough to make a ripple of interest.

No man passing the school was safe from an invitation to come in. If he complied with the request, he was sure to find a silent group of whittlers—so silent and so busy whittling that, for a few seconds, hot flashes of embarrassment would redden his face, though every one present might be a personal acquaintance. If he should decline to “come in,” a dozen or so of the “pupils” would tumble out of the door, and,

standing on the sidewalk, look after the receding figure so pityingly that he would wish he had stopped—their cruel comments!

Professor Heartbreaks usually opened the interview by a question indicating the topic of conversation, and then there would follow a running fire of question and comment that would discount the best effort of many a lawyer.

It happened that one day Rev. Archibald Outwright was called in to contribute his share to the general fund of information.

“Much sickness, parson?”

Thus spoke Professor Heartbreaks, glancing up just one second from the sugar-spoon he was fashioning from soft pine.

“Not a great deal,” he replied, taking the seat offered him on the end of a trestle near the stove.

“No funerals, then?”

“Yes. I attended one last week. A Mrs. Tingleman died of pulmonary trouble.”

“Any children?”

“Yes; three little ones.”

“Father living?”

“You know Henry, or Hank, Professor,” said a pupil, interrupting, “the night-watch at the lumber-yard?”

“Yes; that him?”

“Yep.”

“Lost his job, I heerd,” said another.

“Had n’t heard that,” said the minister. “He was trusty, was he not?”

“Well, he ’d never carry off a meeting-house; now you can put your bottom dollar on that,” another whittler volunteered.

“Joe Bigler tol’ me a’ yiste’day, ur te’-day—can’t jist say which—he ’d advertist his goods at awkshun,” said another.

“He ’d better; and the sooner the better, if all is true that’s been tol’ aroun’.”

“How’s that?” asked the minister.

“You ’ve heerd of Judge Tracy’s house, and Mr. Lysander’s house, and a whole lot more houses, gettin’ broke into, hain’t yer?”

“Yes, certainly; but is Mr. Tingleman implicated in such work as that? I knew he was poor, but I thought he was honest,” the minister said, earnestly.

“Do you think it will snow or rain?” asked Professor Heartbreaks, directing his question to the minister, and by that all the school knew that further discussion of Tingleman’s character must cease.

The minister said rather coolly, for he was thinking of Tingleman, and was far more concerned about him and his children than about the kind of weather the community would have, “Neither, I hope,” and was about to ask some-

thing more about Tingleman, when the professor suddenly left his perch, stepped to the door, and called out:

“Hey, Andy Smoothiron! Hey, Andy! Come in a minute.”

Andy was passing the shop on the other side of the street; but he halted, turned about, and came across, entering the shop just as the minister passed out. The professor the meantime had resumed his seat on the high stool.

“Run down any of them thieves yet, Andy?” said the professor, as the big policeman backed up to the stove, and crossed his hands behind him to protect his overcoat-tail from the heat of the stove.

“Hain’t ’zactly run any in; but do n’t you forget hit, we’re hot on their trail. I tracked one on ’em into his house, just the other night.”

“Why did n’t you nab him?” said one.

“Well—” and the big policeman hesitated.

A suppressed laugh ran around the room.

“Had to leave him, I suppose, for the chief to capture, and get another feather in *his* cap,” suggested another.

“You are clear off,” said Andy, coloring. “Ef any of you fellers ’a’ knowed who it wuz I tracked, you’d swear you’d as soon suspect an angel from heaven as him.”

"An' you let him slip?" queried one, in surprise.

"No, I hain't let him slip, nuther." He spoke indignantly. "I can put my hand on him any day, or any hour in the day or night, and I'll do it, when we git everything sot just so. You fellers do n't know nothing!"

"I'll bet you a dollar to two cents I can name your man," said another, banteringly.

"I'll go you for the cigars, but won't bet no dollar," said Andy, turning about to face his challenger.

"Thaddeus Throckmorton," said the other, closing his knife and putting it in his pocket. Then, shaking his completed wooden pistol in Andy's face, he said, "And if you police hain't got anything better 'n *that*, you'd just as well be at home asleep, for all the good you do a-watchin' for thieves."

"When are you going to get new uniforms?" said the professor.

And Andy was glad for a chance to change the subject; for a murmur of approval had greeted the outspoken words of his challenger. He said, however, before answering the professor:

"I hain't said it's him;" and then, to the professor, "Not until spring, I guess."

"Hello, Throcky!" called the professor, as Thaddeus passed the door. "Come in."

"Guess I'll go," said Andy.

"You'd better," said some one, and the two men passed each other in the doorway.

"How are you, Andy?" said Thad, kindly.

"So's to be around," said Andy, with a wink at the school; but they did not respond to the hint.

"How are your children getting on?" asked the professor.

"Very well, indeed."

"That was a sad death!"

"In some respects, yes; but in others, it was a very blessed death."

"Did he take it hard?" asked the professor, softly.

"Very. They were devotedly attached to each other."

"Where is he?"

"He has given up his place, and will go West awhile. We will see to the children until he comes for them."

"Get married again, likely."

"No, I think not; at least, not soon. I believe he is a changed man."

"Has a hard name, Throcky."

"Yes, I know; but I think undeserved."

"Then you do not believe he is the one who breaks into houses around here?" the professor asked.

“No more than I believe *I* would do such a thing.”

The school smiled at each other, but Thaddeus did not notice the smile; for he was looking straight in the face of his questioner.

“But if he ’d get caught, you ’d believe different?” said one.

“I would have to.”

“And then it might look bad for you, seeing you and him are such friends.”

Thaddeus smiled, and then laughed heartily. The school smiled, but they did not laugh. They knew what seed had already been sown, and reckoned that the harvest would be bitterness for Thaddeus.

“Why, Professor,” he said, after his laughter had subsided, “I was born in Brambleville. My father lived here twenty years. My mother is here yet. Everybody knows me. But, then, I know you are just guying me, for fun. I am, though, no more a friend of Henry Tingleman than I am of any man in need. His wife was sick and dying. I went there to help. His children are motherless, and the last request his wife made was, that my mother would look after them. If he had been a convicted thief, and not merely a ‘suspect,’ I could not have done otherwise for her and the children. They are not to be blamed.”

"You did just right," said the professor, earnestly. "But he *is* a 'suspect,' and he *may* get you in trouble."

"*He* never will. Who could be so low as to concoct tales to my hurt from what I have done—very little, I am sure, but done cheerfully—for a needy family?"

"There are lots of low-down folks in politics, Throcky," the professor said, solemnly.

"Throcky" was a common name for him among his friends, and it had no unpleasant sound to him. Only when it was used by his opponents, with a twist and a tone that was very rasping, did it grate harshly on his ear.

"I am sorry to admit that there are."

"But the professor and the school are for *you*."

"Thank you!"

"That's correct," said another.

"No matter what the police say," put in another, significantly.

"The police?" said Thaddeus, in surprise.

"Not about me?"

"That's it," several answered.

"Andy—that just went out?" he questioned, eagerly.

"We tell no tales out of school," the professor said, with a smile.

"But am I to understand that the *police* are

associating *my* name with Tingleman's—and—and—with house-breaking?" He was excited and angry.

"Throcky," the professor said, kindly, "do not get *us* into it, will you?"

"Certainly not—in no way, shape, or form."

"Can we trust you?"

"On my word as a gentleman, you can."

"Well, then, the school has been looking into this matter all along. We've studied it pretty hard, and I guess we've 'bout learned all there's in it, and we've 'cluded they have sot a trap for you; and *they* say they have caught you."

"*They* say? *Who* says? Caught *me*?"

"Now, you are excited, Throcky. We are *for* you—the whole school, to a man; but you must look out, and play an even hand, or they'll down you!"

"*They*'ll down me? Who are they? The police?"

"Yes; and the politicians."

"Police and politicians?"

"Now you have it!"

"I know the police; but who are the politicians?"

"Them that made the police. You know who they be, do n't you?"

"Yes," sadly.

"The *school's* for you."

"Thank you!"

"Grub-time!" said the professor; and at once all closed their knives, put aside their whittling, and went out to their homes.

X.

A PLAUSIBLE PLEA.

WENDELL MORRISON found great pleasure in contemplating every circumstance that was calculated to reflect upon the character of Thaddeus, or to injure him in public estimation. He listened eagerly to Andy Smoothiron's recital of what occurred at the "Select School;" but the wily policeman was careful to make a report that was sure to please Wendell, without regard to the truthfulness of his story. What was truth as compared with his place on "the force?" What was truth compared with the friendship of so popular and so influential a man as Wendell?

"Gad!" exclaimed the policeman, as he entered Wendell's office, and found him alone; "it is gittin' all-fired duberous and nasty for Throcky. Ef I wuz talked 'bout like him, I'd go West, an' grow up. Jeeminy cracky! he hain't got no show here, whiles the best men is talkin' 'gin him like they are now."

"What's up now?" Wendell said, wheeling about in his chair, and motioning Andy to a seat near him.

The two men supposed they were alone; but

Judge Tracy was in the private-office, and heard all their conversation; for he had not gone to dinner, as Wendell thought he had.

“Well, Perfess’ Heartbreaks called me inter the school, and, Moly Hoses! how they did go for Throcky!”

“Did they?” asked Wendell, gleefully. “What did they say? Who was there?”

“You know Mort Humphrey?”

“Yes; did *he* say anything?”

Wendell was genuinely surprised at that intimation; and more, he was really pained for a second; for, to even a man like Wendell, it seemed sorrowful that so true a friend as Mort should desert Thaddeus. He leaned forward to catch every word Andy had to tell. The big policeman glanced cautiously about, and then said, in a low tone:

“*Say* anything? Jeeminy cracky! he come right out, and said he *knowed* Throcky was a thief!”

“Mort Humphrey said that?” asked Wendell, still in doubt, the assertion seemed so far from what he would expect. In his own heart he believed in Throckmorton’s honesty, and knew he was simply a victim of circumstances; and it was hard for him to believe Mort Humphrey would even suspect his friend of wrong-doing, much less charge him with theft.

"Well, now, may be you think *I'm* a liar!" said Andy, drawing back, and assuming an indignant air.

"Certainly not—by no means," said Wendell, apologetically; "but you might have misunderstood him."

"Misunderstood nothing! I tell you he sayed it, in just them words."

"Tell me all the conversation," said Wendell, turning to his desk, and picking up a pencil to write down the words.

"No you do n't!" said Andy, divining his purpose. "I ain't goin' to make no deppersi-tion to the exact words."

"Very well," said Wendell, dropping his pencil, and turning back to face Andy; "tell me as nearly as you can recollect."

"You won't haul me up for a witness?"

"Of course not, you fool!" said Wendell, impatiently. "This will never get into court; and if it did, hearsay evidence is nothing."

"Well," Andy commenced, being reassured, "I sez, sez I, they 've got them thieves cornered. Then they sez, sez they, 'What thieves?'"

"Who said?" asked Wendell.

"Somebody; I do n't know who, now."

"I thought you said Mort said that?"

"Not *that*. I'm comin' to what Mort sayed."

"O! Well, go on."

“They sez, sez they, ‘What thieves?’ Then I sez, sez I, ‘What broke into Tracy’s, and Ly-sander’s, and the balance of them’s houses.’ Then up spoke Mort, and sez, sez he, ‘Chestnuts!’ Then I fired up, and sez, sez I, ‘What’s chest-nuts?’ And he sez, sez he, ‘About them thieves.’ Then I sez, sez I—pretty hot, I tell you; for he was tryin’ to guy me—sez I to him, ‘What do you know about it?’ And he sez, sez he, ‘You police are clear off.’ Them air his very words. Then I sez, ‘May be you know?’ And he sez, sez he, ‘I do know. It’s Thaddeus Throck-morton.’ Right out, like that, before the whole school. I wuz just fixin’ my mouth to ask him for some pointers, when who on earth should pop in but Throcky himself! And *I* left.”

“What did the others say?” asked Wendell, quietly, for he was oppressed by the news Andy brought him. He was willing to smirch Throck-morton’s name in private, and at such times and places as he thought it wise and advantageous to do so, but he did not want such a report to get to the great public ear; for he was editor of the chief paper of the party in that locality, and he did not want him hurt like that.

“They sayed nuthin’, but looked most awful wise.”

“Did n’t any one defend him?”

“Not a’ one.”

"But *you* do n't believe he was in the scrape, do you?"

"'Pon my soul, it looks bad. At fust I'd 'a' swore him innercent; but now, seein' the word comes from so many directions, they must be somethin' in it. Can't have no smoke without fire; and a smothered fire at that."

"And you think all the school sided with Mort?"

"I know it. He wuz speakin' for the whole pile of them. They just as good as said so."

"Why did n't you stay and see how Thaddeus would act, and what they would say to him?"

"Well, I wuz in a hurry to git back to the square."

"Did he speak to you?"

"Never noticed me no more than if I'd been a dog."

"Why 's that, I wonder?"

"Do n't he know I've tracked him all over this town? Do n't he know I've seed him at most suspicious hours, goin' home, and so has Billy."

"Where is Tingleman now?"

"Do n't know where he mout be this blessed minute; but I'll tell you where I tracked him last night, just after dark."

"Where?"

"To Throcky's house!"

“Did he go in?”

“Go in! You bet. I watched a hour, an’ he wuz still thar.”

“What time do you go on duty?”

“Go on at six in the morning, and off at six at night. Then Billy comes on, and stays until morning.”

“Did you tell Billy?”

“No. I was going home, and hain’t seed him sence.”

“Well,” said Wendell, rising and shutting his desk, preparatory to leaving for dinner, “keep your eyes open, Andy, and your ears too, and let me know what’s new.”

Judge Tracy remained in his office. Had he indeed so long been deceived with reference to Thaddeus and Wendell? He had always thought Thaddeus the more estimable of the two, reckoning him honest, energetic, talented, and deserving the best place in society, and destined to achieve distinction in political life. He had rated Wendell as brilliant, but unreliable; lacking persistence, and destined to wane in influence as he developed indiscretions into excesses. He had helped Thaddeus gladly, for his own sake, and had encouraged him in his attentions to Josie. He had taken Wendell into partnership from selfish motives, having several cases on hand that needed the brilliant and dashing, even

vehement, advocacy that he knew Wendell would give them in open court, while he would look up the vital points, and manage the cases in every other respect. So far his most sanguine expectations had been exceeded by Wendell's achievements. There was more in the young man than he believed. He had carefully guarded Josie from association with him, and could not tolerate the idea of her choosing him as a friend. Perhaps he was wrong in his estimate of him in every particular. That is what puzzled him, and that is why he was still in the private office when Wendell returned from dinner.

"Wendell," said the judge, coming out as the young lawyer seated himself to finish his writing, "what you told me the other day about Throckmorton and the police gossip has annoyed me exceedingly. You do not credit the report, do you?"

"Certainly not, sir," Wendell answered promptly and earnestly.

"Do you know whether the police have any substantial ground for such suspicions?"

"I am quite sure they have not; that is, nothing that would stand the test of a review in court; but—" And here Wendell stopped. He wanted to tell the judge just what he knew, and wanted to show him the handkerchief and the check, and leave him to make his own infer-

ences. But was this the best time for that? So he hesitated, and the judge said:

“But what?”

“Only this, Judge: the police have some circumstantial evidence that looks ugly for Throckmorton; but his unblemished character will outweigh that in your mind, as it does in mine.”

“Perhaps; but I would like to do the weighing myself.”

“Most certainly.”

“Will you put me in possession of the evidence, that I may see for myself what there is in it?”

Wendell blushed and hesitated, finally remarking in a deprecatory manner:

“I can; but it would savor a little of tale-bearing.”

Instantly the judge applied the words to himself, and understood them to be a reproof to him for prying into a matter of that kind. Wendell Morrison rebuking Judge Tracy? He flushed visibly, and was greatly agitated as he stood looking out the window.

Wendell correctly interpreted these signs as evidence of offended dignity, and he made haste to repair the damage his inconsiderate speech had wrought.

“I beg pardon, Judge. You are justly en-

titled to all the information I have; and since you have asked it, I should not have hinted at such a construction of my telling you what I know; for your relations, in a business way, with Throckmorton are such as to justify the closest scrutiny of his every act by you."

Wendell was pleased with the turn the conversation had taken; for he could now unbosom himself to the judge as a friend and confidant, and not as the bearer of an evil report. If he pressed him, he would tell all.

"Well?" said the judge, seating himself with his overcoat and hat on.

"Have n't you been to dinner?" Wendell asked, when he noted this movement.

"Not yet."

"Well, I will be brief. In the first place—"

At that instant the door opened, and Miss Josie stepped in hurriedly.

"Why, papa, we were so anxious about you. We thought something awful must have happened. John said he saw you at the office window just at dinner-time, and we have waited two hours, and you are not home yet. Nothing would do but I should come myself and see what is the matter. I am glad there is nothing serious. Another important case, I suppose," nodding to Mr. Morrison, as she concluded her rapid speech, and then glancing

from one to the other for an answer to her suggestion.

“Yes,” the judge said, taking his daughter’s arm and moving toward the door, “a very perplexing case, I assure you.” And then to Morrison he said, as he stood in the door a moment, “Think up all the points, and let me know about them when I come back.”

“Very well, sir,” Wendell said, and was alone again.

“I have greatly misjudged that young man,” Judge Tracy said, as he drove home in the sleigh with his daughter. “He has depth and breadth I never dreamed of, and for acute and swift analysis he is remarkable.”

“If he was not so fast in other ways, and of such an undesirable reputation outside of his business life,” she said, with a doubtful shaking of her head.

“But he *may* have been misjudged in that as in his legal attainments and abilities.”

“Hardly! Everybody knows—How do—do!—that he is the sorrow of his mother’s life.”

“Who was that?” the judge asked, looking back to see to whom Josie had spoken so cordially.

“That was Thad. He hardly recognized me at all. I don’t believe he saw me until I spoke.”

“Saw you, perhaps, but did not want you to see him.”

“Why so?” she asked, blushing.

“O, he is in deep water, I hear.”

“In what way?”

“O,” said the judge, hesitatingly and evasively, “some legal matters.”

“O!” said Josie, relieved at once. “He can take care of himself in all legal matters, I am sure. He is going to make a first-class lawyer, is n’t he, papa, do n’t you think?”

“Hard to tell. Yes, I guess so; that is, he is a hard student, and is a close thinker. Can never be a match for Morrison, though. He does very well as a newspaper plodder.”

“I should n’t want him to match Wendell in some things.”

“By the way, Josie, do not let matters reach a crisis between you and Throckmorton until you talk to me.”

“Why, Papa Tracy! Can you not trust mamma and me together on such matters?”

“Some things your mother needs the counsel of men of the world on, Josie.”

“You are just teasing me. I know you.”

“I am in dead earnest, Josie.”

“See mamma!”

With this she bounded up the steps and to her room, gayly singing, her heart made light

by the thought that her father had even jokingly alluded to a possible alliance between herself and Thaddeus. Reach a crisis! Indeed, that had been reached and passed! He was her accepted lover, though the formal engagement had been made but very recently, and her mother did not know of that.

XI.

CONSIDERING THE EVIDENCE.

“IT is madness, Morrison,” Judge Tracy said, when he returned from dinner, and the two lawyers were in their private office, “to suppose that Thaddeus Throckmorton is privy to such nefarious business as housebreaking. Unless the evidence you have to submit is clear and convincing, I will at once take steps to relieve him of the suspicions you have mentioned.”

What had wrought the change in the judge’s mind? Thaddeus’s name had not been mentioned since he left his daughter at the foot of the stairs.

It was Throckmorton’s record for faithfulness, fearlessness, for rectitude and righteousness, that had pleaded so effectually with the great lawyer.

“That is true, Judge. At any rate, we are bound to believe every man innocent until he is proved to be guilty,” Morrison said, heartily.

“Well, begin at the beginning, and give me the facts just as they have come to your knowledge.”

“In the same order?” Morrison asked, surprised at the request, for he had jotted down the facts in the order of their force, intending to

make the evidence cumulative, and was hardly ready to give them to the judge one by one in the order of their occurrence. But he dared not disregard the request, so he said:

“You know the night we caught the burglar in your house?”

“You mean the night we did n't catch him.”

“Yes,” laughing. “The night we tried to catch him.”

“Yes; what of that?”

“You remember the fellow wore a handkerchief as a mask?”

“Yes, and I remember that you snatched it off his face.”

“Well, here is that handkerchief!” handing it to the judge for examination.

The judge took it, and scrutinized its texture.

“Look at the corners for a name,” Morrison said, carelessly.

“Yes; here is a name,” looking at it carefully through his glasses, “‘Thaddeus Throckmorton.’ That is plain enough.”

The judge put the handkerchief aside on his desk.

“Let me take the handkerchief,” Morrison said, reaching out for it.

“After a while. I may want it.”

“O, excuse me! But I would like to have it when you are done with it. I—of course, it is

nothing; but I thought I would keep it as a trophy of that night's adventure."

"I see. Does Thaddeus know you have this handkerchief?"

"Yes; well, that is, I suppose he does. He ought to."

"Did you tell him?"

"No; but then he knows all about the affair; had a full account of it in the *Banner*, and mentioned the handkerchief as in my possession."

"I see. Well, what next?"

"You remember Mr. Lysander's fright, and how he thought he had a burglar there, in his house?"

"Yes; and found out it was only an effigy of his own clothes."

"Well, the police have a different theory. They think some one was really in the house."

"So I have heard; but that has nothing to do with this case."

"I hope not. Well, that night Thaddeus was seen at Tingleman's."

"Very well; then what?"

"The next day, or a little while after, this check turned up in Tingleman's hands."

Morrison handed the judge the check Thaddeus had given Mrs. Tingleman to buy Christmas presents for her children.

"I see. How did *you* get it?"

"Billy Barnwell brought it to me to cash."

"And where did he get it?"

"Of Tingleman."

"Who is Tingleman?"

"A suspicious character about town."

"Did you present this check at the bank for the currency?"

"No. I haven't needed the money, and so just kept it."

"Do you need the money now?"

"No."

"I will keep the check. Here is a ten-dollar bill."

Before Morrison could protest, the judge had pocketed the check, and had put a ten-dollar bill in his hand.

"What other facts have you?"

"Tingleman has been seen at Throckmorton's house."

"Yes; go on."

"And Thad has been seen at Tingleman's house at all hours in the night."

"Yes; go on."

"The police say it is common street-talk that his connection with Tingleman is suspicious."

"What is Tingleman? What does he do?"

"A night-watchman at the lumber-yard."

"What evidence have you that he is a bad character?"

"Only his record."

"And what is that?"

"A thief that has served a term in the penitentiary."

"You know that?"

"Yes."

"Then you depend on his record for an estimate of his character?"

"Principally; but it is known also that he is profligate, generally."

"Now, Morrison, you are too good a lawyer not to know that such evidence as you give here would not convict a man in any court in the nation."

"I know that, Judge."

"This handkerchief was found on the face of a burglar; but you do not pretend to say the burglar was Throckmorton?"

"Certainly not; but it shows a connection between the burglar and the owner of the handkerchief. Whether remote or intimate remains to be seen."

"Nonsense, Morrison. It shows no such thing. Suppose this burglar had stolen my watch that night. Suppose he then went to your house, and when you grappled with him he dropped my watch, and you picked it up. Would you argue from that that I, in any sense, was responsible for his acts? Could my watch in his

possession connect me suspiciously with his operations?"

"Certainly not, when it should be generally known that your house had been burglarized; for that would explain the presence of your watch with the burglar. But has Throckmorton's house been burglarized? If so, that will explain the handkerchief."

"Not that I know of; but at most this is but a circumstance."

"Very true. That is all I claim for it."

"Very well; admit that. But how can you connect Throckmorton with the affair at Lysander's house? for I see that is the intent of what you say."

"Just this way: Let it be admitted that Tingleman was the burglar at your house, and let it be supposed that he was the burglar at Lysander's; then it follows that the handkerchief and the check are links in the same chain that connects Throckmorton with Tingleman's operations."

"But was Tingleman the burglar at my house?"

"That is to be proven."

"Where is Tingleman now?"

"Gone West!"

"The judge was silent and thoughtful.

"Where? Do you know?"

“No; only that he bought a ticket to St. Louis; or rather a ticket was bought for him.”

“Who bought it?”

“Throckmorton.”

“You know that?”

“I know it on the strength of the ticket agent’s word. He told it to me innocently, as showing how benevolent Throckmorton is. He is a firm friend of Thad’s, you know.”

“Yes, I know.”

“Now, Judge, all this looks bad for Thad. It makes people talk. Such facts do not convince me, nor even arouse my suspicions; for I believe Throckmorton is all right, and could explain the whole matter.”

“Why not go to him for an explanation?”

“Ah, there’s the rub! To go to him for an explanation is to charge him with guilt. I do not want that task. Do you?”

“No; I do not.”

“It is assuming that he is guilty, you see, and asking him to prove his innocence, instead of assuming he is innocent, and waiting for some one to prove his guilt!”

“I see; but why do you keep his handkerchief, and why did you not cash this check at the bank?”

“Are they not safer in my hands? Might not some unscrupulous person get hold of them, and

the facts connected with them, and use them to Thad's hurt? All this smoke will blow over, by and by, and I am keeping these things quiet."

"I see. Well, then, you would like to keep them for Thad's sake?"

"Yes."

"Well, I will return them after a little. The meantime I will not use them improperly."

"O, of course not."

And so the interview ended.

Judge Tracy was glad he had discovered, so opportunely and so early, the exposure that threatened Thaddeus.

Wendell Morrison was glad he had so successfully sown seed of distrust in the mind and heart of Judge Tracy, and at the same time had made it appear that he was sacredly guarding the character of Throckmorton. He was quite certain Judge Tracy had been very favorably impressed with his disinterestedness.

XII.

A FLOOD OF LIGHT.

IT was vain for Thaddeus to attempt to content himself in the office that afternoon. What he heard at Professor Heartbreaks's school disturbed him more than he cared to own.

If, as he had been warned, there was a scheme a-brewing to ruin him, it could certainly be traced to Morrison; for no other person in Brambleville could have a sufficient motive to work against him.

Suppose Morrison should poison Judge Tracy's mind against him! Suppose the judge should forbid his visiting Josie!

The more he pondered the possibilities in the case, the stronger grew his desire to tell Josie himself what his enemies were doing. Seizing his hat, he rushed out of the office, and hurried toward the judge's residence, fearing all the way that he might miss finding Josie at home.

"Is Miss Josie at home?" he asked the maid who opened the door.

"I will see. Walk into the parlor, please," said the maid, and turned to go up-stairs.

"Miss Josie is at home, and will be down in

just one minute," called a familiar voice from above stairs.

"She is at home, and will be down in a minute," said the maid, turning about and handing Thad his card, smiling very slightly, as if she understood more than she would have him know.

"I am *so* glad to see you," Miss Josie said, in *less* than a minute, as she came into the parlor. "Papa said you were in trouble."

She sat down right near him, and continued: "Can you trust me with your trouble? I should *so* much like to share it with you!"

"Your father said I was in trouble?" exclaimed Thaddeus, in surprise.

"Yes. As we drove home at noon he remarked that you were in trouble about some law matter."

"I do not understand," he answered, with strange forebodings.

"But are you not? If you are not, excuse me for saying anything about it. But what he said has made me want to see you *so* much, and I am glad you came up."

"Josie, I am *troubled*; but I am not *in* trouble that I know of. But I am distressed to think your father should have mentioned it to you. Did he tell you anything?"

"Nothing at all. Do not let that worry you. Excuse my indiscretion in mentioning it."



“Why, what has happened now?” she asked, in sobered earnestness.—Page 143.

"I will tell, Josie. Morrison is doing all he can to injure me. He is your father's partner, and a friend of the family, and my friend's son; and perhaps I ought not to say so, but I am sure he is. I am not afraid of anything he can do against me in a business way, or in politics; but I am afraid of what he may do here—in *your* home—against me!"

"Why, what has happened now?" she asked, in sobered earnestness.

"Nothing happened, Josie; but very much talked about."

Then he told her all he knew of the rumors and suspicions afloat. When he had finished the recital, she looked up and said:

"Is that all?"

"All! Josie, is that not enough?"

"Enough as to quantity—indeed, *too* much as to quality. But, Thad, could you fear such a mass of silly gossip would influence *me*, or any of us?"

"But, Josie, it *has* influenced your father."

"Thad Throckmorton! How dare you! And in his own house, too!"

"But did you not say he said I was in trouble? And he must have referred to this; for this is all that troubles me!"

"Well," said Josie, "he may have referred to this; but it did not make a sufficient impression

on his mind to disturb the usual flow of good humor at dinner. Now I will tell you what he did say about you, just after we passed you, coming home."

"I shall be glad to hear."

"He warned me not to let a crisis arise in our affairs—yours and mine; think of it—without consulting *him!* That is just as good as approval, you know."

But it did not appear so to Thad. It seemed more like a prophesied refusal. His heart sank within him, and he said, sadly:

"I am afraid not!"

"Yes, it is. Does not mamma know? And is she not satisfied?"

"Does your mother know all—our engagement—and everything?"

"Not exactly that; but she knows what I think of you—that is, pretty nearly knows—and I know what *she* thinks of you, and you may just rest easy."

"Well, you comfort me, to say the least. In fact, after telling you all about it, I am almost persuaded myself that I am worse scared than hurt."

"Indeed you are! You ought to hear Uncle Lycurgus praise you. He looks upon you as his deliverer."

"Though I only rescued him from his own clothes!"

“For the time, though, it was a real burglar; and he acknowledges—privately, of course—that he was paralyzed with fear.”

“It was too funny!”

“His wife is your eulogist, too; for, as you say, Uncle Lycurgus has been ‘rescued from his clothes,’ and aunt is correspondingly happy.”

“How’s that?”

“Well, he has never had those garments on since that night, and has given orders to have them handed over to the first tramp, or the first rag-man, that comes along. He can not endure the thought of them. He has hired a hostler to care for his cow and horses, and all is lovely there.”

“But, Josie,” said Thaddeus, rising to go, “tell your mother all—right away, please. I do not want her to—to—be unprepared to—to—say a good word for me, if your father should happen to be influenced by Morrison’s gossip.”

“You silly boy!”

“Please!”

“Why not you?”

“I will, of course, in due time, and with becoming formality; but you pave the way.”

“And papa, too?”

“Yes—no—yes. I do n’t care. *No!*”

That night, when Judge Tracy came home, his wife had something to tell him, and he had

something to tell her. She sought him in his study after tea.

“Well, my dear, Thaddeus Throckmorton was here this afternoon.”

“Aha! Rather frequent caller, is n't he?”

“Rather; and is likely to be more frequent.”

“How 's that?” quickly, and with a startled expression.

“He has offered himself to Josie.”

“And she is waiting our approval?”

“Yes— and no. She has accepted him.”

“Mrs. Tracy!”

“Are you surprised? I am not; nor displeased. I have expected as much. You surely could see how matters were drifting.”

“But let me tell you, my dear. Some things have come to my ears to-day that I did not know before. If true, the matter between him and Josie must end here and now.”

“Judge Tracy!”

“It is startling and terrible.”

“Do tell me! I seem like one in a dream.”

“Here are the facts. See what you can make of them. I have my own theory. I will see what is yours.”

Then Judge Tracy went over all of Morrison's story, exhibiting the handkerchief and the check, and repeating Morrison's arguments and reasons for retaining the articles. When he was

done, his wife, having listened with bated breath and kindling spirit to the recital, said, very deliberately and with great feeling:

“That all proves *one* thing, at least.”

“Well?”

“That Morrison is a designing and crafty young man.”

“Looks so,” said the judge, relieved to find his wife’s opinion coinciding with his own.

“Fortunately, the handkerchief proves another—or, at least, arouses a strong supposition.”

“And that is?”

“That Tingleman was the thief in our house that night.”

“How so?”

“Well, it was his family that Josie and I went to see, at Mr. Outwright’s request. It was for them that the ladies did so much. You remember my telling about it?”

“You tell me so many things of that kind, my dear, that I really can not remember them all. No, I do not recall this particular case.”

“Very well. We were there repeatedly. We found, on our first visit, that Thaddeus had been there before us.”

“Thad?”

“Yes, Thad. Now be still, and let me tell you. Thaddeus had been there, and the old lady, who had charge of the family, was loud in

protestation of admiration of him. She produced this very handkerchief, or one just like it—I saw the name then—and told me how Thad had with it wiped Mrs. Tingleman's face and mouth, and then, of course, left it. He could do nothing else; but she thought his leaving so fine a handkerchief a wonderfully generous act. She made much of it, and that is why I happen to know about it. So, you see, it points to Tingleman, but not to Thad."

"I see!" said the judge, with a broad smile. "But the check?"

"The check? Let me ask you, my dear, if you gave any poor family a ten-dollar Christmas surprise?"

"Not that I can now recall."

"Very well; but that is just what Thaddeus Throckmorton did for the Tingleman family. *That* I know. I helped buy the articles myself, and was given ten dollars to spend. I did not put this amount all into toys for children, you may be sure. I thought it a bit of extravagance for Thaddeus, and inquired why he did it. From what I could learn, it was out of pure benevolence."

"I see! But about his being there at all hours in the night?"

"Watching beside Mrs. Tingleman. He was her only consoler in her last hours."

“Noble fellow!” said the judge, impulsively.

“Indeed he is; but I am afraid he lacks carefulness in assuming responsibility.”

“How so?”

“Well, he has taken Tingleman’s children home to his mother’s, and is caring for them as if they were his brothers.”

“Do you suppose he knows what suspicions attach to Tingleman?”

“Perhaps not; but if he did, that would not deter him from lending a helping hand.”

“So! so! Instead of being a companion of thieves, he has been a quiet and noble worker among the poor?”

“Nothing less; and, as often as he has been here, he has not mentioned the matter one way or the other. Nor have we—Josie or I; but I think I will now.”

“But about your brother’s case?”

“Pure hallucination—nothing more; nothing less.”

“So I think.”

“Now, what is your opinion? You said you had one.”

“That Thad is being made the victim of circumstances. What you tell me confirms me in that opinion.”

“You will see that Morrison is set right in the matter?”

"I certainly will."

"Now, as to Josie and Thaddeus?"

"They have my blessing!"

"You know Thad is ambitious to excel in law?"

"Certainly; but I really believe his field is that of journalism—perhaps literary work. Still, if his tastes are decidedly for the law, perhaps that is best."

"There would be no chance for him in your office, would there?"

"Not while Morrison is there. I am sure there would be friction."

"Is the arrangement with Morrison for a definite period?"

"For five years, unless mutually dissolved sooner."

"My dear, can you not make it to his interest to dissolve?"

"Not yet. He is a useful man in his line."

"And a dangerous man, my dear."

"In what way?"

"He will sacrifice his best friends to his own ambition. I can read him like a book."

"May I come in?"

"Certainly," said the judge, rising to greet Josie, who had knocked timidly at the door of the study.

"Take my blessing, daughter!"

He embraced her fondly, and kissed her forehead reverently.

“Has mamma told you?”

“Indeed she has—much that I never knew before.”

“Well, I have something *awful* to tell you both,” with a well-assumed anxious air, “and then, may be, you will withdraw your blessing.”

Then Josie related, with very great particularity, what Thaddeus had told her that afternoon, her father and mother listening, with affected surprise and dismay, until the end was reached.

“And still you have faith in him?” the judge said, with a frown.

“Yes, papa; why not? What can idle tales avail against a good name?”

“That is true, daughter. ‘A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.’ Fortunately, your mother and I can clear all that in a few words.”

Then the matter was gone over again from beginning to end.

Until a late hour they talked, and the judge related many reminiscences of his acquaintance with Thaddeus’s father, always ending with the remark:

“And the son is growing up to be just like him.”

“Poor man!” Mrs. Tracy finally remarked, with a heavy sigh, “his end was very tragic and sad. I do not see how his wife lived through it! I could not.”

“Please, mamma, do not mention it,” Josie said, pleadingly. “I am afraid I will dream about it all night.”

“I beg pardon, daughter! I will say no more.”

“When Thad comes, to-morrow night, mamma, may I bring him to your room, and will you tell him how sure you are that he is good and true and noble?”

“With pleasure, daughter.”

XIII.

PLOTTING MISCHIEF.

WENDELL MORRISON sat in his office-chair one night, with his feet elevated against the window-casing, almost hidden in the cloud of tobacco-smoke his persistent and rapid pulling at a fragrant cigar had made, when Billy Barnwell, the chief of police, entered unceremoniously.

“Got a mate to that?” he said, as he drew a chair alongside of the young lawyer, and elevated his feet against the other side of the same window. The gas was burning brightly, and the prospect of a free smoke of the very best cigar that money could buy, had attracted the chief from the street below.

Without replying, and without shifting his position, Morrison took a cigar from his vest-pocket, and handed it to Billy, and gave him his own cigar as a light.

“Thanks! Regular twenty-five-centers!” Billy said, after a puff or two at the fragrant weed.

Morrison puffed away, without deigning a reply, and Billy, for awhile, silently smoked on.

“Dullest day for a month!” exclaimed the policeman.

If Morrison heard the remark, he did not deem it worthy of notice; and the two continued to make the thick smoke thicker about their heads.

“Came pretty near running in two tramps, but they got out of the city before I heard they were here.”

Morrison evidently was not interested in the arresting of tramps.

“Charlie Christie has put in a new line of cigars that beat anything ever offered here for the money. Regular twenty-five-centers, Havana-filled, gilt-edge, A No. 1—only three for a half. Dandies!”

But Morrison was satisfied with the cigars he had, and did not so much as look toward Billy, much less make any inquiry about the new brand of cigars. And they smoked on.

“Well, guess I must go now. Andy will be coming up to look for me.”

Had he been talking to himself, Billy could not have had less said to him than was said that night by Morrison. He was smoking when he came in, and he was smoking when he went out. Such fits of sullen silence were common with Morrison, and Billy had learned to wait his mood.

Just after Billy went out, a heavy step, with a quick stride, was heard in the hall. The door was flung open, and Sam Slimkins entered.

"Where there is so much smoke must be some fire. What great scheme are you planning now?"

"Trying to get myself together. I am all broke up, Sam."

Morrison straightened up in his chair, and wheeled it about so as to face Slimkins.

"What has gone wrong?"

"Everything. You know the check?"

"Yes."

"Well, Judge Tracy got hold of it, and it turns out that Mrs. Tracy knows all about how Tingleman happened to have it, and that ends *that!*"

"Well, I never thought it was very much of a string, anyway."

"But it was, I tell you. It was a trump card. You remember the handkerchief?"

"Yes."

"That is gone, too. Mrs. Tracy found out how Tingleman got it, and is full of praises for Throcky on account of it."

"All child's play, anyway, Morrison! I tell you, if you mean business, get up and go at Throcky in a business way. This 'still hunt' way is nonsense."

"That's all you know about it!"

"I know *all* about it! Where would you be to-day but for me?"

"Where would *you* be but for me?" Morrison said, angrily.

"What have you ever done for me that you had not been paid for in advance?" Slimkins retorted.

"What have *you* ever done for me that you did n't demand dollars for?"

"Who cornered the floaters for you at the last election, and sent you to the Legislature?"

"Who gave you ten dollars a head for every one you *said* you voted for me, when they cost no more than two dollars apiece on the average?"

"Well, it was your bargain!"

"And your gain!"

"*Your* gain! You could n't afford to be beaten for a few thousand dollars."

"Well, let that drop. You are excited."

"I should say, let it drop. Who is excited? *You*; that's all. What has got into you? You are as cross as a bear that has lost a whelp."

"I told you I was all broken up."

"Over that little check, and the silly handkerchief business."

"Let up, will you?"

"Be a man, and I will."

"What would you have me do?"

“Declare war on Throcky! War to the knife, and knife to the hilt!”

“I dare not. He is too strong. I must weaken him somewhere. He is all conscience. If I could get a knife in his honor somewhere, he would go to his knees at once.”

“That’s it! Come out in direct assault. Let fly an arrow. *You* will not have to prove anything. *He* will have to explain. Of course, the falser it is, the less likely he will be to notice it; but the people will remember it. Get Monmoskin to let you squib his paper for him. Then give it to Throcky. See?”

“O yes; I see. Very nice for *you* to talk. The law can not touch you, even if he should charge libel against you. With me it is different. He could collect from me any damages the court might allow. You know that. It is easy enough for you to talk that way.”

“Very well, have it so. Then pay me, and *I* will make it hot for him. I will make him think he is in purgatory every hour in the day. He is as easily hurt as a child.”

“What would you do?”

“For pay? How much?”

“Let me know your plan first. I will not fix a price on work undone and unknown.”

“Where does he stand in your way? Let me know just what you are aiming at?”

“At the State Senate, and then Congress. Next fall to the Senate, and four years afterward to Congress. I do not care anything for the Senate except as a stone to step on to Congress.”

“But does he want to go to the Senate?”

“Of course, and, more than that, half the party want him there. I can go back to the Lower House; but that is no promoter. I am tired of it, anyway.”

“Why not let him go to the Lower House, and you to the Senate?”

“Fool!”

“You are another!”

“I say you are! Only two counties in the district, and take both senator and representative from the same county! I say you are a *fool!*”

“Go to the dogs with your ambition—Senate, Congress, and all!”

Sam arose, and stalked out of the office. Morrison smoked on. He knew Sam would come back. There was a chance to make money out of the scheme, and that would bring him. Sam went as far as the head of the stair, and then returned. Resuming his seat, he said, as if nothing had happened.

“I will make him so sick of politics that he will wish he had not been born!”

“How?”

“Through the *Gazette*. Old Monmoskin will print anything for money.”

“Well, go ahead, and I will see what you can do.”

“For how much?”

“Well,”—thoughtfully—“\$300, if nominated; \$500 more, if elected!”

“Go away! Send for your Cheap Johns. No such bait catches me!”

“Well, make it even money, if elected.”

“A thousand?”

“Yes.”

“Good-night. Look out for the next *Gazette*!”

That week the *Gazette* office needed, for immediate use, more type of a certain kind than was in stock. Mr. Monmoskin deliberated awhile as to what he could do in the emergency, and finally adopted the suggestion of his foreman, who said:

“Why not ask the *Banner* for a font? We might return the favor some time. That would let you have it.”

“O yes; That would let me have it. That’s his way. But it is humiliating to ask him.”

“If you don’t, you lose the job and twenty dollars clear cash. Is your pride worth twenty dollars a day to you?”

“Well, send over and see.”

“Reynolds,” said the foreman, “go over to the *Banner* office, and borrow a font of long primer. Tell Thaddeus we will return the favor on demand.”

“Certainly! Certainly! Glad to let them have it,” said the young editor, when Reynolds made known his errand. “See! You can not carry both cases. I will send one of the boys with you to carry the caps.”

“What is to happen now, do you reckon?” asked Thad’s foreman, as the type was carried out of the office.

“Peace, I hope. I am tired of this bitterness, and all this bickering. I suppose the *Gazette* will notice the *Banner* now. It never has done it, you know.”

That week the *Gazette* did notice the *Banner*—or rather the *Banner* editor. The general public did not understand the item; but Thad did, and so did Wendell—and Sam Slimkins—and the police—and, through them, many others of the baser sort.

When Thad read the item he could scarcely believe his eyes; but there were the words in plain type, and the implication they conveyed was a dagger in his heart.

XIV.

BUILDING ON THE SAND.

WENDELL was well pleased with Slimkins's first movement against Throckmorton through the *Gazette*. It was a covert attack that the victim could not meet without drawing upon himself a storm of evil surmisings. There was nothing left to him but silent endurance of a cruel aspersion of his character. There was the barest margin of fact in the charge made against him by the *Gazette* item, and any one acquainted with the facts would exonerate Throckmorton; but the facts could not be given to the public without implicating innocent persons. Thaddeus writhed in agony. He could not even go to his mother for sympathy; and as for telling Josie—that was not to be thought of for a minute.

Wendell left Slimkins to his work, and gave his attention to other plans. He had been made partner with Judge Tracy. What should hinder a marriage with Judge Tracy's daughter? In time, if that could be consummated, the fortunes of the two families would be one, and all of it in his hands! Bright visions of wealth and power!

The only obstacle in the way was Miss Josie herself.

If he could gain her heart, or even her hand without her heart—for “hearts are plentiful,” he said—parental consent would follow as a matter of course; for could Judge Tracy deny his own partner so reasonable a request?

Sam Slimkins could be trusted to carry on a vigorous warfare against Thaddeus as Wendell's political rival; but he would turn his whole attention to winning the hand of Miss Josie. He did not consider Thad a rival there. How could he be? Absurd!

Wendell had had but little to do with the society with which Thaddeus and Josie mingled, and where they were chief actors and ever welcome guests. For this reason he did not know or suspect the close friendship of the two which had culminated in the engagement sanctioned heartily by the judge and his wife.

Wendell was not ignorant of the art of making friends, nor unacquainted with methods necessary to ingratiate one's self in the affections of another.

“I will do it this very night!” he said, closing his desk with a slam, locking it with a snap, and shoving back his chair with a force altogether uncommon. “Happy thought!” he exclaimed, half aloud, as he passed out of the

office to hurry home for supper. "The boys will find a cold reception this night," he added, with a chuckle, as he went down the stairs two steps at a time.

Mrs. Morrison's heart leaped with joy when Wendell announced his intention at the close of supper. He rarely confided to her any of his plans, and never left any word when he went from home as to where he was going, or at what hour he should return, or whether he should return at all.

"Mother," he said, smiling blandly, "I think I will call on Jennie Jessup to-night. I have n't been there for many a month. Do you think they will be surprised to see me?"

"Surprised! I should say so; and delighted as well. I am so glad you are going. Your Aunt Mary was here this week, and asked after you very particularly. Do let her think you come to see her, too."

"Aunt Mary is all right," said Wendell, recalling the many happy hours he had spent there in his boyhood days. "And Jennie is a real bright, entertaining, even lovable girl. I have quite neglected her for a few years."

"So you have, Wendell," his mother said, thrilled by the thought of Wendell's deliberately and voluntarily choosing to call on his cousin to spend the evening, instead of passing the night

with the rough characters generally chosen as his companions. "And Jennie feels it, too. She does not lack for company; but she has always been proud of you, and you may well be proud of her."

"Well, I am going to reform, mother," Wendell replied, rising to go to his room.

An hour later he was at his Aunt Mary's. Jennie was ready to go to a temperance-meeting at the hall, and her mother was to accompany her.

"Come right in, cousin. We will not go a step," she said, decidedly, when Wendell excused himself, seeing they were attired for the street.

"Suppose you go, and let Wendell go with you, and I will stay," her mother suggested. "You know you have a song on the program, and it is too bad to disappoint them."

"Are *you* to sing, Cousin Jennie? Then, of course, I will go. Have n't heard you for years and years. It will make me a boy again," he said, gayly.

"Years and years? The idea, Wendell! I am not so old as that! Do I look so aged?"

"Judged by your looks, cousin, you are not a day over sixteen—or eighteen, at the most. You look fresh as a peach, and just as temptingly lovely."

"Now, you are ridiculing me!"

"Indeed, I am not. Never was more in earnest."

"Well, come on. We will be late, I am afraid."

"Whew! What will people say to see *me* at a temperance-meeting?" he said, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"They will be glad; but none gladder than I, Wendell," his aunt said, earnestly.

"I am not so awful bad, Aunt Mary. I do take a glass, now and then; but it is only to be sociable with the boys. I could quit just as easy as not."

"Come on," said Jennie, nervously; for she feared her mother might say something, in her anxiety for Wendell's reformation, that would drive him away from his present favorable attitude, and together they hastened to the hall.

His coming to the meeting surprised none more delightfully than Thaddeus and Josie; for Thad was chairman, and Miss Josie was secretary, of the society, under the auspices of which the assembly was held.

At the close of the exercises, while Wendell waited for Jennie, who was detained in conference with some other members, Miss Josie went to him, extended her hand, and said warmly:

"I am glad to see you here, Mr. Morrison.

We feel quite honored when our lawmakers and our lawyers attend our conventions."

"Indeed," he replied, with a profound bow, "any man may well esteem it a privilege to be counted as a friend to such people as constitute *this* society. Whether one indorses its principles or not, there is no denying the honorable motives and pure philanthropy that actuate the members."

"Could you not say as much as that from the platform at our next regular meeting, a month from now, Mr. Morrison?"

"I shall be only too happy to respond to such an invitation, Miss Tracy. Remember, I do not indorse your principles; but I *do* indorse the members of the society. How could I do otherwise when Miss Tracy and Miss Jessup," turning to his cousin, who had just joined them, "are their representatives?"

"Thanks!" said Miss Josie, turning to give her secretary's record to Thaddeus, who advanced at that moment to her side.

Wendell did not deign to notice the young editor, making a pretense of assisting Miss Jessup with her roll of music and a bundle of documents she was to carry home, so as to cover from all eyes but Thad's this small but significant slight.

"Did he speak to you?" Josie asked, as they passed out of the hall.

"No," said Thad indifferently, though he felt keenly the disrespect shown him.

"I suppose he was embarrassed by his unusual surroundings, and did not see you," said Josie, apologetically.

"Perhaps," assented Thaddeus, making an effort to appear unconcerned.

Thaddeus doubted not that Wendell was connected in some way with the publication of the item in the *Gazette*, and construed his discourtesy, at this time, as a part of an attempt to dishonor him in small but effectual ways. He felt correspondingly depressed.

Miss Josie was sure the efforts of their society were being attended with good results, or, otherwise, Wendell Morrison would not have been there. She was eager to get home to tell her mother the good news. Together they rejoiced, and wondered why Thaddeus was not as exultant as they.

"If all our labor for two years past accomplishes nothing more than the reforming of Wendell Morrison, I shall be amply repaid," Miss Josie said, with animation, and then asked, "Don't you think so, Thad?"

"Indeed that would be a great work," he said, smiling.

There was corresponding joy at Mrs. Jessup's home. Wendell had praised the program in

unstinted terms, and especially the part Jennie had taken.

“Wendell is to speak next time,” Jennie said, when talking the matter over with her mother. “Think of that! A year ago he could not be induced even to attend the meetings. Now, he is to be one of our speakers.”

Wendell was delighted with the outcome of that night's work. He started to enlist his cousin Jennie's sympathy and help, intending thereby to pave his way into Josie's favor; but at one leap he found himself firmly planted on the very ground he expected to reach only after tedious and difficult approaches.

XV.

A PLEASANT PRISON.

MR. CHARLES CHRISTIE loved fast horses, and found great pleasure in riding behind them; but his indulgence in such enjoyment had always been at the expense and whim of his many friends who drove swift roadsters.

He finally concluded to own a rapid traveler himself, and at once purchased the finest turnout he could buy in Brambleville, and set about finding a horse to match his buggy and his idea of what a man of his position should own.

“I want something—ha! ha!—that will—O! ah!—pass everything—ha! ha!—on the road. I do n’t often drive—ha! ha!—but when I do, I want to *go*—ha! ha!” he said, confidentially and enthusiastically, to Simon Hunter, when consulting him.

“Let me dell you, Choles,” said Simon, looking wise, “id is more imbordend to koom bawk than to go. Ged a horse dat will bring you bawk.”

“I see—ah! O!—I see, Simon! You—ha! ha!—are alluding to runaways—ha! ha! Well, now, Simon—ah! O!—I calculate that I can

ride—ha! ha!—as fast as any horse can go. Ha! ha!”

“But, Charlie,” said Captain Thompson, who had just stepped into Simon’s store, “a few broken ribs, do n’t you know, is pretty big price to pay, do n’t you know, for a ride behind a two-forty horse, do n’t you know? Slow, but sure, do n’t you know, is good motto for pleasure-riding, do n’t you know?”

But Charlie was not to be frightened out of his purpose to have a horse that would pass everything on the road.

He found what he wanted. He bought it of a traveling band of Gypsies! The next afternoon he had the horse brought out for a trial drive. The buggy was just from the shop, and glistened in paint and varnish. The harness was new, and silver-tipped. The whip was new. The driving-cap, the driving-gloves, and the driver—Charlie himself—were all new.

Captain Thompson and Simon Hunter were present to see Charlie off, but both declined an invitation to ride with him.

“There is one thing, do n’t you know, Charlie, that you need to make your turnout complete, do n’t you know, and you had better get it right away, do n’t you know, before the new wears off, do n’t you know?”

“Ah! O! what’s that? Ha! ha!” tucking

the robes under his legs, and picking up the lines.

“A wife, Charlie.”

“Ah! O! Well—ha! ha!—may be the turnout will help to get her. Ha! ha!”

The next instant, at the word, the horse was off in a rapid trot. When he turned the corner of the first block, his pace quickened to a run, and Charlie's friends hurried to the corner to see what was to be the result. They were in time to catch a glimpse of the buggy-top as it disappeared down the street, and saw men standing on boxes and climbing into wagons to watch the flight of Charlie's fast horse.

He passed everything on the road for two miles, and tried to pass a walnut-tree that stood where two roads crossed, but failed, and left Charlie and the buggy in a heap, both badly damaged.

Three broken ribs, a sprained arm, a scalp-wound, and innumerable bruises, were Charles Christie's list of hurts, to which ought to be added shattered confidence and crushed hopes; for the two last named were the most serious of all.

Simon Hunter called to see his friend as soon as he heard he was at home undergoing surgical treatment, arriving just as the doctor was departing.

“Bretty bad hurt, Charlie, eh?”

"Seems so, Simon," feebly, and with many a groan.

"You haf blenty dime now to read up on art of driving, eh?"

"Do n't want to know."

"Eggsguse me, Charlie; you must let me haf my liddle jokes."

"All right, Simon. You must joke for both of us. I can't.

"Come, come, Charlie! You haf lots to be glad about."

"Do n't know. Buggy gone; horse gone; three ribs gone. Drat the luck!"

"Suppose you haf had your wife with you, Charlie? Think of that once!"

"If I had had a wife, I would n't have got the buggy, nor these hurts," groaning fearfully.

"Take the advice of a friend and brother, and get a wife, Charlie. Who is going to care for you now? Your mother? May be; but she is not a wife."

"Better get well first," sighing sadly, said the injured man.

"Delays are dangerous, Charlie. Better swap one of your broken ribs for a wife, eh?"

"Simon, do you think any woman on earth would even so much as look at me in this condition—one eye shut, head in bandages, arm in

sling, face swelled, body black and blue? Simon, you are a fool! Ha! ha!”

“Dere, I will go. Dat is all I waited for. You will get well now. I shust wanted to hear dat laugh. ‘Richard’s himself again,’ as it were. Well, so long! I will see you again before beddime. You know all you haf to do is to send for Simon, if you haf not all you want.”

“Good-bye, Simon!”

Mr. Christie’s really elegant home was next to that of Mr. Lycurgus Lysander’s, just beyond which was Judge Tracy’s. The next house to Mr. Christie’s was that of Simon Hunter’s. With such surroundings he was not in danger of being neglected. His mother presided over his home with stately grace, and was wondrous kind; but very quiet and sad in manner and conversation. Her son inherited his vivacity from his father, and his tenderness from his mother.

“May I see Mr. Christie?”

“Yes, dear,” said Mrs. Christie, rising to meet Miss Edith Lysander, as she was shown into her room. “Come with me. He will be delighted to see you.”

The two ascended the stairs where Mr. Christie lay in his spacious and richly furnished apartment.

“Miss Edith!” he exclaimed, “I am—ah!

O!—quite honored—ha! ha! ha! But see—ha! ha!—my right arm is in this sling, and—ah! O!—I must give you my left hand—ha! ha! ha!”

“I am glad you have a hand left to give me, Mr. Christie. I am so—”

“Very good! Very good! Quite good, indeed—ha! ha! Miss Edith, I did not know—ah! O!—you were given to puns—ha! ha! ha!”

“I beg your pardon, Mr. Christie. The last thing I should think of doing is to make a pun intentionally in the presence of suffering.”

“You are quite excusable, Miss Edith—ah! O!—for I assure you I am not suffering—ha! ha! Indeed, I feel quite comfortable.”

“Does your head hurt you, Mr. Christie?” and Edith innocently and very tenderly laid her soft, warm palm on the one spot on his forehead not covered with bandages, Mrs. Christie the meantime exploring beneath the covers to see that the support for his arm was in proper place.

“No!—yes!—that is, sometimes; but not just at this particular minute—ha! ha! I think it will before very long—ah! O!”

Mr. Christie had never spent a whole day in bed as an invalid since he was a child, and all this nursing and tender care was new and very delightful to him. He was not very particular whether he recovered rapidly or not.

“Is there anything I could do for you, Mr. Christie? Mamma says you were *so* kind to papa when he had the fever. We all are *so* glad we can repay you now, in a little measure. Of course, we are sorry you are hurt, and all that, and the buggy was right new, too; but if you had to be hurt, why we are glad it happened here, and not when you were on your vacation trip; for then you would have to go to those dismal hospitals. Now, if you think of anything I could do for you, let me know. Mamma says we must not neglect you a minute, for papa’s sake.”

“It is very kind of your mamma to send you, and very kind of you to come.”

“Please do not mention it. It is nothing. It is a pleasure to take care of our friends. Now, what can I do for you?”

“I think he ought to sleep all he can,” said Mrs. Christie, softly, and with the faintest smile.

“O!” said Miss Edith, stopping her lips with a finger pressed tight against them, and arose as if to withdraw at once.

Mr. Christie heard the remark, and noted Edith’s movement with alarm.

“I think so, too,” he replied, not wishing to contradict his mother, nor to discredit her judgment. “I generally read myself to sleep; but I can not do that now.”

“Do you think I could read you to sleep, Mr. Christie?”

“You—ah! O!—might try—ha! ha! ha!—Miss Edith. Nobody has ever tried yet—ha! ha!

“I shall be only too happy! What shall I read?”

“Would you mind reading the last number of the *Pharmaceutical Review*? It is—ah! O!—rather heavy reading, and has a—ah! O!—a druggy air—ha! ha! ha!—and ought to have a soporific effect—ha! ha! ha!”

“O, Mr. Christie! how can I ever pronounce all those hard names?”

“I can pronounce them for you, Miss Edith—ha! ha! ha!”

“Then you will never go to sleep, if you have to stay awake to pronounce the names for me!”

“Well, take something else—ha! ha! The *Congressional Record* is there. You might read some speeches—ha! ha!—on removing duty from quinine.”

“No; let me try the *Pharmaceutical Review*. It will be too funny to learn to pronounce those horrid names. You will not mind staying awake a little while to pronounce them for me, will you, Mr. Christie?”

“No, Miss Edith—ha! ha! ha!—I dare say you will need but little help.”

“Thank you!” drawing a chair near to the

bedside. "But what will you do, Mrs. Christie? Listen?"

"Yes; but down-stairs, dearie. If Charlie needs anything, just tap the bell, and I will come up."

"Why can not I get it for him?"

"I am going to sleep—ha! ha! ha!—mother, and will not need anything—ha! ha! ha!"

Mrs. Christie smiled softly, and quietly went below stairs.

Edith spread the *Review* in her lap, leaned over it, and commenced to read the first article on the editorial pages, the meanwhile toying with the charm that hung from her necklace. Mr. Christie had known Edith from her girlhood days; but he had not before noticed how womanly she had become in appearance, though retaining the artlessness of her younger days. As she read the *Review* editorials aloud, he silently read her face and studied the character so plainly described thereon.

"What does that mean, Mr. Christie?" Edith asked, looking up suddenly.

"Why—ah! O! ha! ha! ha!—Miss Edith, I beg pardon; but I really did not hear—ah! O!—that is, I was thinking of something else."

"Now, listen!" and she read the sentence again.

“Well—ah! O!—the plain English of that is that a druggist’s life is not a happy one!”

“But is n’t it?”

“Some druggists—ah! O! ha! ha!—are never satisfied with what they have. But—ah! O!—Miss Edith—ha! ha!—that’s not *me!*”

“I should think not!” with wide-open surprise. “You have everything to make one happy, Mr. Christie.”

“Not everything, Miss Edith,” soberly.

“No; not a horse or buggy!”

“Now, that is—ah! O!—mean—ha! ha!—Miss Edith, considering my present state—ha! ha!”

“Well, let me finish this editorial. I declare! I am beginning to get interested in drugs and druggists myself!” Then she read on just as if she had not sent an arrow straight to Mr. Christie’s heart—an arrow that he did not care to draw out, but which actually made him think less of his bodily hurts. Did she mean to say *that?* or was it one of her artless outbursts of sincerity?

When she closed the *Review*, and glanced at the patient, his eyes were shut, and he was breathing regularly and quietly. She looked at him a minute, and then said softly, inquiringly:

“Asleep?”

Not a muscle moved, but he was not asleep.

He was feigning sleep; for he did not wish to weary the reader the first day, and did not want her to think her labors were in vain. He heard the soft swish of her dress as she arose and tip-toed out of the room. He heard her say to his mother, in the hall down-stairs, as she paused in the open door way.

“He seemed to enjoy it. I will come again to-morrow.”

Then he went to sleep. His last wish was that he might not awaken at all until to-morrow.

XVI.

BITTER-SWEET.

THE Temperance Society could not do otherwise than indorse the invitation Miss Josie had given Mr. Morrison to address the next assembly of the workers and friends of the cause. They had no desire to do otherwise.

The *Banner* always gave prominence to announcements of meetings of the Temperance Society, and in every way advertised the speakers. No exception was made in this case; but the editor was sure that Morrison was insincere in his attitude, though he could not decide what motive prompted him.

Miss Josie was entirely free of suspicion of insincerity, and Jennie Jessup was confident that a great reformation in her cousin was at hand. The one out of pure philanthropy, the other out of pure love, rejoiced that he was to address the assembly, and held frequent conferences to perfect plans for leading the young legislator into hearty espousals of their principles and faithful observance of their practices.

“You can influence him as no other person can, Josie,” said Jessie, as they were discussing the matter at Josie’s home.

"I do not know," she replied, hesitatingly and thoughtfully, at the same time flushing slightly at the compliment paid her persuasive powers by Jennie.

"I am sure you can. He has spoken lately to me in such warm terms of admiration for you that I *know* you can do more to bring him out on our side than any one else, or all of us put together."

"Do you *really* think so?" Josie asked eagerly, looking up, the slight flush deepening to a bright coloring, that made her lovely face all the lovelier in its softness and radiancy. Jennie's quick eye caught this change, and she was encouraged thereby to press the case to its utmost.

"If he *is* my cousin, Josie, you must agree with me that he is brilliant, entertaining, very gifted, and destined to exert a great influence with men. If that influence can only be directed toward sobriety and other good causes, what a blessing his life may be, and whoever saves him from drunkenness and a wrong life, saves scores of others through him; perhaps hundreds; may be thousands!"

For a little while Josie had been oblivious to Jennie's presence, and did not really hear; or, if hearing, did not comprehend what she had just said. Josie was dwelling on the words first

spoken: "Lately he has spoken in such warm terms of admiration of you." She was flattered. Thaddeus loved her devotedly. She was sure of that. She loved him fondly. There was no doubting that. But here was another soul turning toward her, praising her, and waiting to be led by her. He was Thad's enemy and rival. That she knew; but why might she not become a peacemaker and unite their energies instead of permitting them to waste their strength fighting each other? Could she not prove her devotion to Thad by making friends with Wendell, and using him for Thad's advancement? It looked as if she could. She was dreaming of this when Jennie, who had waited a minute or more for her to reply, said, pleadingly:

"Will you not undertake the task?"

"I beg pardon, Jennie, I was lost in reverie. What did you say?"

"Will you not undertake to win Wendell over to our side? He is on *your* side already," she said, with a little laugh, and an expression of eyes and tone that pleased Josie greatly.

"Yes," she said, meditatively, "if you think I can do any good. But I undertake it unwillingly. Mr. Morrison is not a congenial companion. His tastes are so different from mine in every way." This she said more to herself than to Jennie.

“O! that is because you do not know him. At heart he is royally good. You know him only as a public man. Just wait until you know the private man. Then you will change your mind.”

“Perhaps!” said Josie, with a bright gleam of pleasure at the thought of the reformation to be wrought by her influence.

After a little while, having completed arrangements for the next assembly, Jennie said:

“Does Wendell visit here?”

“O no; only to see father on business.”

“Excuse me, Josie; but I am *so* anxious about him that I may seem impertinent. Would you object if I should bring him up some night for a call? He comes to our house two or three times a week now.”

“I should be too happy to have him come—with you.”

“When?”

“Any night—except—no, any night. I have no engagements for this week.”

“Wednesday night?”

“Yes—Wednesday night—or Thursday, if it makes no difference,” Josie said, remembering that Wednesday was reserved for Thaddeus. But then Thaddeus need not interfere in her reform work. She would sacrifice *her* preferences to her work; why should not he?

“Wendell generally comes down to our house on Wednesday night,” said Jennie, “and I will send him a note that we are to spend the evening here.”

“Very well.”

When Wendell received Jennie’s note, he read it hastily, not giving due attention to the words used, and rushed at once to the conclusion that he was to call on Josie at her suggestion, and not by arrangement made by his cousin Jennie, and forthwith fell to congratulating himself on the easy marches he was making to the citadel he was intending to capture. He gave no credit to his cousin for her part in the work, but arrogated to himself all praise for his captivating manner—when he set his heart to it!

Miss Josie was ill at ease after Jennie left. She doubted the policy of having Thaddeus meet Wendell in her parlor the first night the latter should call. It would be better to excuse herself to Thaddeus, and receive and entertain Jennie and Wendell alone. So she sent a note to him, saying:

“MY DEAR THADDEUS,—Will you excuse me from the engagement for Wednesday night? I will explain why, sometime; but do not ask me. Let me take my own time about it. Come down Thursday night, and Friday night, and even Saturday night, to make up for Wednesday night.

“JOSIE.”

Thaddeus read the note with real sorrow. He had counted much on the Wednesday night visit. His heart leaped in joy at the cordial invitation to call three successive evenings, but sank again when he recalled that every night had important business engagements that could not be put aside.

But, of course, he would excuse Josie. Why should n't he? She had never before made such a request. It was not unreasonable. The note he sent in reply was warm, regretful, submissive, and loving. It touched Josie's heart, and made her wish she had not consented to receive Wendell's call.

Wednesday afternoon, Wendell was in the *Banner* office, reading the city exchanges which had come on the late train. To take the best seat in the office, to appropriate the latest and brightest exchanges for first perusal, and to read aloud some striking sentence and give an oral comment for Thad's enlightenment, had become so common with Wendell that the young editor had ceased to chafe under such unwarranted treatment, and quietly submitted to the intrusion and the annoyance. However coolly Wendell had acted toward Thad at public meetings or elsewhere, however insolently he had talked to him in the presence of others, or however maliciously he had talked about him in his ab-

sence, he never failed to make his daily call at the *Banner* office to read the papers, and to leave to be printed some item complimentary to himself.

“Hello! here is a good one!”

So saying, Wendell dropped his feet from the editor's desk, picked up the editor's pen, and, not seeing any paper near by, thrust his hand into his coat-pocket, and brought up his cousin Jennie's note telling him of the engagement at Miss Josie's home. Turning the sheet over, he wrote an item for the *Banner* on the blank side, put a paper-weight on it, and soon after went out of the office, leaving the item for the editor's inspection. He read it, and was about to hand it out for copy, when he noticed the writing on the other side, and indifferently turned it over to see what it was. He read in amazement. He could scarcely believe his eyes. Then it was to meet Wendell that Josie had canceled her engagement for Wednesday night! He was deeply wounded. He was very angry at himself and also at Josie. His impulse was to tear the sheet of note-paper into pieces, and toss them into the waste-basket. He concluded, instead, to rewrite the item for the printers, and to keep the note for future use. He put it away in a drawer, and resumed his duties with a heavy heart.

Just before he went home that evening he re-read the note, and discerned, what he had not noticed before, that Miss Jennie clearly stated that the engagement was at her solicitation. Then he was ashamed of himself for doubting Josie for one second. He was ashamed of himself for flying into a passion over such a small affair. He saw how discreetly and kindly Josie had acted; for he certainly would not be happy in Wendell's presence in Judge Tracy's parlor. He went home comforted. He admired Josie more than ever. He could trust her now to do the right thing at all times. He was proud of her. She was a woman of rare tact. He loved her. She had proved herself so tender of his feelings, and had sacrificed her pleasure to his peace of mind. Those were the thoughts that made his walk toward home bright and cheerful.

He laughed aloud as he passed through the gate opening into his own door-yard. He would, just for a joke, next week, ask Josie to excuse *him* from his engagement, and would then spend the evening with Miss Jennie Jessup. That would make them even, and both would have something to tease the other about. Happy thought!

down again—to-morrow night perhaps. Who is in there?"

"Thad Throckmorton."

"Has n't been here lately, has he?"

"No, not for weeks."

"That settles it, auntie. Thad is a splendid fellow. I would not break in on Jennie to-night for a fortune. Do not tell her I was here."

Wendell slipped softly to the curtains that separated the parlors, and peeped in, his aunt looking in with him. Then he bowed himself out, saying under his breath, for the music had ceased: "H-s-h! Not a word, auntie! Will come down again soon. Do not tell her. Thad's a good fellow. Am glad he likes Jennie."

Before he reached the front gate the piano rang out an interlude, and the last he heard of Jennie and Thad, as he walked rather hurriedly away, was a strain of a duet they were singing.

A half-hour later, Wendell stood ringing the bell at Judge Tracy's door.

"No; I will answer the bell," said Josie, flying down the stairs, and intercepting the maid in the hallway. She was sure Thad had changed his plans, and had come anyway, though late.

"May I have the pleasure?" said Wendell, bowing low, and smiling blandly, as he paused a moment on the threshold.

"O!" gasped Josie, when she saw who the caller was, and pressed both hands close over her heart. "I thought—pray come in, Mr. Morrison. Do, please, excuse my blundering. I was not expecting you."

"Some one else, then?" said Wendell, in a tone of offended dignity, yet with courteous humility—a manner and a tone of which he was complete master.

For a moment Josie was confused, but only for a moment, recalling instantly that she was not looking for Thad, and answered composedly:

"No one else, Mr. Morrison; nor was I expecting you."

"I hope I do not intrude?"

"By no means, Mr. Morrison. You must excuse my blundering. Is—is your mother quite well?"

"Quite, Miss Josie. I trust Mrs. Tracy is in good health?"

"She is, thank you!"

For some reason both felt constrained, and the atmosphere was icy. Josie regretted this; for she was truly desirous of reaching Wendell, and accomplishing his reformation. He was sorry; for he had counted on a cordial reception, and had felt sure of making a grand march toward the conquest of Miss Josie's heart. He rallied his retreating confidence, and essayed a

flank movement. So he said abruptly, but with apparent earnestness and sincerity :

“You can not imagine, Miss Josie, how much interest I feel in the success of your temperance movement.”

“I am glad to hear you say that. Of course, we are all so grateful to you for your address the other night. At our regular meeting we will adopt a resolution of thanks, and will send you an engrossed copy ; but I must say to you personally how your words stirred my soul !”

“You honor me above my deserts, Miss Josie. I am not insensible to the honor conferred on me by your invitation, and am truly glad that my efforts were appreciated.”

“Indeed they were. Our cause has taken on fresh vigor since then. I am quite sure you have done us a world of good.”

“Can you sing that song for me to-night, Miss Josie, that you sang then ?”

“If you desire it,” she said, promptly.

“I certainly do. May I turn the music for you ?”

“Thanks !”

Miss Josie was delighted beyond measure at this invitation. Her heart was in a flutter, and the hot blood mounted to her face, and she cast a wistful glance at Wendell as he stood beside her. She had selected and sung that song at

the assembly for his especial benefit, hoping it would touch his heart; and now he asked her to sing it again! It had surely been a successful venture. What would Thad say when he knew of her victory? These thoughts inspired her with hope, and thrilled her soul with pleasure. Wendell noted her animation, her evident happiness at being asked to sing for him, and he counted the movement a fortunate one. She was not as hard to capture as he had supposed. But, then, he was a skillful maneuverer. So he thought, and he smiled appreciatively upon the fair singer. He did not ask her to sing again; but the remainder of the evening devoted himself to entertaining her, relating amusing episodes in his legislative life, describing famous men he had met, and manifesting an interest in the success of moral reform movements that surprised and gladdened Josie.

"I do not remember when I spent a more delightful evening, Miss Josie," he said, rising to go.

"I am sure the enjoyment has been mutual," she said, earnestly.

"I am not sorry now that a disappointment led to my coming here, though to confess the truth I did not leave home to come here."

"So *I* am second choice," she said, archly.

"Do not put it that way, Miss Josie. You

see, I went down to see Jennie Jessup to-night, but found Mr. Throckmorton was there; and as they were having such a fine time singing together, I would not let auntie tell them I was there. Not knowing just how to put in the evening, I ventured to come here. But, Miss Josie, you must know if my last call here had not been so agreeable I should not have even *thought* of coming to-night."

"Thanks," she said, calmly, though her heart was in a tumult.

When he had gone, she went to her own room, and was disconsolate. She resolutely resolved to keep her wounded heart hidden from Thad. She almost lost all desire for Wendell's reformation. It had already cost her much. Could she afford the entire expense? There was one consolation, however: Wendell had never before shown any preference for any lady in that city, and she had brought him to her as a suitor. She would encourage him just enough to hold him near her until her object was accomplished. That would annoy Thaddeus, perhaps; but then had he not given her liberty to do that by breaking an engagement with her to call on Jennie Jessup? After all, it might be convenient to have Thad less attentive for a while. Comforted, she fell asleep, and dreamed away the night.

At Jennie's home, the hours sped rapidly. The evening was devoted entirely to music.

"I have it now!" Jennie exclaimed, enthusiastically, after a particularly happy rendering of two parts of a quartet song. "Let us have a select quartet! You, Wendell, Josie and I. That would be just too splendid!"

Thaddeus smiled, and seemed to be looking for another song.

"We are so anxious about Wendell," Jennie continued, softly thrumming the piano keys with one hand, "and I know it would do him good to go with our set."

"But would he?" Thad asked, with but little show of interest.

"Certainly. He is trying to reform, I am sure. Josie has great influence with him—more than any one."

Thaddeus sighed heavily, and sank into a chair and drifted off into a reverie, as he was so wont to do.

Jennie was busy with her own thoughts, and did not notice his abstraction for a little while. Then she said:

"Will you agree to it?"

"O, of course, if the others will."

"And may I arrange for the quartet, if I can?"

"I do n't think you can; but I am in favor

of it," Thad said, with an attempt at indifference.

"Yes I can. I will begin right now. You come down Friday night. Will you?"

"Yes," said Thad. "Then what?"

"I will ask cousin Wendell to bring Josie down, and after a social hour we will spring the matter on them. They could hardly object, could they, when you and I both insist?"

Thaddeus trembled, and his heart stood still. "*They* could not object"—Wendell and Josie—he said, over to himself. "You and I insist"—Jennie and Thaddeus. What fate was linking their names like that?

"Could they?" she asked again, after waiting a minute for him to reply.

"O, of course not," he answered, springing up and looking at his watch. "Eleven o'clock! Is it possible!"

"That is early," said Jennie, brightly.

"Why did I so forget myself?" Thaddeus was talking to himself more than to Jennie, and thinking of Josie rather than of his hostess.

"I hope I may have some blame for that," Jennie said, laughingly.

"You have certainly beguiled me into staying an hour longer than I should."

Thaddeus went home sadly, repenting at every step that he had thus retaliated upon Josie.

XVIII.

THE PRAYER-MEETING.

A MOST unexpected occurrence, trivial in appearance, but important in results, must be recorded here.

Rev. Archibald Outwright had a way of his own in conducting the affairs of the Church of which he was pastor. He prided himself on the spirit and general excellence of the social meetings, especially prayer service, and never let pass an opportunity to create new interest in that assembly of the flock. In pursuance of this purpose, he called at the office of Tracy & Morrison to invite the young lawyer to come to prayer-meeting. Could anything be more audacious? Yes; the inviting of Mr. Morrison to address the temperance rally! That had been successful; and why not this? That had been brought about by the young people. Why might not a pastor achieve a similar victory? With a courage that many could never summon, Mr. Outwright entered the lawyer's office early one morning, and, finding him alone, proceeded at once to make his errand known, encouraged by the hearty greeting extended him. It was easy for Wendell to be hearty in his

friendship. It was a cultivated grace—a part of his trade.

“Why, my dear Mr. Outwright! Is this not early for a clergyman to be abroad? I had an idea that, except on rare occasions, they indulged in large measures of ‘tired nature’s sweet restorer.’ But I am royally glad to see you! How are you, this bright morning?”

“Quite well, I thank you. No, it is not unusually early for me to be out; but, if it were, this would be ‘a rare occasion’ which would justify my early call. I have come to ask you to be present at prayer-meeting to-night.”

“What!” Wendell said in unfeigned astonishment; “come to ask *me* to attend prayer-meeting! Mr. Outwright, you surely are not ‘guying’ me, as the boys say?”

“Not by any means. I am in earnest. Will you come to-night?”

“Well, well!” Wendell said, meditatively. And then he lifted his eyes to Mr. Outwright’s and added: “You are the first man that ever invited me to such a place; but I have scores of invitations to go to the bad. I hardly know what to say. I would do almost anything to please *you*, Mr. Outwright, for I have always considered you my friend; but this is so unusual a request I am not prepared to answer at once. I will take it under advisement.”

“Do nothing of the kind,” said the minister, earnestly, at the same time putting his hand upon Wendell’s shoulder in a respectfully familiar style, peculiar to himself. “It is a little thing I ask you to do. Say yes or no now, and send me on my way rejoicing; for I know you will say yes.”

“But you must know, Mr. Outwright, that I have no faith in religion—such as you teach. I believe in being as honest as one can, and not get swindled out of everything he has; I believe in helping the poor, and all that; but as to praying and singing—why, somehow, I don’t take to it like some people.”

“Then you say no?” Mr. Outwright asked, in a tone that clearly indicated his regret at the decision.

“Not exactly; but I wanted to warn you that if I should say ‘yes,’ it would be to accommodate you, and not to please myself.”

“I understand that; I ask it as a personal favor—*this* time; some other time I might urge other considerations.”

“Well, then, to please you”—stopping to weigh well his decision—“I will come; provided, I can get some one to come with me—some one who is as much a stranger there as I will be—to keep me company, you know.”

“Good!” Mr. Outwright exclaimed, “I wish

I had a hundred and fifty men like you in the Church; men who will not only come themselves, but who will bring some one for company. Good! Be sure to bring a companion. Good-bye!"

In an instant Mr. Outwright was out of the door, rejoicing in his heart over the success of that venture.

The young politician sat in his office after the minister left him, smiling over the brightness of his future prospects. Rapidly, very rapidly, his mind had wrought out a scheme while Mr. Outwright was awaiting his decision. With his usual quickness, he saw the end from the beginning, and decided accordingly.

"What a surprise that will be for her!" he said aloud, as he turned to his desk to write a note to Miss Tracy. "But I will not let it be the last. One surprise shall follow another until the last great surprise, when she finds herself my wife, and I her lord. Then, *then* I will go and come as *I* please."

He wrote, asking her to go with him to prayer-meeting.

When Miss Tracy received the note, and had read it once, she held it open in her hand, and thoughtfully considered its request.

To prayer-meeting? Why, she rarely went herself! To prayer-meeting with Wendell Mor-

risson? What would Thaddeus think? What would people say?

She turned to the note, and read it again. There was no reference to his recent call at her house; but perhaps, after all, something she said then had led him to believe she was not only a member of the Church, but a regular attendant on all its services. It would not be safe for her to disappoint him just now, when she was so earnestly endeavoring to reclaim him from the use of intoxicants! So she read the note a third time, and in new light. Hastily writing a note of acceptance, she dispatched it by the messenger who had brought Wendell's request, and felt she had done a noble act—had sacrificed herself and Thaddeus, too, on the altar of duty.

Encouraged by his signal success in persuading the young lawyer to promise to attend prayer-meeting, Mr. Outwright went immediately to see the editor of the *Banner*, counting that there he could not fail, and was certain of adding at least two persons to the members who would be at Church that night.

“As usual, working for life!” he said, closing behind him the door of the editor's office, where Thaddeus was driving his pencil across the pages of soft paper as if only an hour remained for a whole day's work.

“Correct!” he said, glancing up at the speaker, and then continuing his work. “Have a seat;” and on the pencil dashed. “Be done in a minute,” he added, and wrote on. “The boys are nearly out of copy,” he explained a minute later, as he finished the page and handed a lot of copy to the foreman.

“In that case I will tarry but a minute. By the way, did you know this is prayer-meeting night?”

Thaddeus laughed, and said: “So it is! Well, I have been a little negligent for some weeks, I confess; but I will turn over a new leaf this very day, pastor, and will keep it turned right along. That sermon of yours last Sunday morning stirred me up wonderfully. Yes, I will be there, if nothing happens to prevent.”

“Good! Good! Well, good-morning! I will look for you.”

“You may,” Thaddeus added, earnestly. “But say!” he called, as Mr. Outwright was closing the door, after he passed out.

“Well?” he asked, peeping through the door, as he held it ajar.

“I suppose you will not object if I bring somebody with me?”

“Not I! *Do* bring somebody; bring two!”

“That I will,” Thaddeus called to him as he

closed the door. And so he did, though no one could have guessed who the two would be. Thaddeus intended to call for Miss Josie, never doubting her certain acceptance of his invitation.

Mr. Outwright was so pleased over his success so far that he was just in the mood to push his work to the utmost. With this thought in mind, he entered Mr. Christie's drugstore to make a trifling purchase, and was waited on by Mr. Christie himself. As no one was present besides the two, Mr. Outwright said, with a peculiar sidelong glance of mingled hope and fear, brightened by a smile of kindness that always foiled resentment:

"Mr. Christie, there is one place in Brambleville you do not know much about."

"Well, yes—ha! ha!—Mr. Outwright—ha! ha!—I am quite sure—O! ah!—ha! ha!—there are many places in Brambleville—ah!—that I do n't know much about—ha! ha!—but—O! ah!—ha! ha!—I can not guess which one—O! ha! ha!—you refer to now."

"I mean prayer-meeting."

"Well, that *is* a good one, of course. O! ha! ha! I do n't know much about that place—ha! ha!—but, Mr. Outwright, my mother—O! ha! ha!—my mother—ha! ha!—'tends to that for us both. Ha! ha!"

“Yes, your mother comes regularly. That is why I think you ought to come occasionally. Come to-night, just to please me—and your mother.”

“I—ah!—ha! ha!—well, I—I—perhaps—ha! ha!—I will, just to please you—ha! ha!—and—my mother.”

“Thank you! I will look for you. Good-day!” and the minister was gone, seeking some other person to invite to prayer-meeting.

His work in that direction was abundantly successful, as the attendance that night demonstrated.

There was no doubt in Thaddeus's mind that Miss Josie would go with him to prayer-meeting if he should ask her, and he intended to ask her before he went home for dinner. With this thought in view he turned to his work with enthusiasm, after the minister left, and put so much vigor and push into his labor that he soon saw a mass of “copy” pile up on his desk, and found himself at liberty to make an informal call at Judge Tracy's an hour or more before noon.

Messenger-boys in Brambleville were not regularly employed as such, but were picked up here and there from among the unengaged, wherever the patron could find one willing to perform the service required. It was such a

one as this that Thaddeus saw coming out of the gate at Judge Tracy's as he approached. They passed a short distance from the entrance to the judge's home, and when Thaddeus was about to open the gate, he saw at his feet a sealed note. He picked it up, glanced at the address, recognized the handwriting, and for a moment was transfixed with astonishment and filled with intensest indignation; for in the well-known, almost perfect, and smoothly-flowing chirography of Miss Josie's pen, was the name of Wendell Morrison. A moment only he hesitated; a moment only was he indignant; a moment only did he give place to wrathful thoughts,—the next, he was calm, tolerant, and decided. Hurrying after the boy, he delivered the note to him; rebuked him gently for his carelessness; and told him when he had given the message to Mr. Morrison, to come to his office for another, to be taken to Mrs. Jessup's. Would he?

“'Course,” he answered briefly; for he was concerned in something more important than carrying notes, though that was desirable work just then, as he was endeavoring to save up money enough to go to the next show, already advertised to appear in Brambleville; and at once the barefooted and frowsy-headed volunteer messenger-boy commenced to ply the young

editor with questions, and to flood him with information gained from his street companions, winding up, as they reached the *Banner* office, with a pointed question :

“Say, now, ef I ’d carry notes for yo’ ev’ry day an’ ev’ry day, would yo’ give me tick’s to ev’ry blamed show thet cums ’long? ’Cause the boys *all* say you gits comp’s to ev’rything, an’ *I* never see yo’ ter nun uv ’em.”

“I do not have many notes to carry,” Thaddeus said, laughing; “and I am afraid tickets to shows will not be good for you.”

As he spoke, he put his hand on the boy’s head, and turned his face upward toward his own. The happy expression faded from the fair face, and the blue eyes took on a deeper hue, as a sense of disappointment filled the childish heart. With an effort to be calm, accompanied by a perceptible swallowing of grief, the boy stood for a second like a statue. Thaddeus’s heart was touched. Thinking rapidly what to say or do, his face brightened, and the sunshine of his heart fell upon the soul of the child, and made his eyes shine like a June sky. He said :

“After you take my note, I will pay you, and will give you a ticket to a concert at the church next week, if you will go to a Church entertainment.”

“Golly! Will I go? I’ll go!”

Away he ran, or rather jumped; for his feet scarcely touched the pavement as he bounded like a rubber-ball along the street. Watching him, Thaddeus forgot for a moment his own disappointment, and stood, smiling after him, one foot on the pavement, the other on the first step of the stairs he was about to mount to reach his office. He was living over the years of his own happy childhood, and wishing all boys might have such a home as his, when Seth Russell touched his arm, having come to his side noiselessly.

“Say!” the old man said, pointing toward the boy, just disappearing in the stairway leading up to Morrison’s office, “whatever you do for that boy will bring blessings on your head. Did you see his eyes? They are his mother’s—a piece of heaven’s own blue. Did you notice his head? It is his father’s, and a skillfuller mechanic never lived than him. Knew ’em both. Both are in God’s home, they say; but I reckon both of ’em are right nigh him that is kind to their Joseph. But, say, Thad, my poor, dear boy, son of my best friend, old Seth’s heart aches for you! You are to be tried as by fire. Never flinch! Be true to yourself, and to the right, and to those who love you. ‘Love with a pure heart, fervently.’ First, let love be

pure; then, fervent. Good-bye! Old Seth has eyes and ears open for those he loves. Good-bye!"

Thaddeus mounted the stairs two steps at once, saying, as he did so: "He *is* an odd fellow, and no mistake."

There were two happy hearts at prayer-meeting that night: The pastor's, because his invitations had so generally been accepted; Mrs. Christie's, because her son had voluntarily accompanied her to the service.

There were two sadly-disturbed souls at prayer-meeting that night: Miss Josie Tracy's, because she was there with Wendell Morrison and Thaddeus was with Jennie Jessup; and Thaddeus Throckmorton's, because of the same unexpected groupings.

Such an assemblage, in its heterogeneousness, never before had appeared in that church, and never afterward. Paths met there, crossed, separated, diverged, and never again on earth escaped the controlling influence of that brief hour and a half in the house of God.

Whose hand brought them there? Whose will sent them away with new and strange thoughts? Who put fire into the heart of the pastor that night, and power into his words? Who dropped the lead into the religious life of one, showing how shallow it was, because it ran

over the shoal of selfishness; and who sounded the life of another, revealing its great depths, because God's providences had every day broken up and carried away the hidden rocks of selfish desire? Who, in one hour, severed bonds, like cords of tow, that were thought to be bands of iron? Who melted, and ran into one mold, hearts that had, until then, been singularly antagonistic? Who, but the One who works out his own designs, whether men assist or resist?

As Thaddeus walked home in deep meditation, after leaving Miss Jennie Jessup and her mother at their door, he met Seth Russell at the corner.

"I was waiting for you, Thad, son of my best beloved friend. 'God is love,' and all he does is for the good of those who trust him. I see he has set your feet in the path that leads to happiness, renown, and wealth. Follow his leadings, though it break your heart. Remember, 'He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.' You are broken-hearted and wounded to-night, son of my best beloved friend. I know. I saw you. Good-night!"

The aged but lithe form disappeared down the street, the white hair and whiter beard blowing about his head and face, like finest silk, in the breeze of that summer night.

XIX.

EXPLANATIONS.

THE next morning, while Jennie Jessup was engaged in her piano practice, her mother came in, and, sitting down with broom in hand and sweeping-cap on, said, with emphasis and an air of deep concern :

“Do stop a minute or two, Jennie, and let me know what *you* think. I have my own thoughts, but they may not be right.”

Jennie did not stop at once, but touched the keys very softly while her mother was speaking, and then went on to the end of the score she was playing ; but at the same time answered her mother :

“One, two, three, four—about what, mother? One and two, and three and four, and—in a minute, mother. One, and a two, and a three, and a four, and a—just as soon as I get this right once. One and two, and three and four. There! Now, what, mother?” she said, turning round on the stool to face Mrs. Jessup.

“Well, about prayer-meeting last night. I was never so wrought up in my life,” the mother said, sweeping away imaginary dust from about her chair.



“Now, what, mother?” she said, turning round on the stool to face Mrs. Jessup.—Page 210.

"It *was* good," Jennie said, folding her arms, and dropping her head meditatively.

"I suppose it was; but that is not what I mean. I mean the people who were there."

"There was a large attendance; but, then, Mr. Outwright knows how to get people out. I think it is his—"

"I do not mean the many, but the *kind* of people who were there, and the way they were there."

"O!" Jennie said, in surprise, lifting her eyes to her mother's.

"Did n't you notice it?"

"Why—not particularly."

"You did n't? I did. Now, there was your cousin Wendell. Nothing has happened in a dozen years to surprise me like that, except his temperance speech that time. Do you know how he happened to come?"

"Mr. Outwright, I suppose."

"Or, Josie Tracy?" Mrs. Jessup added; and, for a few minutes, mother and daughter were silent.

"But another thing, Jennie, puzzled me. How did it happen that Thaddeus came by for you? Now, if it had been anybody else I should have thought nothing of it."

"Why should you anyway, mother? Thaddeus used to come by for me very often."

"But that was a long, long time ago."

"Not so very. We were in the same classes in school, you know."

"And, then, there was Charlie Christie at prayer-meeting. I am expecting the millenium right away now, when such a dry stick as Charlie gets to coming to Church, and such a hard case as Wendell is at prayer-meeting."

"Mother, I do believe you did not hear one word the pastor said," Jennie replied, laughing gayly. "You were absorbed in the people."

"Yes, I heard what he said, right enough; but I *was* worked up by what I saw."

"Well, I thought it was a splendid meeting, and did not pay much attention to the people who were present."

"Except to one," Mrs. Jessup said, significantly.

"What one was that?" Jennie asked, innocently, turning to the piano to put another piece of music on the rack.

"Thaddeus."

"Not much to him, either," she replied, and turned about to face her mother, showing just a little uneasiness at being detained longer from her practice.

"But tell me, Jennie," Mrs. Jessup said, sighing softly, and thumping the floor with the broom, not caring to lift her face to her daugh-

ter's, "are you not afraid to have Thaddeus come back to you? Do you not remember how hard it was to be reconciled to his going away before?"

"Mother," Jennie said, impulsively and with much feeling, though she strove to be calm, "I was young and thoughtless then. I hope a mature mind is more to be trusted than a giddy girl's."

"It is, my daughter, it is; but the heart is seldom ever guided by the judgment."

"If you feel that way," Jennie said, submissively, after a few minutes' reflection, "when he comes to-night I will tell him plainly what you think, and ask him not to call any more."

"When he comes to-night!" Is he coming to-night?" Mrs. Jessup exclaimed, excitedly. "I am sorry," she added, in a quieter tone, resuming her manner of sorrowful concern. "I am *very* sorry. For several reasons I am sorry, and almost as much on his account as on yours."

"What can you mean, mother? You are taking the matter all too seriously. Thaddeus has called once or twice, and has gone to Church with me once, and is to call again. Surely all that is very little; but you speak as though we were engaged, or about to be."

"There are some things I know that you do not, my daughter, and I can not tell you now.

I was glad when he quit coming, though it did so nearly break your heart, and I can not but be sorry to have even the appearance of a renewal of his visits. Will you let me influence you in this, without giving my reasons?"

"Mother," Jennie said, kindly, but firmly. "I am not now the girl I was then. Then I yielded to your wishes; but *now* I feel that I have rights that I must not surrender even to you. I can not retain my self-respect and do that. If you will give me one good reason why I ought not to receive calls or any attention from Thaddeus, I will *gladly* do as you say—for a *good* reason."

Mrs. Jessup did not reply at once. She was undecided what course to take for awhile; but finally determined to make a bold stand, and said:

"There is very serious doubt as to who his parents are!"

"But I thought—" Jennie said, in surprise and alarm.

"Yes, I know what you think; but I can not tell you any more now."

"But why did you not tell me this before?"

"See how it distresses you now. Could you have received it with less remorse when you were in love with him as a 'giddy girl,' to use your own words?"

“But is there any disgrace in not knowing your ancestry?”

“By no means; but the ancestry, if known, might be a disgrace!”

“And might be a great honor!”

“Possibly; but not in this case.”

“Then you know.”

“I have my suspicions.”

“What are they?”

“I can not tell you now. Sometime I may. But have I not given you a good reason for discarding his attentions?”

“No, mother!”

“I am sorry, very sorry, my daughter. You take your own risks.”

Mrs. Jessup arose and went about her work, leaving Jennie with her music; but the hour slipped by without a sound from the instrument, for the player was in no mood to invoke sweet harmonies and rich melodies from its vibrating cords. Memories of other years swept over her soul like a flood, and she felt the touch of thoughts and hopes she had believed were forever dead.

Thaddeus lost no time that same morning in calling on Miss Josie, determined to undo, as far as he could, the wrong of the past few days, and to set himself right in her mind. He was heartily tired of deception, even in the way of

practical joking. He was sure, very sure, he was not prompted by a spirit of jealousy.

“Pardon this call at such an unseasonable, if not unreasonable, hour,” he said, rising to greet Miss Josie as she came into the parlor.

In reply she smiled faintly, extended her hand, and, as she sank into a chair, said: “An early call is better than none;” and so saying echoed the sentiment of her heart.

“Thank you, Josie; that is better than I deserve. But, believe me, I did not stay away because I wanted to. I thought—perhaps you did n’t care.”

“Did you, indeed?” she said, with arching brows.

“Indeed I did; but I have come this morning to say I am sorry if I have given you pain for even an hour. Will you forgive me?”

“I will,” she said calmly, so far as her voice was concerned; but she straightened herself in the chair, clasped her hands tightly, and let them fall heavily on her lap, and Thaddeus noticed a constrained look of peace on her face. Quickly she added: “I will on one condition.”

“What’s that? That I shall never do so again? That’s easy! I promise that with all my heart,” he said, eagerly.

Josie was disconcerted for a moment by his

eagerness; but with a forced smile and uncertain voice she said:

“Not that—but easier—perhaps. That you let me have time to work out a cherished hope—something I have prayed over very earnestly, and feel to be a duty; though, in some respects, an unpleasant one.”

“Certainly!” Thaddeus replied, earnestly. Rising, and walking over to Josie’s chair, he stopped right before her, and was about to take her hand when she put them out of his reach, and said:

“Wait! What would you do to save a soul, Thaddeus?”

“Your soul, Josie? Anything in my power! I should limit myself in no way. I would make *any* sacrifice; endure any affliction!”

“Would you? I believe you would! But I did not put the question right. What do you think *I* ought to do to save a soul?”

Thaddeus was silent, and tried to read the eyes bent so earnestly and heroically on him. But in their clear depths he saw no clue to Josie’s meaning, and he was obliged to say:

“A soul is worth much, Josie; even a world is nothing in comparison. I can not answer that question for you. You must answer it for yourself.”

“So I know; so I have done; my mind is made up. But will you help me?”

“I will, most faithfully and earnestly. What would you have me do?”

“Leave me to myself awhile—until I bid you come again.”

“Josie!” he exclaimed in distress.

“It has cost me a fearful struggle; but I have gained the victory.”

“Josie, you are beside yourself! I can not believe you know what you say!”

“I am not beside myself. I know perfectly well what I am saying.”

“Then will you tell me all the particulars of this sudden and very strange determination.”

“I will. You were at prayer-meeting last night?”

“Yes.”

“You saw me there with—with—Wendell?”

“I am sorry to say, I did.”

“I knew you would be. But except for *me*, Wendell would not have gone. He said so; and he was much interested, and told me he would go often—if I would go with him.”

“The knave!”

“How could you! Remember you have promised me to help! After we came home last night he signed the temperance pledge. I wrote it here with my own hand, and he signed it.”

“And you believe he will keep it?”

“Yes; for he left it with me, and made me write another and sign it myself and give it to him to keep. He said whenever he should look at my pledge he would think of me and his pledge!”

“What else did you pledge?” Thaddeus asked, in such cold and deliberate tones that Josie was startled.

“Nothing; except that I said I would go with him to Church Sunday night. I *do* so want him to hear one of Mr. Outwright’s sermons.”

“Good-bye!”

Before she could utter one word of protest he was gone.

She shuddered at the thought of what he must suffer; but consoled herself with the reflection that she was sacrificing her happiness and his for the uplifting of an immortal soul.

“If need be,” she said aloud, when she had returned to her room, “if need be, I believe I could actually marry Wendell to save him from ruin! Thaddeus, my darling, you do not need any help. You are strong in yourself, while Wendell is weak at one point, though strong everywhere else. He says I am ‘a tower of strength to him!’”

XX.

MR. CHARLES CHRISTIE.

“MISS EDITH, you can scarcely guess—
ha! ha!—how many people have called
to-day—ha! ha!—to say how surprised, or—ah!
—how delighted, if you will—ha! ha!—excuse
the term, to see me at prayer-meeting last
night! And—ha! ha!—I was quite surprised
myself—ha! ha!—and delighted, of *course*—ha!
ha!—to find myself there! I hope—O! ah!—
Miss Edith, you were not wholly displeased
yourself—ha! ha!—to know that I can go to
prayer-meeting occasionally—ha! ha!—when a
sufficient reason is given—ha! ha! Do I pre-
sume—ha! ha!—Miss Edith, on your interest
in the meeting, or—ah!—in me, to suppose you
were pleased.”

“By no means, Mr. Christie! I was really
glad to see you there—for your sake as well as
the meeting’s.”

“Ah! thank you.”

“I was glad to see you so interested in the
services, Mr. Christie, especially in the singing.”

“How could I fail—ha! ha!—Miss Edith, to
be interested in singing—ha! ha!—when—O!

ah!—you contributed so largely—ha! ha!—to its excellence. . What would they do, Miss Edith, without your voice?—ha! ha! I distinguished that—ha! ha!—in the midst of all the others!”

“Thank you, Mr. Christie; but I am sure you give me too much praise. Did you not notice how Miss Jessup and cousin Josie sang? What a beautiful alto Miss Jessup’s is!”

“I did not notice it—O! ah!—of course, I know, in a general way—ha! ha!—Miss Jessup’s voice is fine; but—ha! ha!—not to be mentioned—ha! ha!—if you will pardon me, at the same time—O! ah!—with your own.”

“But is not Mr. Outwright splendid?”

“In what way, Miss Edith? I am not—ha! ha!—very familiar with points of excellence—ha! ha!—in clergymen. Now, if it was—O! ah!—*spiritus frumenti* or *morphia*, or something like that—ha! ha!—I would know.”

“Or horses, Mr. Christie!”

“Spare me, Miss Edith! I am not—ha! ha!—doting on horses at present—ha! ha!—Miss Edith; for—O! ah!—you know, yourself, my feelings on *that* subject.”

“Yes; I know what were your feelings when I helped your mother nurse you through your hurts and breaks.”

“Do you really—ha! ha!—Miss Edith,

know—ha! ha!—my feelings—O! ah!—when you were so kind as to help me through—ha! ha!—those long, dreary hours?”

“And were they dreary, after all? You have told me several times they were not; that you did not mind being shut in!”

“Did I, truly, Miss Edith? O! ah!—then—ha! ha!—I must reaffirm my declaration. It was dreary at times; but—ha! ha!—of course, you could not have known that—ha! ha!—for—O! ah!—you were not there at such times.”

“Do you not drive any more at all, Mr. Christie? I am very fond of driving. I can not get papa to go with me nearly so often as I would like.”

“No, Miss Edith—ha! ha!—I have disposed of my horse. The carriage, you know—ha! ha!—was quite effectually—ha! ha!—disposed of at the time of the mishap. But perhaps I will—O! ah!—find a gentler horse, and then—ha! ha!—but O, by the way, Miss Edith, if you feel perfectly safe in driving, and only lack company, and—ha! ha!—if Mr. Lysander can not take time from his office to go with you—ha! ha!—I should be happy—ha! ha!—to have you—O! ah!—accept me as a substitute—ha! ha!—a very inadequate one, I am sure, but better than none—ha! ha!—if I may be so presumptuous as to say so—ha! ha!”

“O, I am a splendid driver, Mr. Christie! I really believe if I had been with you that time your accident happened, I could have prevented it.”

“Do you, truly? Then I am very sorry I did not—O! ah!—have the pleasure of your company.”

“But if you had n't been hurt, I would not have been called to nurse you, and would never have learned what I did about drugs and druggists' supplies, and would never have learned so many awfully hard names, and—”

“O! ah! Miss Edith, I should have been only too happy to teach you all that without being laid up for six weeks. Ha! ha! I am sure I could teach you now—ha! ha!—much better than when suffering so much from bruises and cuts—ha! ha!—if you care to learn.”

“O, I only learned then to please you! I was to entertain you, you know; and when I saw it pleased you to have me learn, I did it.”

“But it would—ha! ha!—please me now to have you go right on learning. Ha! ha!”

“But you are not sick now, Mr. Christie, and do not need to be humored.”

“I am never—O! ah!—*very* well, Miss Edith—ha! ha!—and—”

“Have you thought of consulting a physician, Mr. Christie? Think of your mother! What

if you should die, and leave her alone in the world?"

"I do think of that, Miss Edith; and—O! ah!—I often think of myself, if she should die, and leave me alone in the world. That would be worse, you must—O! ah!—allow, Miss Edith."

"That would be awful! What would you do, Mr. Christie, if that should happen? Your mother has been with you so long, you would surely miss her greatly."

"Not so very long—ha! ha!—Miss Edith; but I *would* miss her greatly. Ha! ha! I get very miserable sometimes, Miss Edith, thinking about losing her, and—"

"Mr. Christie! I never supposed you were miserable a day in your life. You are always so cheerful and full of humor, always laughing, and—"

"Ah! Miss Edith, you do not know—ha! ha!—how many miserable days I have put in since that accident. Before that time—ha! ha!—I was tolerably contented—ha! ha!—but since then, somehow, I have lost interest in—O! ah!—nearly everything, and time hangs heavy—ha! ha!—on my hands. Now, do you suppose you—"

"Let me sing you a song I learned to-day. That may cheer you."

"Thanks! Do!"

"It is 'The Song that Reached my Heart.' Do you know it?"

"No, I do not. Perhaps it will reach mine, too. Ha! ha! Indeed, of that—O! ah!—I am quite certain, if you sing as you did last night."

"Do you know 'Marguerite,' Mr. Christie?"

"Marguerite who? That is not your friend's name who was here from Kentucky?"

"O no! It is the name of a very popular song."

"O! ah! I see! Ha! ha! No, I do not know 'Marguerite.'"

"Shall I sing it for you, too?"

"I should be too happy, Miss Edith. Ha! ha! Shall I turn the music for you? Is the light—O! ah!—just right, Miss Edith? Ah! beg pardon! Let me adjust the stool for you. It was quite careless in me—ha! ha!—not to offer to do that. Is that quite as you would have it? Ha! ha!"

"Thank you! You are very kind."

"But Miss Edith—O! ah!—you can hardly guess—ha! ha!—what pleasure it is to be kind to—O! ah!—to—ha! ha!—to *you!*"

"Hold on, Mr. Christie! I have n't played half of the prelude yet. You read music, do you not?"

"Yes, Miss Edith—ha! ha!—when I have

nothing better—ha! ha!—to read; but just now, I—O! ah!—find it hard to keep my mind on the notes. Ha! ha! Your pardon, please! Ha! ha!”

“Do not mention it!”

“But, Miss Edith—O! ah!—please permit me to mention something else—ha! ha!—that troubles me more than—O! ah!—forgetting to turn the music, if I may be so bold?”

“Certainly, and you shall see how sympathetic a friend I can be!”

“That is it, Miss Edith—O! ah! Ha! ha! I need a friend—ha! ha!—a sympathetic friend, and I hoped—ha! ha!—you would be a friend to me in this trouble. Ha! ha!”

“Shall I sing this song first?”

“Just as you please—ha! ha!—but—O! ah!—I could come again to hear the songs, if I may be—O! ah!—so bold!”

“I should be glad to have you—come again.”

“I certainly will, if I may; but, as I was saying, I—ha! ha!—do not feel that I have ever—O! ah!—adequately or suitably expressed my gratitude for your kind care of me—ah!—when I was laid up by that accident.”

“Please, do not mention it. It was nothing.”

“But I must mention it, Miss Edith. I shall have no peace until I do mention it. If I thought you would not be offended, and would

accept what I would offer, I should—ha! ha!—be happy to show you how truly, *truly*, I appreciate your kindness, gentleness, goodness, helpfulness, and even sweetness—O! ah!—if I may be so bold!”

“There! there! Mr. Christie, do not hunt up any more adjectives! If it will please you, I certainly will be glad to accept any slight token of your appreciation.”

“It is a slight token, Miss Edith; but I beg you to accept it. It will make me very happy to know you do accept it, Miss Edith. O! ah! let me offer you—begging you to accept the gift—let me offer you—offer you—my—myself!”

“Stand up, Mr. Christie! Do, please, stand up! Quick! Papa is coming down the stairs!”

“Ah, Mr. Christie! My wife has just informed me of your contemplated call to-night, and I ran down to make a few brief inquiries concerning the present status of the political campaign, and the apparent possibilities of Mr. Morrison’s election to the Legislature.”

“I beg pardon—ha! ha!—Mr. Lysander, for not answering your question—ha! ha!—for in the present state of my mind—ha! ha!—I may not—O! ah!—give a clear account—ha! ha!—of the outlook—ha! ha!—I have a case on hand that has troubled me greatly for some time, and

I feel that I must call on you for counsel—perhaps for pleadings.”

“Ah! I am at your service, Mr. Christie, and will take your case in hand at once, if you desire.”

“I—O! ah!—have been pleading—ha! ha!—myself, but—O! ah!—without much success. Ha! ha! You will remember, Mr. Lysander, I have *your* consent—ha! ha!—but—O! ah!—Miss Edith—”

“Ah! *that* case! In that case, Mr. Christie, you must consider me as retained to carry the cause to a higher court; but at present I must leave you to make your own arguments. Good-night!”

“And I, Mr. Christie, must ask you to excuse me—”

“And do you reject me?”

“I do not.”

“Then do you accept me?”

“I do not.”

“Must I go without an answer?”

“You must—to-night.”

“And may I—O! ah!—may I—may I come again?”

“You may!”

“May I speak to Mr. Lysander?”

“Certainly; I will send him down. Good-night?”

“Good-night!”

XXI.

A POLITICAL SCHEME.

“HELLO!”
“Hello!”

The first greeting was spoken in a bright, energetic manner, which betokened interest and hope, as Sam Slimkins threw open the door of Wendell Morrison's office.

The reply was uttered in a careless and half-smothered tone that indicated extreme indifference on the part of the young lawyer. Unabashed and undaunted by the coolness of his reception, Slimkins advanced to Wendell's desk, and, uninvited, drew up a chair, and, when seated, slapped the attorney on the knee, and said:

“I've got it!”

“Well, what is it worth, now you've 'got it?'” Wendell asked, with a slight frown darkening his eyes, and a rasping emphasis jarring his words.

“It is worth a million to you; but how much to me, I have n't found out yet.”

“Slimkins, did you ever come to me in your life without the thought of making a gain out of me? I'd give half I am worth for a friend who

was n't a friend for the money there is in it—just for one hand's-turn out of pure friendship, with no thought of financial reward. I am sick to death of bribes!"

Wendell spoke vehemently, and punctuated his words with terrible oaths, picking up and flinging down with vengeance the various articles on his desk by way of exclamation points.

"You've made your own bed," Sam replied, with imperturbable calmness.

For a reply to this thrust, Wendell was content to scowl at him fiercely.

"And just let me ask you," Sam went on, after a moment's silence, "just let me ask you, when did you ever come to *me* without having a scheme or a dirty job you wanted me to work out for you? A nice man you are to talk about pure friendship!"

"Shut up! Go on with what you came to tell me," Wendell said, with impatience, as he rearranged the papers on the desk he had a moment before scattered in his wrath.

"Thad is dying to go to the State Senate."

"Tell me something I do n't know."

"O, you know that, do you?" Sam said, sarcastically. "Well, if you know all about it, I need n't tell you. Good-day!"

He arose, and strode toward the door.

"Come back!" Wendell said. "Sit down here.

I want to talk to you about other matters. What else do you know?"

By this time his manner had changed entirely, and his voice was soft and smooth as a lover's, and his bearing as gentle as a woman's.

"Well, what I was going to say," Sam replied, resuming his chair, "is, that you must make Thad believe you do not want to go to the State Senate, but would like to have the nomination for Congress."

"But I *do* want to go to the State Senate, and there is no chance of my getting the Congressional nomination."

"Of course, you want to go to the State Senate, and you will go there, too; but if Thad believes you do not want it, he will announce himself as a candidate, and—"

"And get the nomination!"

"Not by a big sight!"

"What's to hinder, if I am out of the way?"

"Can't you see further than your nose? O, come off; and talk like the man you are, and not like a school-boy."

"*You* are to make this scheme plain to me. Go ahead, and let me play unsuspecting innocence."

"Well, if you make Thad think you do not want to go to the State Senate, and let us fellows know that you do want to go, we will see that you get there."

“For a consideration, of course?” Wendell said, with an ill-concealed sneer.

“You bet your sweet life! What are we here for but for money?”

“Well, go on.”

“When he finds you are off on the Senate, he will make the *Banner* red-hot for you for Congress.”

“Will he?”

“He said he would—told Judge Tracy so in my presence.”

“Good! Go on.”

“Just before the Convention, say the day before, come out yourself for the Senate, and us fellows will have things fixed to sweep every delegate, except a few from outside towns, into your line, and there *you* are; but where on earth will Thad be? Scooped! Snowed under! Defeated! Crushed! Ground to powder! Blown away! Everything yours!”

“Wise head, Sam! It shall be as you say; for that is just what I was thinking about doing!”

“Yes, you were!” very sarcastically. “That is what made you so all-fired happy when I came in!”

“Not thinking of it this morning, I admit, but before this.”

“Then, from this on, the *Banner* is to boom

you for Congress; and we are to pat Thad on the back for the State Senate, and knife him in the caucuses? Everything is fair in war, eh?"

Sam arose, and towered over Wendell, who could not but admire his fine physique, however much he loathed his deformed spirit.

With noiseless step Seth Russell had climbed the stair just after Sam Slimkins, and, pausing for a moment at the entrance, he could see through the clear spaces between the frosting on the glass of the upper half of the door who were the occupants of the office, and hearing through the transom, which was ajar, the name of his dear friend's son, he listened to what was said, and thanked God he had been sent to hear.

As Sam Slimkins passed out, Seth Russell passed in, not forgetting, however, to make a profound bow to the tall schemer; not out of respect, but to hide the flashing of his eye as his heart burned with strong indignation against him. But Seth was master of his spirit, and his body as well; so when he raised his eyes to Wendell's, they were twinkling with mirth instead of flashing with wrath, as a moment before. But the mirthful twinkle was a mask behind which was hidden the fire of fierce resentment. Seth had learned to wear a mask early in life. It was never worn by him for evil purposes—only

for serving unselfish purposes; only for discovering and thwarting unholy conspiracies.

"The sun shines not more serenely this cloudless day than does your face this moment. I hope peace reigns within!" As he concluded he made a low bow to Wendell, a counterpart of the one he made Sam Slimkins.

Wendell smiled upon the old man, and expected a smile in return; but when Seth lifted his eyes to Wendell's, they were like balls of fire in the intensity of their glow, and burned into his heart like the focused rays of the sun through the microscope. Instantly the smile faded, peace departed, the sun darkened, and Wendell felt chilled; but he knew not why, and he wished Seth had not come in. The change was noted by the old man; and having satisfied himself of his power, he cared not to use it further at that time, and the soft light of forbearance followed the glare that had pierced Wendell's guilty soul. What a relief it was to Wendell!

"Yes, I have peace within," he said, having found words to reply to Seth's salutation. "Why shouldn't I? Isn't virtue its own reward, Seth?"

"It is, it is, my son! Take the advice of an old man, who has traversed the rough ways of life too long to be deceived by appearances, and

seek only such things as conscience can commend! Love is not blind, as heathens declare; for God is love, and his eye is everywhere! Who wears the mask of love to serve the devil in, will find the devil in all the love he gains!"

"What's new about town?" Wendell asked, wishing to switch the old man off his moralizing track.

"'There is nothing new under the sun,' Solomon said, and so I find it. 'Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished.'"

"Somebody will have a big contract on hand to carry that out," Wendell said, with a forced laugh. "Besides, you know, Seth, you must catch the hare before you skin it!"

"Men are not hares, my son, and God is not man! Mark that. God can punish the wicked while they run—their running may be their punishment!"

"Running for office, I suppose you mean," Wendell said, with another forced laugh.

"Perhaps! 'The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.'"

"But the office is for the man who gets the most votes. You can not deny that, old fellow."

"I can, and do! Throckmorton got the most votes for county treasurer; but he did not get the office."

"Thad's father, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Ah! that was before my day. I do not know anything about ancient politics."

"But there are scores of us old graybeards who do know about ancient politics, and modern too."

"Throckmorton must have been an odd fellow, if he was anything like Thad is now," Wendell said, meditatively.

"He was an odd fellow, and no mistake!"

"You knew him, then?"

"Knew and loved him like a brother; and I love every one who bears his name!"

"Thad wants to be senator—State senator, you know."

"He shall have my vote; and influence too, for that matter."

"As against me?" Wendell said, with well-assumed surprise.

"As against anybody!"

"O, well," Wendell said, resignedly, "I guess I have had sufficient honor in that line. If I can't get it, I should like to see Thad have it."

"Have what?" asked Judge Tracy, who at that moment entered the office.

"The State senatorship, Judge."

"It would be poor policy to spoil a good ed-

itor to make a poor legislator," the judge said, smilingly, as he passed into his private office.

"Or to spoil a good congressman to make a poor senator," Seth added, in a loud voice, and then quickly left the office.

His remark cut like a two-edged sword, wounding both Judge Tracy and his partner; Wendell Morrison, not seriously, to be sure; but the 'blood followed the blade,' and both were uneasy for an hour over the remark of the old man, though both counted him as naught in party movements. Wendell felt that the remark was a thrust at his congressional aspirations, and a backward stroke at his past legislative record. Judge Tracy felt it was a blow at his senatorial plans, intimating that to be congressman was enough for him!

It is surprising how Mordecai can annoy Haman! It is surprising how Mordecai triumphs over Haman—and yet not surprising when God is with Mordecai!

"Here is a note," the judge said, coming out of his office, "that Josie asked me to hand you. I forgot it when I came in."

Wendell sprang to his feet to receive the note, and bowed his thanks.

XXII.

A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE.

THERE were only a few people in Brambleville who knew the facts in the matter of Thaddeus Throckmorton's parentage. Silly gossip had been indulged in from time to time by envious or inconsiderate neighbors concerning the disappearance of Mr. Throckmorton, and it was to the alleged cause of his disappearance that Mrs. Jessup referred when attempting to dissuade Jennie from receiving his son's attentions. There is not much to the story, and the details may as well be given now as later.

Mr. Throckmorton, at that time an ambitious but highly sensitive young lawyer, partner in business with Judge Tracy, had been elected county treasurer by a good majority of votes. At least so it appeared from the unofficial returns given out by the clerks of the several voting precincts. There was great rejoicing among the young lawyer's friends, and among all the voters of his party; for he was the only candidate on their ticket who was elected, and his election was the first break in the continuous control of all county affairs by the opposition. For several days, or from the time of closing the polls and

counting the votes to the time of the official canvass of the returns by the County Board, great demonstrations of delight were indulged in by Throckmorton and his friends. It was a cold and blustering day in early November when the County Board sat, at night, to complete their work, which had been begun in the forenoon. They were in the main room of the old courthouse in Brambleville, just within the bar, the inclosure around the judge's bench reserved for use of attorneys during court sittings.

Several candles on the table at which they were sitting furnished all the light in the room. A number of spectators, representatives of both parties, stood outside the railing and watched the proceedings. Suddenly a window was thrown open, and a gust of wintry wind swept through the room, putting out the lights, blowing papers about, and leaving all in darkness. Then followed confusion, overturning chairs, and many an oath and complaint. Finally the window was closed, the candles relighted, and it was seen that all the canvassers were present, as were all the spectators; but the tally-sheet, the poll-book, and the ballot-box from the precinct of Brambleville, which had given Throckmorton his majority, were gone!

Then arose a wrangle. From laughing remarks about the strength of the wind, seeing it

had spirited away a heavy ballot-box, the controversy grew serious, after the room had been searched, and no trace of box, book, or sheet was found. Then Throckmorton and his friends abandoned their first suspicion, that some wag had hidden them during the temporary darkness, and that it was accidental that the box that gave him his majority was the one gone. Angry words were quickly followed by threats of personal violence. In hot resentment for an insulting remark, Throckmorton rushed upon the chairman of the Board, felled him to the floor, and pounded him to insensibility before he could be delivered out of the hand of his assailant. Rejecting the advice of his friends, and believing he had most rashly and foolishly maimed and disfigured, if not mortally wounded, his victim, Throckmorton, with a hasty good-bye to his young wife, left Brambleville "until the storm should blow over." The injuries the chairman received were slight, and the next day he laughed about the affair, and said he would never have made such a remark about so straight a man as Throckmorton had he not been drinking freely, and was a little excited over the election anyway. In a short time, though the missing box was never found, and Throckmorton's opponent was "counted in," peace prevailed, and the affair was looked upon

as a dead subject by all except one—and that one was the young wife who became a mother after a few months—for all said, “He will come back,” and his political friends predicted another victory for him at the next election!

But he never came back! The West was a wilderness then, unbroken by railway, and untouched by telegraph. It was easy for one to lose himself, and to be buried from sight and hearing as effectually while living as when dead.

Gossips, as the years rolled by, forgetting the political wrangle, but remembering the fact that Judge Tracy, then a young lawyer like Throckmorton, and unmarried, was a welcome guest in the happy home of his partner, most cruelly and falsely bandied the name of the young mother, and pursued the child and the subsequent man with malignant innuendo.

But for no second of time in all those years did Seth Russell lose confidence in his beloved friend, the absent lawyer, nor fail to follow his child, and afterward the man, with his prayers and his protection. Not a Sabbath afternoon went by without bringing Seth to the home of Mrs. Throckmorton for a few minutes' chat, and a flood of wild but very soothing prophecies of future bliss and fame for both father and son! “For, I tell you, he is not dead,” he would say as a parting word each time. “If he were, I

would feel it *here*," striking his hand repeatedly upon his breast. "He will come back!"

Mrs. Throckmorton had come to count her husband as on the other shore, and listened to Seth's oft-told faith as one would listen to the tale of a wandering mind.

Sometimes Seth would become very fatherly in his manner, and in soft tones would say:

"Never marry, my dear Mrs. Throckmorton. It would be awkward for you, if you should, when he comes back.

"No, no! He will not come to me, but I shall go to him."

"But is he not here *now*?" he would say, excitedly. "Surely, surely, my dear woman, your heart tells you he is here; not over there! Is he not in your heart?"

"I have him in my heart every hour, Mr. Russell. And do you know I can not think of him as old? He must be old now, you know, and gray as I am; but I think of him as young and strong, as lithe and gay. I hear him speak in round, full tones. I see him walk with steady step and erect form. Though my hair is gray, I think of his as clustering in black curls about his head. Though I wear glasses, I imagine his eye flashes as in those other days when we were so happy together!"

"To be sure! to be sure! That is love! Ah!

you know! Love never grows old. How can love be old? 'God is love.' And love is like God's mercies—new every morning."

"What a philosopher you are, Mr. Russell!"

"Not at all, not at all, my dear woman. Far from it. I am no philosopher. I do not go about, trying to find the whys and wherefores. But let me tell you! I have found a fountain of perpetual youth. The same that the Spaniards looked for in the New World centuries ago—looked for, but never found, because they searched through hills and vales. It is not there. It is in God's Word. Like Paul, I believe *all* the law and the prophets. Not a little here and a little there; but *all*."

"I am sure you do. And I believe you are just as young in thought and feeling as when first I knew you, thirty years ago."

"Younger, younger, my dear woman. I am younger to-day than then by a score of years. My heart is with children now as never before."

"By the way, have you noticed Tingleman's children lately?"

"Noticed them? How could I fail to notice anything in your family? They are bright boys—just like their mother. She was a jewel."

"Did you know her well?"

"Know her? Did n't I see her baptized when not more than three months old? Did n't

I know her mother? Wasn't her mother an own cousin to Judge Tracy?"

"Mr. Russell!" Mrs. Throckmorton exclaimed, in genuine surprise. "You do not mean that these Tingleman boys belong to the Tracy family?"

"That is just what I mean. And why not? Do they dishonor their stock? Not a bit of it. Tingleman is a scamp, no doubt; but his wife and his wife's mother are of royal blood; and blood tells, Mrs. Throckmorton, though years intervene and providences seem to go awry."

"But do you suppose Judge Tracy and his wife and Miss Josie know who these children are?"

"To be sure. What would you have them do? Not take the children, surely—not while *you* live? I would not, and the Father above would not; you would not, and Judge Tracy would not; and so it is all harmonious, though so very inharmonious when you come to consider the reasons. *You* would not, because you love the children; the Father above would not, because he has prepared your heart and home for just this purpose; Judge Tracy would not, for his wife and daughter do not wish to be bothered; and I would not, because I see what gems you are making out of these rough stones. So all are harmonious, but each has a different

reason for doing just what the Father wants done.”

“You *are* a philosopher, Mr. Russell.”

“No, no, *no!* not a philosopher, but simply a believer in God’s Word—the Law and the Prophets—as was Paul. His law is perfect, converting the soul; his testimonies are sure, making wise the simple. I am a simple old man—I mean *young* man—but I am *wise* because I believe God’s Word. He says, ‘All things work together,’ and I believe it.”

And so it was. Though Seth Russell knew the source of his strength and his wisdom, he little dreamed how very strong he was, nor how wise, as he went forward, day by day, trusting God, and doing with his might what his hands found to do.

Nor did Wendell Morrison, nor Sam Slimkins, know, until too late, how the foolish things confound the wise, and the things that are *not* bring to naught the things that *are*, when God is with the foolish and when he is with the weak!

XXIII.

PLOTS.

WENDELL MORRISON was fully committed to two objects. The one was election to the State Senate, and the other the wedding of Miss Josie Tracy. These two accomplished, he felt he would then be prepared for further political advancement. One man only stood in his way—Thaddeus Throckmorton—and he stood in both paths.

To defeat Thaddeus politically, as already shown, Morrison could trust to the maneuvers of Sam Slimkins, assisted by the chief of police and his subordinates. To thwart his desires and plans matrimonially, he dared not leave the work to any other. Nor was any scheme too hazardous for him to undertake in his contest for the hand and heart of Miss Tracy. For this reason, when she invited him to assist her in making out a program for an active canvass of the county in the cause of temperance, he cheerfully and promptly complied, and even consented to become the principal speaker at the majority of the township meetings which the program provided for.

It must be understood that at that time tem-

perance agitation had not seriously disturbed the political parties. Indeed, its advocates sought the individual reformation of the drinker, rather than the suppression of dram-selling. It had never occurred to the temperance people that the end sought could best be attained through political organizations, and by way of the ballot-box. Nevertheless, he must be a courageous politician who would antagonize the saloon element by boldly and publicly espousing the temperance cause.

Wendell Morrison had no lack of courage, and hence was never deterred from any course by fear of popular disapproval. He trusted always to his skill in managing men, and calculated with surprising faith to ride to place and power on the reacting wave of sentiment that follows every tide of opposition to the right.

He foresaw the burst of derision and the storm of dissent that would greet his participation in the temperance crusade, and calmly counted the chances of his stemming the current until it should flow back, and put him where he longed to be—in Judge Tracy's family, and in the State Senate. Consequently he was prepared for Sam Slimkins when he rushed into his office, exclaiming:

“All the gods in heaven and all the devils on earth can't save you if you don't cancel

these dates!" holding out a copy of the *Banner*, in which were printed the places and dates of the rallies for temperance reform.

"I am depending on mortals, and not on the gods, Sam, and have learned that mortals are very subject to moods, and are not often controlled by cool judgment; and yet the worst men have a vein of virtue that is like gold in the rock—the most valuable and the most easily worked of all their nature, though not the most prominent."

"A part of your speech, I suppose?" Sam said, with a sneer, as he sat down near the young attorney.

"Perhaps so. I have not yet decided just what I will say."

"Have some sense, Morrison! Here we have worked every whisky man in the county to oppose Throckmorton because he is a temperance crank, and you come along and spoil it by becoming a crank yourself! I tell you, the jig is up unless you cancel the dates, and say the publication was unauthorized. Geeminy crickets, Morrison! I have just thought of it! Do that, Morrison, and we can make it appear that Throckmorton published the dates in his paper to kill you with the saloon people. The temperance folks already know you drink like a fish, even when you are spouting for them."

“But I have signed the pledge, Sam, and do not intend to drink another drop—until after the election.”

“Yes, you have!” Sam said, with a tone of incredulity.

“Fact. I am going to work the goody-goody voters, and want you and the boys to look after the bums. See?”

“I see; but, Morrison, you are a blasted fool! What do you want to cater to the God-and-morality people for? You know they are solid for the party. If the whisky men get mad, no power on earth can hold them. It is business with them—dollars and cents.”

“Do n’t I know all that, Sam? Trust me to bring this out all right. I want to get talked about. The whisky men will damn me awhile; but when I put up my money for all the liquor the floaters can drink, they will see how very shallow is my conversion to temperance. But for awhile I must stay away from saloons, and you can put it down that I will not hurt their business in my speeches.”

“That is all very nice on paper, or in your mind; but it won’t work. Let the whisky men learn once that you are actually in the field against them, making speeches here and there and everywhere, and it will take a year to get them to see what you really are at.”

“Not correct, Sam. It might take a year for me to establish myself as a true convert to the temperance cause; but say, you old fool, one big drunk would put me back, safe and sound, on the broad-gauge of old times. See? It is hard working *up* to the God-and-morality plane, but I can get *down* in the twinkle of an eye.”

“Well, what shall I do?”

“For the present, kind o’ turn a cold shoulder to me publicly; but see that things are kept boiling where the boys are. Come up to-night, and bring a lot of the fellows with you. I will have refreshments of a proper kind on hand, and we can play for a small consideration until good retiring time—say three or four A. M. See? Our morality campaign does not begin until next week.”

“All right. A dozen or more of the boys will be up to-night. Shall I tell Billy not to ‘pull us?’”

“Tell him,” Wendell said, laughing at the mere suggestion of the chief of police arresting the proposed gambling party, “tell him to come up about nine, and to bring a corkscrew with him. That is all the pulling he will care about having a hand in.”

“And Andy, too?”

“Yes, Andy, too. Just as well have the whole force here as not. Then we are *sure* not

to be surprised while at our game. Capture the officers, you know, and then they can not capture you.”

The plans were all executed as indicated, and when midnight, with its solemn silence, hovered over Brambleville, Wendell Morrison and his boon companions were thumping the tables in his office as they threw their cards, filling the room with clouds of tobacco-smoke, and repeatedly draining glasses that had been replenished with intoxicants. In the group assembled were law-makers, law-executors, law-judges, and yet all were law-breakers. Pharisees and hypocrites, every one!

The same night, in Judge Tracy's parlors, a different scene was being enacted.

When Thaddeus received by messenger the program Miss Josie and Wendell had prepared, accompanied by the usual request for publication, he could scarcely believe his eyes. For an hour he struggled against the temptation to throw it into the waste-basket, and, by refusing to give publicity to the arrangement, defeat in a measure the scheme he believed Wendell had wickedly concocted for selfish purposes. He well knew that Mr. Monmoskin, of the *Gazette*, would never mention the proposed campaign, and that the *Banner* must be depended upon to advertise it. To refuse to publish it would

offend Morrison; and had not Morrison sent him word that very day that he had withdrawn from the race for the State Senate, leaving the field clear to Thaddeus? He blushed at the thought of his ingratitude, and mentally confessed himself baser than he had ever supposed, because he would let Wendell's attentions to Miss Tracy be grounds for withholding his support from the temperance work. He picked up the copy, and carried it to the printer, remembering, as he walked across the floor, that not to publish the program would also offend Miss Josie; and he hoped to have another interview with her, if for no other purpose, at least to apologize for his hasty and impolite departure when he was last there. He wanted to make a reconciliation as easy and as certain as possible, and to publish the program was a step in that direction. So he had two good reasons, aside from his personal interest in the work of reformation, for giving the program unusual prominence in the coming issue of the *Banner*. It was published, and its publication and the warm editorial indorsement of the scheme pleased Morrison, and delighted Miss Tracy.

She was delighted, because she took the hearty indorsement the *Banner* gave the campaign as evidence that Throckmorton had become reconciled to her plan to have him step

aside temporarily while she rescued Morrison from the habit of strong drink.

Morrison was pleased when he read the announcement and editorial comment, for he assumed that Thaddeus was conciliated by his feigned withdrawal from the race for State Senate, and he believed that he could easily hoodwink the young editor all through the contest.

Thaddeus himself was quite satisfied when he glanced over his paper and noted the editorial, for it seemed to be evidence that he was really generous and self-sacrificing. And yet, as he walked toward Judge Tracy's house a few hours later, he had misgivings as to the outcome of the matter.

But his reception was so cordial, and so different from what he had feared it would be, judging from the manner of their last parting, that he was reassured, and laughed at the fears that had haunted him.

"Thank you, ever so much," Miss Josie said, as soon as she could find a place for the remark after ordinary greetings, "for the kind notice you gave of our temperance meetings."

"Do not mention it," Thaddeus said, formally, a sudden chill choking back the words of love that were trembling a moment before on his lips. Her thanks sounded strangely in his

ears. Together they had worked for months and months in the temperance cause, and he no more expected thanks for that notice than for any other editorial comment he had written. To thank him as though a personal favor had been conferred on her, was virtually ruling him out as an interested party in the cause that had engaged their united energies. Then he stumbled over the "our," feeling that it meant Miss Josie and Wendell, and not Miss Josie and himself.

"You will be with us, I suppose, of course," Miss Josie said, brightly.

"Of course!" Thaddeus replied, mechanically; but instantly realized that his lips and his heart were at variance. Possibly he would be with them for political effect; but it would be a fearful departure from the truth to say he was with them in heart!

His impulse was to excuse himself as gracefully as possible, and quit the place forever; and yet he could not go.

Finally he stammered, without fully understanding the import of his words:

"Miss Josie, is this arrangement of yours with Wendell to continue long?"

"*Miss Josie!*" she said, smiling, repeating his words. "That carries me back a great many months, Thad. It has been quite a time since you were so formal."

“I beg pardon, my dear, it was an unintentional return.”

This deliberate use of a pet term seemed like mockery to him; for, just then, under the agony of wounded pride, almost any other person was more dear to him than Miss Tracy!

“Thank you!” she said, with a little laugh, that to Thaddeus’s distorted mind was full of taunting. “You are not very amiable to-night, Thad.”

He quickly noticed that she had not responded to his attempted return to the allowable familiarity of persons related as they were. It cut like a knife; but he would not let his hurt appear in word or manner. Rallying all his forces, he held himself steady to the purpose of his call.

“Josie,” he said calmly, “I know Morrison better than you can possibly know him—up to this time. I beg you, if you love me at all, not to receive any attention from him; and do not permit yourself to be deceived by his pretended reform. He is—”

“Thad,” she replied, interrupting him, “I do not grant that you have any right—as yet—to dictate to me. What I have done, and what I am proposing to do, has my mother’s sanction, and her approval is all that I am—concerned about.”

“Then she approves your course, knowing, as she does, that we are engaged?”

“She does. She feels that my influence over Mr. Morrison will save him from a drunkard’s grave. She knows that *we* are not to be married for a long time yet; not until you have been elected, you know; for you said so yourself—and—that may be longer than either of us think. So I do not feel that it is right for me to refuse my help to him now. Papa is greatly taken up with the idea. He says, but for that one fault, Wendell would be as perfect a gentleman as he is a brilliant and successful lawyer.”

“But, Josie,” Thaddeus said, gently, and with some of his old-time fervor of manner, “would you be quite satisfied for *me* to make a similar arrangement with some one for a similar purpose to save her from some fearful sin, at the same time holding you to your promise to me?”

He hoped to find by that route a way to her heart, but was disappointed when she answered, a slight flushing of her face being the only token that his words had touched her at all:

“Of course I must allow you the same freedom I claim for myself. If you know of some one whom you can save—why, I must not object!”

“Josie,” he said, with a sigh, “I hoped you

would see—I hoped your woman's heart would tell you—that any one needing to be saved would be an unworthy companion for me. And I hoped you would feel in your soul how torturing to me is your proposed plan for rescuing Wendell. He is stronger than you, my love, and I tell you now, he laughs at your notion of rescuing him. He does not want to be rescued. He wants you. O, my darling, I can not endure this! Your pure soul must never be joined with his! I beg of you, sweetheart, do not expose yourself to his wiles—to his power. He is rich; he is brilliant; he is successful; but then he is a knave, and unworthy of you! I am poor, and, so far, have achieved no fame, such as his; but, darling, I love you, and that is more than he can say! He loves only one; but that one is Wendell Morrison!"

Thaddeus stooped as he spoke, and took Josie's hands in his, and pressed them to his heart. She did not resist; but he was conscious that no response came from her heart to his passionate appeal, nor did her eyes meet his, but were bent upon the floor. Wounded afresh by her indifference, he arose from her side, and resumed his seat, burying his face in his hands, and awaiting the reply.

"Thaddeus, what you have said ought to have thrilled my soul—ought to have moved

me from my present purpose! But it does not. I am quite as much surprised that it does not as you are wounded by my indifference. To me this is a revelation. I begin to doubt whether I have not mistaken pity for you in your struggles for love. It may be I have. Forgive me if I have. Yet I know I have loved you—and do now some, surely. And yet, because I am willing to let you go to save Wendell, must mean something.”

“It does, Josie, it does! I see now what I have not seen before. It *is* pity, and not love for me. I do forgive you. Even your pity has been very sweet to me. It has been a light in many a dark hour. This is a cruel awakening, and yet it must be best!”

“It must be,” she answered simply; for her heart was too uncertain in its promptings to permit her to say more.

“And yet, Josie, have we not been happy together? And is the past to be but a memory? Do our paths diverge here? Will they never fall in the same direction again? It *is* a dream, after all!”

“Do not grieve so, Thad,” she said, softly, with just a hint of her old-time tenderness in her voice. “It is better for us both to have this happen now than after it is too late!”

“But promise me one thing, Josie: By the

love I bear you, by the memory of all you have been to me, I beg you not to give yourself to Wendell. Anything but that!"

"I can not promise. Just now I do not think I ever will; for I do not believe he cares for me except, perhaps, as a sister, and—"

"Say no more. I understand it all. Already his fascination holds you. Good-bye once more—and forever. Let no one know of this. I shall be too busy in the office to take any part in the campaign you have outlined. It is just as well. Good-bye!"

Thaddeus arose, took her hand in his, clasped it fervently for a moment, hoped for some slight token of regret on her part at the parting, but none was given, and he silently withdrew, going out into the starlight with an aching heart and a crushed spirit.

"Whither, so wearily?" asked Seth Russell, stepping before him as he walked slowly homeward. "Have your enemies come upon you to eat you up? Hope thou in God; for thou shalt yet praise him! Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord!"

"God bless you, dear friend! You must be an angel in disguise. You happen upon me always just at the right time. I am discouraged to-night! I have a notion to tell you some-

thing—something that I should like to tell my father, if I only had one to tell!”

“Tell me, my son; tell me! In old Seth’s keeping, any secret is safe.”

“It is *only* this: I have been engaged to Miss Tracy. Did you know it?”

“Of a truth, my son, I knew it; but no great joy came to my heart on that account!”

“But to-night—” and Thaddeus hesitated. It could not be true! “But to-night,” he went on, “the engagement was broken, and it nearly kills me!”

“So it does! Poor boy! But do not grieve. Do not be cast down; there are other truer hearts! And as to wealth, there are those who are wealthier, but do not know it. Now am I glad! Now do I know why I wandered the streets to-night! It was to meet you, and to cheer you. It was to be made happy myself by hearing this. The Lord hath delivered your soul from the snare of the fowler. To him be praise. Good-bye!”

Quickly down a side street, Seth disappeared, and Thaddeus walked home with a lighter heart and a firmer step. “There are those who are truer and wealthier,” he repeated to himself. “I wonder to whom he referred?”

“I just came to say,” spoke Seth, as Thaddeus was entering his home, “what I should

have said a little while ago. There is one who has a better title to the Morrison estate than Wendell. Let the stars sing to you, and let the moon smile on you. Let the sun greet you at dawn with his glory, for your night is passing; and, behold, the day is here!"

"What an odd fellow he is, to be sure!" Thaddeus said, half aloud, as he entered his home. "But there is a deep meaning to his wild words, if I could but fathom them."

XXIV.

TEMPERANCE MEETING.

THE announcement that Wendell Morrison was to be the principal speaker drew crowds of people to every meeting in the temperance campaign, as arranged by Miss Josie. The temperance workers were in ecstasy, because the men they had longed for so much—the tipplers, and even confirmed drunkards—were out in large numbers, drawn thither by curiosity, to see and hear for themselves the one-time liberal and free Morrison, who had become so suddenly the champion of sobriety.

If Miss Josie ever had a doubt of the success of her scheme, it was dispelled at the first meeting. Such crowds! Such enthusiasm! Such a brilliant address! Such a perfect success! There was, nevertheless, a fly in the ointment. Thaddeus was not there, and somehow his absence affected her spirits strangely. She did not know he had had such a large part in her life. His absence was noted by others, and commented upon variously.

“He is a candidate for the State Senate—or rather, the nomination—and he is afraid of the saloon men,” said one, with a sneer. “It is no

more than I expected. Our best men kneel to that element. It makes me heart-sick."

"I don't believe it," said another. "Thaddeus Throckmorton is too true to be guilty of such a fear. Let the *Banner* speak for him. Week after week it devotes column upon column to temperance facts, and its arguments are telling."

"But, do n't you know," said Captain Thompson, who had driven out to the country church, where the first meeting was held, as company for Major Morrison and wife, who were easily persuaded to lend the help of their presence to the crusade, seeing that Wendell was to take such a prominent part in the proceedings, "do n't you know that a ten-line editorial of 'Thad's has more real sense, more hard-fisted argument, in it, do n't you know, than a whole hour of some men's harangue, do n't you know?"

"I hope—ha! ha!—Captain, you do not now—ah!—refer—that is to say—ha! ha!—you do not mean—ah!—to have us—ha! ha!—draw any inferences at the present—ha! ha!" said Mr. Christie, as he leaned out of the buggy, and gently beat the dust off the weeds by the roadside with the whip; for he had come with Miss Edith in her father's buggy, driving a horse that could not run away if it had wanted to, being made proof against such a caprice by the

infirmities of years. Indeed, with difficulty the faithful old servant made the distance of ten miles from Brambleville to the country church, hopping along on two feet, and dragging the other two through the dust, sending a cloud of it into the air at every attempted lifting of the feet out of it as it lay three inches deep in the much-used highway.

Notwithstanding this, and notwithstanding the fact that the meeting was well under way when they reached the church, Mr. Christie said, as he lifted Miss Edith to the ground:

“A very dusty drive—ha! ha!—Miss Edith, and—ah!—a very heavy road; but—ha! ha!—we made it in a remarkably short time. It seems but—ah!—a short hour, when,” looking at his watch, “when it is now nearly noon. Ha! ha!”

“Impossible, Mr. Christie; for we started at eight o’clock, and surely we have not been four hours coming ten miles!”

“Beg pardon, my—Miss Edith! The watch has stopped. It is the same time I left your house last night—quarter to eleven. Ha! ha!”

For this reason, Captain Thompson had good grounds for saying, in reply to a remark Mr. Christie had addressed to him when they were discussing the meeting just before dinner was spread:

“But, do n’t you know, Charlie, the best

thing for you to do is to draw no inferences, do n't you know, seeing what time you got here, do n't you know? Why, we passed you two miles out of Brambleville, do n't you know?"

"Well—ha! ha!—that *is* a good one—ha! ha!—on me, Captain; but—O! ah!—if you will promise—ha! ha!—not to mention it, I will tell you what detained us—ha! ha!—when I get home."

"Never mind; for Mr. Lysander has told me already, do n't you know?"

"Ladies and gentlemen!" called the stentorian voice of Wendell, as he mounted a stump just outside the church. "You are invited to repair to the beautiful grove just at hand, to the right, and spread your lunches on the grass. Arrangements have been made for supplying you, free of cost, with an abundance of refreshing drinks—nectar, distilled from the dews of heaven; a beverage, brewed in the sweet chambers of God's great laboratory; a drink as pure as an angel's dream, and as harmless as a dove's soft cooing,—an abundant supply of cool, clear, delicious *water*."

So saying, he stepped down, took Miss Josie upon his arm, and carrying her capacious basket, filled with daintiest food, led the way to the designated lunch-ground.

Mr. Christie and Miss Edith were dissuaded

from driving home for dinner, as was their intention when they came; so they consented to join Captain Thompson and Major Morrison and wife, leaving Miss Josie and Wendell to spread their dinner under another tree, where they invited to lunch with them such men as Wendell thought would appreciate and remember such a favor.

"Charlie," said Captain Thompson, as they slowly walked together toward the church after dinner, Major Morrison, his wife, and Miss Edith having gone on before, "it is high time, do n't you know, for us to take a hand, do n't you know, in seeing that Thad gets the nomination for the State Senate? Wendell's men, do n't you know, are simply doing nothing for Thad, though Wendell says he is out of the race, do n't you know? But say, Charlie, what do you think of his speech for a temperance speech?"

"Was that—ha! ha!—was that a temperance speech, Captain? I got in late—ha! ha!—and supposed he had got through with his temperance talk—ha! ha!—and—ah!—was just trying to please 'the boys.' It was good, as all Wendell says is good—ah!—but—ha! ha!—as to *temperance*—well, what *I* heard was as much astronomical as temperance."

"But, do n't you know, Charlie, I have a notion, do n't you know, that Wendell is doing

this to make a reputation as an orator, do n't you know, to catch the popular fancy, and to cut Thad out in the end?"

"Reputation, Captain? Why, he has that *now*—ha! ha!—both good and bad. But, of course, I see what you mean—ha! ha!—and must confess—ha! ha!—it looks that way. Ha! ha! 'The knave!'"

"Hist! Here we are! Well, Mrs. Morrison, do n't you know, I wish you had been along, do n't you know, with the Major and me, do n't you know, when we had to do our own housework, do n't you know, down in Dixie?"

And then, as they sat under the tree and waited for the after-dinner exercises, the major and the captain related bits of their army experiences, helped out by Mr. Christie, who filled in with the experiences of those who staid at home.

The afternoon program consisted of songs and recitations by the children of that neighborhood. Later, the participants and the well-satisfied people in attendance, drove homeward; but among them were two restless hearts—Miss Josie and Wendell Morrison; for there had been a lack in that gathering that seriously disturbed the peace of mind of both. Both were sorry and displeased because Thaddeus was not there. One, because he occupied so large a place in

her heart, though she had made herself believe he did not; the other, because the *Banner* would not contain a synopsis of his address, and would have no warm words of commendation of the speaker's style and effectiveness. Both were selfish motives, to be sure.

The drive homeward was strangely silent. Neither cared to talk, though each tried to entertain the other. The effort was so apparently irksome that after awhile they agreed that they were too tired to be pleasant, and both were glad when the end was reached, and they could say, "Good-bye!"

Both spent much time that night in devising a plan by which Thaddeus would certainly be brought to the next meeting.

XXV.

APPEARANCES DECEITFUL.

“ARE you surprised to see me?” Miss Josie asked, as she hurried into the *Banner* office at noon, a few days later, finding Thaddeus at his desk, quite alone. “Mamma is waiting for me in the carriage down-stairs. I told her I wanted to see you about some printing, and I do. Here it is. Some blank pledges for our next meeting. O dear!” She stopped a moment in her rapid talking, and then went on: “Running up-stairs took my breath away, and my heart is all a-flutter. Let me sit down a minute—just a minute; for mamma will wonder what is keeping me. But say, Thaddeus, won’t you please go to our next meeting? I missed you *so* much from the last one. *Please?*”

“Why should I?” he asked, rather constrainedly, though his own heart was “a-flutter,” too, and he had not run up-stairs, either. “I am not on the program, and, from what I have heard, you do not need me to swell the attendance or get up enthusiasm, and—”

He hesitated, and she exclaimed:

“Why should you? Why, principally be-

cause *I* want you to go. Is not that enough? It was once."

"So it was, Josie; but surely, *surely*, you have not forgotten? Don't you remember what you said when last we met?"

"I do, Thad; but I was not myself that night. Come again; I have something to tell you. But I must go. Good-bye! We will look for you."

With that she was out of the door, and hurrying down the steps.

"*'We will look for you.'* Why could she not have said *I?*" Thaddeus remarked half aloud and in a bitter tone, going to the window in time to see her enter the carriage and drive away. She cast a glance upward, and, seeing Thaddeus at the window, smiled most bewitchingly. Thaddeus was completely overcome by that call. He had felt himself free from the enthrallment of Miss Tracy's attractions, and was rejoicing in the ease with which he bore his disappointment in her; but now, in a second's time, he found himself again a prisoner to her whims, if that term is a correct expression of her temper. At once he did what some would call a foolish thing. He strode to his office-door, locked it, and then flung himself upon a pile of baled paper, and groaned out a prayer for strength and wisdom. But scarcely had he done so before

the door was tried by some one, desiring to enter. Not knowing who it was, he sprang to his feet and called out:

“All right; wait a minute!”

“Beg pardon,” Rev. Mr. Outwright said. “Do I intrude upon your privacy? I hoped to find you alone at this hour, as I knew you never closed your office for dinner. You are troubled!” he exclaimed, as he noticed Thad’s wretched face, and thought he detected signs of tears in his eyes.

“Yes, troubled, Mr. Outwright; but that is not new for me, and I beg you not to think about it. What can I do for you?”

The last remark was accompanied by a forced smile, altogether unlike the usual radiance that illuminated Thad’s face.

“What can *I* do for *you*? let me ask, the rather,” said the minister, taking Thad’s arm, and walking with him to his desk.

“Nothing, my dear friend; and yet I would like to have your advice. Which should control one in this life, duty or desire, supposing the two to be antagonistic?”

“Duty,” Mr. Outwright replied, promptly. “Do you not recall the Divine example? He said, ‘Let it pass;’ but added, ‘Thy will, not mine.’ He desired to escape the cross, but duty led him thither.”

“That is what I expected you to say. It is what you ought to say; and yet, Mr. Outwright, somewhere, in the Psalms I think, it is written: ‘Delight thyself in the Lord, and he will give thee the desires of thine heart.’”

“True; but be sure you first find *delight* in his service. That is the condition upon which we are to have the desires of our heart.”

“I see. But say, Mr. Outwright, what is one to do when he does not know what the desire of his heart is, being so divided between two or more objects?”

“Miss Josie and Miss Jennie, for instance!” Mr. Outwright exclaimed, laughing knowingly. And before Thad could say a word, he added: “Both are gems of the first water, and you will be glad always whichever you choose.”

“What made you say that?” Thad asked, the color mounting his cheeks unpleasantly. “Do you observe that closely?”

“A mountain is n’t hard to see, my brother, and practice makes perception acute. But pardon the pleasantry. What objects divide your heart now—the State Senate and the *Banner*? I confess I will dislike to see you elected if the *Banner* must lose you; and yet, in all sincerity, I hope you will be elected; for the State needs you.”

“The election will be certain if I am nomi-

nated, for the district is very safe our way, you know."

"But you have no opposition, have you, for nomination?"

"None visible; but I have learned to be very suspicious of some people I could name. Quietness does not always mean peace."

"Whom do you fear?"

"Morrison!"

"Ah! do you? Then you know! I came up for no other purpose than to put you on your guard. I chanced to overhear a bit of conversation in the post-office lobby to-day that set me to thinking. Seth Russell was there at the same time reading a paper; but I judge his eyes were not as attentive to the printed page as his ears were to the rather loud though whispered conversation between the chief of police and Mr. Slimkins."

"Did you hear anything of consequence?"

"Perhaps not; but I caught several significant words, and noticed a good deal of winking and suppressed mirth. Slimkins said, 'Throckmorton snowed under! Sweet innocence!' and Barnwell said, 'He won't have six votes in the Convention;' but, of course, I do not know what he meant. It occurred to me, however, that they might be fooling you; so I came, my friend, to put you on your guard."

“Thank you, ever so much! It only confirms my suspicions. But if Seth was there he will give me the straight of it. What he does not hear, he has revealed to him, surely; for he knows everything that is, has been, or is to be, it seems to me.”

“There is another thing. The *Banner* has always been a temperance advocate, and now that a vigorous campaign is on, I believe you ought to be at all of these township meetings. I missed you from the last one. You will not lose, but will gain by it. Do not let Morrison steal your leadership in temperance work. I fear his work is all for effect; but the mass of the people will not see through his disguise until too late. Go to the next meeting, won't you?”

“I have been thinking about it. Yes, I think I will. Will you be there?”

“Unless providentially prevented. But I hinder you; besides I must hurry home, as I have an engagement to meet. Good-day.”

“Father,” Thaddeus said, leaning his head on his desk, after Mr. Outwright left, “I thank thee for this servant of thine, and the help he has brought me to decide what to do. Be thou with me in this struggle for the right!”

That evening found Thaddeus at Judge Tracy's home, a place he thought he should



“Hello, Seth!” Thaddeus exclaimed.—Page 275.

never again enter. The hopes his last visit had so cruelly crushed, had revived under the warmth of Miss Josie's invitation for him to call, and the promise that she would tell him something, gave him grounds upon which to build a belief that she had repented of her hasty action in dismissing him for Wendell.

"Excuse me," Miss Josie said, meeting him at the door, having been warned by his well-known, decided, and quick step upon the stone walk, at the same time blushing deeply in confusion, "Mr. Morrison is in the parlor. Will you come in, or would you rather call some other time?"

"Thank you, some other time; good-night," and he was gone. Could there have been a more inopportune call than that? Where now were all his good resolutions and his adherence to duty, his promise to Mr. Outwright, and his belief that God was guiding his steps? He strode down the walk, flung the gate open, and was intending to let it come back to its place with a resounding clash, when it stopped halfway, closed, and a voice said softly:

"The sheep does well to seek the fold when a grievous wolf is around."

"Hello, Seth!" Thaddeus exclaimed. "Did you drop from heaven, or come up out of the ground?"

“From heaven, my son, and soon enough to see that wolf enter that home. Beware, lest his teeth harm you!”

“What is the news, Seth?” Thaddeus said, calmly, walking toward his office with his friend, and, by sheer will-power, beating back the grief of that sudden and new disappointment.

“Much news, son of my best beloved friend. You are your father’s heir! He was the victim of conspiracy, and lo! you have his heritage. Nets are spread for your feet, and your familiar friend is the fowler that would ensnare thee! Trust not to appearances!”

“What now, Seth? You must drop your figures and tell me plainly. Who is plotting against me, and what can be done to thwart him?”

“Well asked, my son! Morrison is secretly cherishing the hope of nomination for the Senate, though he is out for Congress. He knows that he will not get the Congressional nomination, but intends to crush you by taking the State Senate nomination right out of your hands in the Convention. The plan is this: Every precinct will instruct for you, and select delegates for Morrison. Instructions are wind; but delegates are flesh and blood, that can eat and drink and vote. There it is in a nutshell!”

“Thank you! Forewarned is to be forearmed. I will meet him on his own ground!”

“Good, son of my well beloved friend! Do *that* and victory shall be yours. Never lower your standard. Hope *thou* in God. Let Morrison trust in chariots and in the multitude of his horses; but put your trust in God, and *get out the voters at the primaries!*”

“Would you advise me to attend these temperance rallies? Morrison is the chief speaker, you know, at all of them.”

“Go to all of them! He may be the chief speaker, but when his eloquence is forgot, people will remember your songs. Go and sing as never before! One of your songs will outlive a hundred of his speeches. Sing—and if you can—mark my word, sing—and if you can find anywhere a voice that blends with yours, and a heart that looks up to you as a leader, get that voice and that heart, and you are equipped with divine armor! The voice is God’s spear, the heart is his buckler.”

Thaddeus was pursuing his way in silence, but in deep thought. When he turned to speak to his friend, he was nowhere in sight. He had noiselessly slipped away down a convenient by-street, leaving Thaddeus to his own reflections.

“‘A heart that looks up to me as a leader,’” he repeated. “That can not mean Josie, for she has always rather exercised dominion over

me; or, if not that, has held herself beyond me. 'A voice that blends with mine!' That can not be Josie's; for, while our voices harmonize, they do not blend. Each is as distinct as gold and silver. 'A voice that blends'—whose can that be but Jennie's? 'A heart that looks up to me as leader?' Bless her! all through school-days, how she came to me for advice and help in her little troubles and in her lessons! 'A heart that looks up, and a voice that blends!' O Seth Russell, thou art a messenger from God! Thou art, in his name, the giver of sight to the blind! Thou art a liberator of the bound! Thou art the abode of the Spirit of God!"

With a lighter heart Thaddeus hurried home, glad that Morrison had prevented his interview with Miss Josie. Doubtless they were at that moment perfecting their plans for the continuance of their work together. If Providence would but open the way, the next meeting should be enriched by song, as well as illuminated by eloquence. "Two voices that blend," and two hearts that are complements will together strive for public favor on the same platform with two minds that plan, and two hearts that scheme for place and power. Never doubting that the way Seth Russell pointed out was the way the Father smiled upon, Thaddeus went to sleep with a deep-drawn sigh of relief.

XXVI.

VIEWS AND INTERVIEWS.

“ARE those blank pledges ready?” Miss Josie asked a few days later as she swept into the *Banner* office.

“Excuse me,” Thaddeus said, hastily arising and going toward the table where the pledges lay, wrapped and ready for delivery. “You need not have called, I intended to send them up to you.”

“Need n’t I?” she asked in a low voice, with a half-sad face, and then added: “But I wanted to come”—and after just the slightest pause, that was very effective in its work on the heart of the young editor, she said, half apologetically—“for the cards.”

Quickly, and with a show of asperity, Thaddeus said impulsively, a frown darkening his brow, “You need not have said that, for I knew as much.”

“But you do not know *all*, Thad. If you did, I know you would not judge me harshly. It was not my fault that Mr. Morrison was there first the other night. Will you come again—just once?”

This was said so earnestly and so pleadingly,

that his resentment vanished like a cloud of mist, and he replied, with a sigh of relief, a smile chasing the frown from his face :

“If it will please you.”

“It will. *Do* come! To-night?”

“Yes—as far as I now know.”

“*Do!*”

With that, and a backward glance and a smile, she hurried out the door, and was on the street before Thaddeus realized that he had violated a solemn pledge made to himself,—that he would not for any consideration call at Judge Tracy’s again.

“Fool that I am!” he said, in smothered tones, as he resumed his seat at the desk.

“Why did n’t I say *no*, and be done with it?”

“Too late for this week’s paper?” Wendell inquired as he walked in, holding up to view a communication.

“I guess not, if not too long; though we must go to press in an hour or two.”

“It is not long. Since you were not at the meeting, I have given you a little account of my speech at the rally the other day. Great crowd, and a fine time! I talked for an hour and a quarter, and made the fur fly, I tell you! Say, Thad, you must be with us next time.”

“I have been planning to go,” Thaddeus answered; quietly, but feeling very wretched at

the thought of the misery of the hour when he should see Wendell and Miss Josie the leading spirits where he had so long been in chief command, and she his willing assistant!

“That’s right. I want you to be there; for I know you can report my speech so much better than I can. Say!” and Morrison grew very confidential, lowering his voice to a whisper, and drawing a chair close up to the editor’s desk. “Make the *Banner* speak in its well-known convincing and entertaining style of my candidacy for Congress, and you will lose nothing by it when I get there! Say, Throckmorton, you deserve something nice for your faithful services the past six or eight years. How would you like to be consul at Callao, or some such place? I will get that for you, if I am elected. Shall I?”

“But if not elected, then what am I to get for the *Banner’s* service?” he asked, with a forced smile, half jokingly and half in earnest.

“By Jupiter!” Morrison exclaimed, rising hastily, “get what the rest of us get—a chance to pocket defeat, and try again!”

Thaddeus saw that Morrison was offended at his question, and so said in a conciliatory manner.

“But we will not anticipate any such trouble. You will be elected, of course, if nominated; and

nominated surely, if everybody proves true to you. The *Banner* never deserts the party."

"That is so, Throcky. The *Banner* has never deserted its principles," Morrison answered, in a kinder tone, and then said, referring to the communication he had brought in: "You may think it a trifle strong, the way I speak there of my speech, but it was remarked on all sides that the like had never been heard in this county before. One thing pleased the boys, and that was when I excoriated the Church. Put it in just as I have written it, and be sure to be at our next one yourself. I'll not forget you when I go to Washington. Father and the President were old army chums, and that will help. Father was on his staff at the close of the war."

"The knave!" Thaddeus said, with a stamp of his foot, though the word was muttered under his breath, as he glared after Wendell when he had gone. "Yes, I will put it in just as it is written, and I will be at the next meeting; and I will make the *Banner* bright with puffs for his congressional aspirations; and I will retire from Judge Tracy's, and will do many other servile things, all for the chance of political preferment for myself! He shall not know that I have the secret of his scheming!"

The more Thaddeus meditated upon the sit-

uation, the firmer became his determination to cast sentiment and devotion to the winds until after the election, and to be a cold, calculating, astute politician. "In that form I will go and call on Miss Tracy to-night," he said, pushing his chair aside, and hurrying to the case to "set up" Wendell's eulogy of his own speech; for the printers were behind, and the *Banner* must come out on time! By an heroic struggle through the rest of the day, Thaddeus kept his heart in the prison-house of his political aspirations, and shut love up in the dark dungeon of his self-control! With such prisoners in his breast he called at Judge Tracy's, and was received smilingly by Miss Josie. He was not himself at all. He was certainly another person. He dared not glance in the mirror as he stood before the hall-tree a moment before entering the parlor, whither Miss Tracy led the way, for fear he would be alarmed by his changed countenance. He wondered if Miss Tracy did not notice the difference. Perhaps she did; but if so, she made no sign of surprise. Of one thing he was certain: He was a heartless man; for was not his heart in prison? He was sure it was; for he could feel its throbbings through the thin walls of its hastily-constructed ward! He was a loveless man; for his love was fast asleep in the dark dungeon! Fast asleep? There he

was wrong; for it was the cry of love he heard, faint indeed, but very distinct, as he watched the gleam of a ring which Miss Josie turned round and round on her finger. She had on but one that night, though she usually wore several, and that one was his gift to her. It had never been returned, nor had he ever thought to ask for it, though it was the token of their plighted love! Was she toying with it to remind him that she yet wore it—and wore it to the discarding of all others? Surely not for that purpose; for her voice was gay and her eyes were bright—not a suspicion of regret in a single gleam that flashed upon him.

What could Thaddeus do with heart and love both bound with chains that night? *Do!* He could play the politician, and plan for success. He could show Miss Tracy that he was a man *now*, and not the foolish youth who had lost his heart to her!

And that he did—and more! What if Seth Russell had been hiding in the depths of the window! Would not his old heart beat wildly in admiration for the heroism of his friend's son? But Seth was not hiding there. He was elsewhere, and on an errand of mercy.

“Mr. Morrison tells me,” Miss Josie said, brightly, “that you have agreed to go to our next meeting.”

“Did Morrison tell you that? Well, it is true; but I wish Mr. Outwright had told you, for I promised him to go before I saw Morrison; and I would rather you would believe that I yielded to Mr. Outwright’s persuasion, and not to Morrison’s dictation.”

“Why?” This was said with a deep questioning from the eyes; but Thaddeus did not heed the silent inquiry, seeing that love was locked up, so he answered carelessly:

“For no reason, except that I believe in bestowing honor where honor is due, if I may be so bold as to assume that any one is honored by having me yield to his influence.”

“O!” she replied, with a little sigh, “I thought there might be some *other* reason. But what you say is quite natural and proper.”

“Thank you! I am in the race for the Senate, and mean to win if hard work and serious planning can carry me through. From now on there is to be no play where I am. I know what I have to contend against, and mean to be a man!”

Thaddeus was surprised at himself, and not a little ashamed. There he was before Miss Tracy, a non-voter, and a person without political influence, boasting of his manliness and of his courage. Why should he speak so loud, and with such a show of bravado? Why, indeed,

except to drown the voices calling to him from their narrow and uncomfortable prison-cells?

“What makes you speak so loud?” Miss Josie asked, quietly, smiling in genuine amusement at his defiant air. “Are you practicing for the campaign next month?”

“Beg pardon! Does my voice sound loud to you? It did to me; but I thought it was due to this cold I have taken.”

“Perhaps it is. But say, Thad, papa says you have no opposition for the State Senate, since Mr. Morrison declines to run. It was *so* kind in him to withdraw in your favor.”

“Certainly it was. Mr. Morrison is a very kind man. But of course you know, Miss Josie, that a man can not be a State senator and a congressman at one and the same time. I am willing to concede to Mr. Morrison all the praise he deserves for withdrawing from the race against me; but the larger prize he seeks must be awarded some influence in his action.”

“Perhaps your *friends* have induced him to seek the other prize, and to leave this to you?”

“Not at all impossible, but *very* improbable!”

“I hope you count *me* your *friend*?”

“It is an honor and a pleasure that I am proud to acknowledge.”

“I hope you will believe that I have some influence with Mr. Morrison.”

"Too much, by far!" Thaddeus said, hastily, and with such a manner of expression that he quite lost self-control, and his heart was in his throat in a second.

"Do not say that—especially when my influence has been used for your benefit."

"Political, you mean, of course, Miss Tracy," Thaddeus said, recovering self-control quickly.

"That, at least."

Then they talked briskly and cheerfully of temperance, of charitable work, of social events, and finally came back to politics, Thaddeus all the while acting the part he had assumed, and keeping all thought of the relations between them in the background. Not until he arose to go, and when she offered him her hand in saying good-night, did he permit himself to allude to their engagement even most remotely. Then, as if to test her, to sound the depths of her heart, to discover her real desire, he said, with what carelessness he could summon, assuming a matter-of-fact air: "Miss Josie, would you let me take that ring you have on?"

"Certainly, if you wish it;" and before he could add a word or explain his intention, the ring was in his hand, while his friend smiled upon him brightly, though he thought he detected a quiver of the lip, but was not sure.

Awkwardly, holding the ring still in his ex-

tended and open hand, he stepped back, bowed himself out, and heard the door close softly behind him, as if reluctantly shutting him away from that parlor and that heart.

"I hope I will not meet Seth to-night," he said to himself. "I feel like a traitor! Whom have I betrayed? Myself or Seth? Am I right, or am I wrong? Does pride, or does passion control me? Be brave, good heart! I have won the battle to-night! And yet another *such* victory would ruin me. I have lost more than I have gained. I went there clear-headed, fully persuaded as to myself! I am going away confused, and undecided whether my fortune is in her keeping or in the hands of—Seth Russell!"

"Who calls me?"

With a start of surprise, Thaddeus turned about to see his friend at his heels.

"Did some one call you?" Thaddeus asked, as they moved on together.

"Perhaps not; but I *felt* called to come out and meet you to-night—you or some other distressed soul. It must be you, seeing you are the first I have met. And does your heart bear up, son of my beloved?"

"Not as I wish; not as I wish!"

"A divided house can not stand, nor a divided heart. First of all, settle the heart. Success can come only to a true heart. A true heart is

a whole heart. Have only one *door* to the heart, and only *one* chamber! Who enters must be sure that *no* other hides in some unknown recess."

"But, Seth," Thaddeus said, musingly, "suppose the head and the heart do not agree, what—"

"Follow your *heart*. Out of the heart are the issues of life. The head is only the private secretary. A secretary may make a mistake. If so, the heart can correct it on sight."

XXVII.

A PROPOSAL OF MARRIAGE.

THE next meeting in the temperance movement was a more decided success in point of attendance, in enthusiasm, and in excellence of program than the preceding one. For some reason every class of people was interested. Ministers of various Churches, lawyers of notoriety, physicians and merchants, farmers and town-people, young and old, crowded to the township meetings with such unanimity as to make one believe that drunkenness, and especially the open traffic in intoxicants, could not continue one week in that county. Such unprecedented enthusiasm did not fail visibly to affect the bearing of the new factor in the movement, who, because he was a new factor, took to himself all the credit for the attendance and the apparent interest of the masses. From being a rather reluctant participant and a questioning follower, he suddenly emerged into the leader, not to say dictator, of the movement, taking the management out of Miss Josie's hands, making changes in the program, and in other ways asserting his personality until all spoke of the

gatherings as "Morrison's meetings." And so in fact they were. They were Morrison's because he controlled them, and they were Morrison's because he used them to further his own ends. Nevertheless all *that* did not affect the attendance, nor diminish the interest. It was quite the thing, all that summer, for the people to put up dinner in baskets, and spend one day, every two weeks, in the woods, giving heed to Morrison's eloquence and Throckmorton's singing.

When Morrison spoke, the people applauded, and cheered lustily when he had finished, and there the matter ended. When Throckmorton sang, the people were silent as the grave; but when he had finished, they cheered and cheered, again and again, and would not be content until he had sung another and another song; and there the matter begun, instead of ending, as in Morrison's case. Mothers and fathers went home, thanking God for such an example for their sons, and praying a blessing upon the head of one who preached and practiced a correct life. Young men went home, secretly to model their habits after Throckmorton, and to sing as best they could, at smaller gatherings, the songs he made popular at the Morrison meetings; while young ladies left the rallies determined to urge, by many a hint and open

declaration, their brothers and friends to become Throckmortons in life.

And yet, in all he did, Thaddeus did not seek his own. His attendance upon the meetings was a personal sacrifice all around. It took him from his business; it threw him into unpleasant contact with Morrison, whose sincerity he had great reason to doubt; it opened afresh the slowly-healing wound that Miss Josie's conduct had caused; it put him in association with Miss Jessup so constantly and so publicly that he was annoyed by frequent jocular references to it by inconsiderate youth and unkind adults. It was only because he had promised Mr. Outwright, and had listened to the entreaty of Seth Russell, that he started into the work. It was because a great desire seized upon him, after the first meeting, to put some soul into a movement which threatened to go to seed prematurely, and really to uplift the community, that he persisted in the campaign, submitting gracefully and patiently to the almost insufferable dictatorialness of Morrison. That *he* was an attraction never entered his mind. That he would gain votes in the Convention, did not form any portion of his calculations. An ardent advocate of temperance from principle, he rushed into this field with self-sacrificing ardor, because it was an opening he had long coveted.

That his singing was effective, he did not doubt; but with strange blindness he did not see from what earthly source came his strength; nor did he recall how perfectly his voice and Jennie Jessup's blended as she sang with him in duets; nor did he count the delicacy of conception nor the perfectness of touch with which she accompanied his solo singing with the organ, giving a clear field when he was strong, and supporting with full organ his weak places. He remembered, but did not sufficiently value, her labor in going through a mass of vocal selections every day to find something new and striking that just suited his voice. He knew that she had something ready at every rehearsal, and that she never failed to select just the thing; but he did not stop to consider what labor had been gone through with to secure it. He did not know—for he could not see, and no one took pains to tell him—how her mood changed with his in his singing, and how her eyes, her mouth, her whole countenance, indexed, unmistakably, the pathos, the power, the sadness, or the sweetness, of the song he sung. He did not know how there was no other person for her in all that great mass of people, while he was before them singing. He did not know how, nightly, she pleaded passionately at the Throne for his success, though she believed all the time that

his heart was pledged to another. She did not, after the first rehearsal, allow herself to give the slightest significance to his considerate attentions and little kindnesses, knowing he was, in the nobility of his soul, devoting himself to the work in hand for his love of it, staying away from Miss Tracy only that her cousin Wendell might be won to a life of sobriety and usefulness.

The final meeting of the series was to be at home, in the Brambleville music-hall, and a crush of people was expected.

It was within one day of that meeting, and Wendell was at Judge Tracy's home, in consultation with Miss Josie about some details of the gathering—or rather, was there to give his orders concerning the details, quite satisfied to leave the execution of his plans to her.

“Miss Josie,” he said, with a seriousness and a depth of feeling which he could simulate to perfection on demand, “with sincere regret I reach the end of this campaign. I will not longer disguise from you the pleasure I have had in this work because it is yours. It has been a delight to do your bidding. I will not withhold longer a confession I have longed to make, but dared not until now. I have kept the pledge. I have not touched a drop of intoxicants since we exchanged pledges that night. You have been my strength and my stay. But after to-morrow

night this delightful and helpful association will cease—I fear. I tremble for myself, unaided by you. How like a tower of strength you have been to me, let my successful, my first successful, keeping of the pledge answer! Miss Josie, dare I hope you will not cast me off to go to the bad? By the memory of these weeks of victory together, I beg you to let me be your servant longer—even for life!”

He took her hand in his. She made a slight movement to withdraw it; but, his clasp tightening, she permitted him to retain it for a moment, saying, with genuine embarrassment and confusion, for his declaration was wholly unexpected at that time:

“I do not quite understand you, I fear, Mr. Morrison.”

“Let me be candid, then, and let me be clear. Miss Josie, will you be my wife?”

Withdrawing her hand from his, she sat a moment silent, and then said, very slowly, and without any sign of emotion:

“I understand you now. You honor me, I am sure. You would not want me to answer you hastily. It is a very sacred relation—that of wife—Mr. Morrison. I could never marry where I do not love devotedly. It is sweet to me to hear you say I have helped you keep the pledge. It is very flattering to me to have you say your

hope of future success is in my acceptance of your offer. But would marriage without the heart be marriage at all?"

"Certainly, certainly, Miss Tracy. The courts nowhere inquire into the question of sentimental attachment. The only point to be decided is, whether the marriage contract has been legally celebrated and recorded. But in this case, Miss Josie, I have been led to believe the heart was not untouched."

"I am sure, Mr. Morrison, that no one could be thrown into your company, as I have been during the past few weeks, without being compelled to admire your brilliant talents as an organizer and as an orator, and to concede your perfect observance of all requirements of polite society. But I am not ready to-night to—to—say more."

"You do not reject me?"

"I do not, Mr. Morrison. My heart will not let me do that."

"Pardon me, Miss Tracy! Under the circumstances, may I not presume to ask you, is your heart free?"

"If I should say it *is*, you would take that as notice that you have your suit to win. If I should say it is *not*, you would believe your case won, and only the decision held in reserve," she answered, evasively.

“Ah, I see!” Morrison replied, with well-assumed grace, though he was impatient at this dallying, “you are a worthy daughter of a worthy sire. The judge himself could not be more politic. But I shall consider my case as under advisement. I beg you to remember what deathless results await your decision!”

That was a restless night for Miss Josie. She had in her hands the soul of an immortal being. So she thought. He had fame, brilliant talents, and wealth. His family were of highest respectability. When daylight came, she was sleeping from sheer exhaustion and restless tossing. She was sleeping because she had decided to accept his offer. She would become Mrs. Wendell Morrison. A note, dispatched to him by her father as he went to the office, told him of his acceptance by her.

As for Morrison, that night, he was as happy as a man like he was could be. He was as happy as he had been often before, when a packed jury had speedily reached a verdict in favor of his client—just that happy, but no happier.

The next night there was the crush expected at the music-hall. Every seat was taken, and every available space occupied. The hour for opening came. Mr. Outwright, who was to offer prayer, was there; the mayor of Brambleville, who was to preside, was on the platform; the

chorus of singers, Thaddeus, and Miss Jessup, were in their places; and only Miss Josie and Wendell needed to come to make the company complete. Miss Josie was waiting for her escort, wondering just how it would seem to go with him, now that he was her accepted lover.

"It is his way," Thaddeus whispered, to Mr. Outwright. "He will come in late to attract more attention. Suggest to the chairman that we have the opening numbers—the chorus, the prayer, and the next song. By that time he will be here—if he is coming."

"You do not think he would fail to come to this magnificent audience, do you?" Mr. Outwright asked, incredulously.

"I do not know. I am afraid he would if he wanted to."

The chairman did as suggested, and yet it fell to Mr. Outwright to bridge, with a few impromptu remarks, the gap left by Wendell's non-appearance between the song and his speech.

A half-hour slipped by, and Mr. Outwright was still talking, to the great delight of the audience; but Wendell was not there, nor would he be that night. He was at home—*drunk!*

Judge Tracy and wife were in the hall, having left Miss Josie to come with Wendell. When they learned of the cause of the failure of Morrison to appear, they quietly withdrew, and hast-

ened home to condole with their daughter over the failure of Morrison's appearance at the hall. But she needed more comfort than even their loving words could impart. The wound was deeper than they surmised, and was of a different character.

And yet she bore it bravely. She did not weep, nor moan, nor charge any one rashly. She was silent—so silent and uncommunicative that Mrs. Tracy was greatly alarmed.

“Do not worry, mamma dear. I will be myself by and by,” she said, quietly, with pallid lips and trembling voice. Then she asked: “Was Thad there?”

“Yes, of course, dear; but for him I fear the meeting would have been a failure certainly. But it was not. It was a great success. He does sing so magnificently!”

“Jennie was there?” she asked again.

“Yes; but seemed very sad. I wonder if she knew of Wendell's fall before she came! Poor girl, she is so wrapped up in him!”

“Papa,” Josie said, turning to him a sad face, and speaking in a voice that betokened an inward struggle to be calm, “did you deliver my message to Mr. Morrison this morning?”

“I did not, daughter. He has not been in the office to-day, nor did I see him. It is in my desk.”

“Then, papa, bring it home to me to-morrow. I would rather he would not have it just yet.”

“My dear, do not be so sorrowful. Such disappointments come to every life. Even our Master did not escape them. Everybody knows it was not your fault that he was not there, nor that he has fallen again.”

“Mamma, may I go to my room now—and be alone awhile? Do not worry about me. I will call you if I need you. I must think this all out. I do not see.”

“Be considerate, dear. Do not blame yourself,” Mrs. Tracy added, putting her arm around her daughter, and walking with her to the foot of the stairs.

“Good-night, mamma!”

Wearily—O so wearily!--Josie climbed the stairs, grasping the balustrade as she went up, and when alone in her own room sank into a rocker, and pondered upon the folly of that night, and perhaps of the whole campaign, thankful in her secret heart that the note was undelivered.

XXVIII.

AN UNMATED PAIR.

LET no one suppose that Morrison's return to his habit of drinking intoxicants, or his failure to keep his engagement with the people at the last rally of the temperance campaign, militated against his political prospects.

Quite the contrary; they were improved thereby, and no one knew this so well as Morrison! Indeed, but for his drunken spree just at that time, and but for his failure on that night, his most sanguine political friend would have predicted utter defeat through the opposition of the liquor-dealers. His spree revived in them their fast-fading hope that Morrison was playing a game with the temperance people, and was in reality the friend of the liquor-seller as before. Even the temperance element, kind, patient, and confiding people that they are, did not cast Morrison overboard, but said they would forgive that one failure; and to encourage him, and help him back into their ranks, they would vote for him just as they had intended to do before his fall. So if Morrison should not be given whatever political office he asked for, it would not be

because the liquor-dealers and the temperance people were divided on him; for they were not; but were most solidly united.

No wonder Billy Barnwell, the chief of police, slapped Sam Slimkins on the back, and exclaimed:

“Great Cæsar, Sam! Morrison is the greatest schemer on earth! And he’s got the grit of forty-’leven men! By Jupiter! No other man would have dared go into that temperance craze and hope to get the saloon vote; and no other man but Morrison would ’a’ gone on a spree at the very last meeting! But Morrison is Morrison, and there’s none like him! He’s got both the liquor-dealers and the temperance cranks in his pocket!”

“He’s slick,” Sam said, meditatively. “He told me all about it when he went in, so I ain’t surprised.”

Of course, Morrison gave himself to business with such untiring devotion that even Judge Tracy relented, and repented of his promise to his wife to dissolve partnership with Morrison as soon as possible. And the young lawyer appeared to be so sincerely sorry, and so humble with it all—so willing to be flayed alive, as it were, by her hands—that Miss Josie looked with pitying eye upon his misfortune, and, after several days’ deliberation, gave to him herself the

note her father did not deliver that eventful morning; and he became, after all, the possessor of Miss Josie's promise of marriage. Notwithstanding his privilege to call, now that he had her promise, and that in writing, he did not often go to Judge Tracy's, but excused himself from time to time, when expected, by pleading business engagements.

Very soon Miss Josie became filled with strange forebodings as to the strength of her influence over Morrison. She very wisely asked herself what could she do with him after marriage, if now, in the warmth of courtship, he came so seldom, and so easily found excuses for not coming when expected? But when he did come he was so entertaining, so considerate, so full of confession of past neglect, and so abundant in promises of future fidelity, that she could but admire him even as she pitied him. And yet things did not go smoothly; or rather did not move joyously; for there were no quarrels between them. Wendell was too much of a diplomat to permit such a thing to occur, and Miss Josie was too refined in thought and manner to take part in any unseemly controversy. But there were many and many weary stretches of time when both were trying to their utmost to be agreeable, even attractive, and utterly failed.

"I must be more lover-like, I suppose," Wendell would say to himself sometimes. "It is quite the proper thing, and no doubt she expects it. I must not disappoint her."

"I must be more winsome, and must appear happier to be with him," Josie would say to herself. "He seems so uninterested in my conversation. I suppose I should be more demonstrative, or something."

And so they planned what to say and what to do when they met, and, with it all, called themselves lovers!

"I am intending to leave on a business trip for a week or ten days," Wendell said, one evening. "I shall see many new and interesting places. Shall I write you descriptions of them?"

"I will leave that entirely with yourself," Miss Josie replied, quietly; Wendell, the meanwhile, wondering what she meant by that indifferent answer. He wished she had said, "Please do?" or, "Please do not?" so he would have known her desire. She, on the other hand, was much annoyed, though she displayed no vexation, that he should ask whether he should write. At any rate, she did not want him to write to please her only.

"I hope you will have a safe trip and a speedy return," she added, after a few minutes' silence.

"Thank you. I wish it were so you could accompany me—that is, I wish this was to be our wedding tour," he said, with more confusion than he was wont to show.

"Is that your idea of such a tour—business and pleasure combined? I always thought it should be wholly for pleasure," she said, blushing; for it seemed to her that he made the tour a secondary matter, a pleasant accompaniment to a journey of necessity.

"You quite misunderstand," he said. "I meant to suggest that my heart is impatient at delay. I was wishing for a near-by date, instead of the one so far away."

"The one far away is the one you first mentioned," she said. "Would you change it?"

"That seems to be best yet; but still, do you not allow me the privilege of *wishing* for an earlier date?"

"I should be happy to know you are really impatient of delay. It is something to every heart to be longed for."

"That is so," he said, in a business-like way, and rather absent-mindedly; for in truth he had not heard her last remark. And then there was silence. Presently he said:

"What do you admire most in me, Miss Josie?"

"I can not say, Mr. Morrison," she replied, promptly.

“Is there not one thing more than another which attracts you?”

“Not one thing,” she said slowly, and quickly added, so the remark would not wound, “for there are so many to be named.”

“If ‘so many,’ do me the kindness to name *one*—just *one*!”

“Please excuse me, Mr. Morrison; indeed, I can not make a selection. You would not like for me to insist on your telling me what one thing in me attracts you.”

“By Jove! I could do it in a second,” said Wendell, springing to his feet, almost forgetting, in his excitement, where he was or in whose presence. “I beg pardon!” he said, resuming his seat. “But for a truth, Miss Josie, I can name one, or a half-dozen traits of character that attract me. But it seems that not one reason can you give me for—for—I will not say *loving* me, but for accepting me.”

“Give me time to think, Mr. Morrison. Do not urge me now. I will tell you some time. Be patient with me.”

“I will not insist. When you have discovered it, let me know; for it is refreshing to be complimented in earnest once in a while.”

It was a positive relief when Judge Tracy came in and engaged in the conversation, drifting easily into politics and business.

“You have arranged to go next week to get those deeds signed, have you not?” the judge asked.

“Yes, Judge. I will start Monday. I am planning, however, to extend my trip to the seaboard, and will be gone ten days or more.”

“Very well; but get the deeds signed by all the heirs first, and send them to me by express. I have an engagement with a party Friday to close the sale of that property, but I can not give a clear title without those signatures. After that, you can continue your journey.”

“What deeds, papa?” Josie asked.

“Quit-claim deeds from heirs of my uncle’s estate. My father, you know, bought uncle’s interest; but it was never properly conveyed, and now we must get the heirs to quit-claim.”

“Are all the heirs at the same place?” Wendell asked.

“Yes, all at Waterford; all except one daughter. She went West years ago, and is supposed to have died childless. But that is only conjecture. At any rate she is not known to have left issue.”

“Papa, is that the same branch of the family that Tingleman’s wife claimed to belong to?”

“Yes, the same; but she had not a scintilla of proof to sustain her claim. It was all assertion, and agreed in its details with the family

history ; but that may have resulted from her familiarity with such details through some scrap of published personal reminiscences."

"Speaking of titles reminds me," said Wendell, "of a discovery I made the other day while searching the records for another purpose. I discovered that Aunt Jessup has never quit-claimed her interest in the estate my father bought of the heirs. I must call father's attention to it before Aunt Jessup drops off."

"Yes, it ought to be attended to at once. I am surprised to hear you say that; for Major Morrison is one of the most particular persons on titles that I ever had dealings with."

"Carelessness of some attorney, doubtless, before his son was old enough to look after his titles," Wendell said, laughingly, knowing full well Judge Tracy had always been his father's attorney.

"Perhaps," the other replied, smiling.

"O dear!" sighed Josie, "how glibly these men talk business, and how animated is Wendell's manner now, compared with its dullness a few minutes ago. I do believe I am a burden, and he has taken me only to wound Thad!"

Not to wound Thad! Not that, though he would not have winced at that result. Not to wound any one, Miss Josie, but to advance his own schemes! It is not an affair of the heart

with him, Miss Josie, but just a legitimate and possible way of becoming possessor of wealth he could not gain so quickly or so certainly any other way.

And what did you accept him for, Miss Josie? Not for love! No, for your heart could not deceive you in that. But for pity first, for fame next, and for punishment for your folly last!

XXIX.

THE CONVENTION.

FOR several weeks Thaddeus and Wendell gave themselves up to business, endeavoring to bring up work neglected on account of the long and exciting temperance campaign. Their friends were at the same time very busy in arranging for their nomination at the approaching Convention. Wendell's men had the advantage of long experience and unscrupulous methods; but Thaddeus's workers had the strength that comes from heart and mind united.

When the day for the assembling of the Convention came, everybody was surprised at the multitude of voters who came to witness the proceedings. Wendell's friends were not only surprised, but alarmed.

And well they might be! He had not usually triumphed through popular uprising, but had won his laurels by crafty scheming and unblushing bribery in the primaries and in the Conventions, knowing that the party would elect the nominee, whoever he should be. The throng of interested voters boded no good for Wendell in the Convention, though only regularly chosen delegates might

vote. Wendell was too shrewd a politician not to discover the true situation early in the day, as the streets about the square in which stood the courthouse began to fill up with men from the rural districts. He called to Sam Slimkins from his office-window, as the latter stood below on the sidewalk in the midst of a group of laughing men. As Sam entered the office and closed the door behind him, Wendell, his eyes dark with anger and his face set in hard lines by his suppressed wrath, exclaimed, with indignation:

“What is this I see? The streets are full of voters, and Throckmorton for the Senate is all I hear, go where I will! Is it for this I have been cashing all your bills these three months?”

“Keep your temper down,” Sam said, coolly, in expressive but inelegant language. “Do n’t be a fool, and do n’t die until your time comes.”

“But what does it mean? Have I been spending money like water to pack a Convention for Throckmorton? What have you done? Did you lie to me when you said you had a list of delegates, and that a majority were for me?”

Wendell was cooler now, but his anger was none the less intense. It was only under better control.

“Idiot!” Sam said, sneeringly. “This is not a mass convention. Let the crowd howl for Throckmorton. The delegates will do the voting, and

the delegates are ours, I tell you, and that by a safe majority."

"Safe majority!" exclaimed Wendell. "I am sick to death to hear you talk about *safe* majority! The majority ought to be so great that no thought would be given the other fellow. It was for an overwhelming, a crushing defeat that I have been paying you money!"

"Well, a defeat is a defeat. You must remember that we have had no child's play. Throckmorton is known in every nook and corner in the county, and you and your blasted temperance rallies have made him better known than he was. I tell you to thank your stars that your name is to be mentioned at all in the Convention. Man is a queer animal in a Convention. If a stampede strikes him, he is worse than a Texas steer. He will tramp the life out of his grandfather to get along with the crowd. We've got the delegates, but Throckmorton's got the crowd."

"Fool!" Wendell said, white with rage. "Fool! Did I not tell you that, and you said this is not a mass convention—only delegates can vote; and *now* you say Throckmorton has the crowd."

"And he has! That was your plan! You said, 'Let the primaries instruct for him, and let the delegates be chosen for me, and I will do the rest.' Now, do the rest! You will have your hands

full! Begin to slick up, and brighten your mind. We'll call on you for a speech, and it's for *you* to smash the instructions. Every precinct has instructed for Throckmorton, but we've got the delegates—or the most of them. They are your friends. Now go in and bust their instructions, and you are all right. I have done *my* part, now you do *your'n!*”

“Your part! Your part seems to be to spend all the money you get!”

“Here's the delegates. Look over the list. Count your friends, and see if they are not in the majority.”

Wendell took the list and read over the names of delegates, and, as he did so, his manner softened; for he saw that a very large majority were his personal friends, just such as he would have chosen. Indeed, the list was almost exactly the one he had made out, and asked to have sent up as delegates.

“Bully boy, Sam!” he said, cheerfully. “That's all right! I'll take my chances with those fellows every time! Say, have them understand that I'll settle all bills for liquor to-day. Hold the Convention off until two or three o'clock. Throckmorton's friends will get tired, and will begin to go home early. They are not the kind to hang on.”

“All right. I'll see the Central Committee,

and get them to wait until about three o'clock to call the Convention to order. We have from one to five, according to the call. I do n't care if I do," and Sam took the offered cigar, and sauntered out, leaving Wendell to his reflections. Though they had scowled and howled at each other for ten minutes, they parted as fast friends as ever; Sam to go out to smoke and drink with the delegates; Wendell to sit in his office and arrange the speech he was to make, when called out in the Convention, stopping occasionally to laugh over the sight of Thaddeus, when he should steal the nomination from him in a Convention that was instructed to a man for the young editor.

The meanwhile, in the private office of the *Banner* a group of men were assembled as if by chance, but they were there by agreement. They were not astute politicians, but they were terribly in earnest, and counted no amount of labor too great to insure success, though unalterably opposed to bribery. Only one in the group was a stranger to politics, and that one was Mr. Outwright, Thaddeus's pastor.

"This is new work for me," he laughingly said, when he came in; "but I will try to hold the hare while you men skin him."

In the group were Judge Tracy, Charles Christie, Simon Hunter, Captain Thompson, and Major Morrison. The last-named suspected the treach-

ery of his son in the matter, and was not surprised when it was broadly hinted by others present. Judge Tracy was not ignorant of Wendell's plan to abandon his Congressional aspirations at the last moment, and to seek the nomination to the State Senate; but as such an intention had not been made public, nor had come to him authoritatively, he felt justified in working with Thaddeus's friends, and hence was present at this last conference before the Convention assembled.

"What have we before us?" he asked, when all were assembled.

"Mr. Outwright will speak first, I believe," Thaddeus said.

"I am reliably informed, gentlemen," Mr. Outwright said, "that a scheme is on foot to steal the Convention from Thaddeus to-day, and to give the nomination to Mr. Morrison."

He paused, and a death-like silence reigned in the room for a minute or more. Then Major Morrison spoke:

"Gentlemen, this comes home to me quite naturally. If I were a delegate I should vote for Thaddeus, even as against my own son, for I believe in fair play; and up to this time there has been but one candidate in the field for nomination, and he should have the fruit of his labor. However, I believe it is only proper for me to

withdraw from this conference, that your plans may be unhindered by my presence."

And he withdrew in silence.

"I have suspected as much," Judge Tracy said, "but did not know for a certainty that it was so. On account of my business relations with Wendell, I feel that I must withdraw from this conference, though I am sincere in wishing abundant success to Thaddeus in this aspiration. He is competent and worthy. I will retire."

And he did, without protest.

"A very proper thing—ha! ha!—a very proper thing—ah!—for the major, and the judge, too, for that matter. Ha! ha! Fine gentleman—ha! ha!—both of them, with—ah!—a very delicate sense—ha! ha!—of fitness of things. By the way—ha! ha!—seeing that some one must take the lead—ha! ha!—Mr. Outwright, what would you—ah!—suggest for us—ah!—to do?" Mr. Christie said, smiling cheerfully upon the men who were yet in conference.

"I am not here, gentlemen, to suggest methods. I am here to work. If you have anything I can do, command me."

"By the way—ah!—Thaddeus, do you know who—ah!—that is to say, have you a list of the delegates? But, of course, you have—ah!—being an editor. Ha! ha! Ah, thanks! By the way, gentlemen—ha! ha!—let me read you the names—

ah!—of the delegates as chosen—ah!—by the primaries,” Mr. Christie said, taking the list Thaddeus handed him. “Ah! Mr. Russell,” he continued, looking up as the door opened, and Seth slipped in, and took a seat. “I suppose—ah!—gentlemen, Mr. Russell is—ah!—not intruding. Ha! ha!”

Seth said not a word, nor did any one object to his presence, so the reading commenced:

“S. L. King, Thomas Jackson, Robert Morton—”

“Gone to Chicago,” broke in Seth, referring to the last-named.

“Good!” said Captain Thompson. “He is worth ten men, do n’t you know? Morrison will miss him more than ten men. That whole delegation, do n’t you know, can be held to Thad, if Bob Morton ain’t in it, do n’t you know? Count the rest of that township for Thad.”

“But—ah! ha! ha!—what made Morton leave just now?”

Then Seth stood up and said: “Read on! Every now and anon you will strike the name of a delegate that has business somewhere else. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous. His ears are open to the cry of the needy!”

And the reading went on. From every township names were greeted by Seth with the remark, “Gone to Chicago!”

At the close of the reading, Captain Thompson said:

"It seems to me, do n't you know, that about all of Morrison's best workers have gone to Chicago, do n't you know? I do n't understand it."

"And you do not have to understand it, Captain," Seth said. "The ways of the Lord are past finding out."

"Nonsense! The Lord has nothing to do with Bramble County politics, do n't you know? Now, if you had said, 'The devil was to pay,' do n't you know, I'd have agreed with you."

"Der Sheegawga eggsbusion ees a midedy beeg ding to der fellers whad neffer bean dar," Simon Hunter said, gesticulating impressively with both arms. "Ond dare be gustomers ob mind dat I wands der see it already, right away off soon; ond Morrison he's mind freund, obv course, ond so I sends hees freunds, ond mind gustomers, too, to see der eggsbusion a week or tend days, already righd away, once. Ond dat's der vay the devil's ter bay, Cabtin!"

"You do n't mean to say," said Mr. Outwright, in surprise, "that you have hired Morrison men to go to Chicago, and miss this Convention?"

"Naw! I shust remarght dat I send ad me own eggsbense sume gustomers ob mind ter de Sheegawgo eggsbusion! I fine out mit mine freund, Sed Russell, day's Morrison's freunds,

doo! Ond I not wand der spoil dare drip, so I shusht say dat magdt no diffrence to me!"

"Well, well!" said Mr. Outwright, sighing heavily.

But the rest of the company laughed heartily, except Thaddeus and Seth. They were too busy just then in a whispered conversation to notice the general hilarity, or to remark the very satisfied air Simon Hunter wore, as he stalked about the room, and examined the portraits of politicians that hung against the walls.

"But what is to be done now?" Mr. Outwright asked, anxiously.

"Nothing. Ha! ha! I suppose—ah!—only to go to the Convention—ha! ha!—and see Thad nominated!" Mr. Christie said. "All the rest of the names are solid for Thad. Ha! ha! It would take—ah!—a cyclone—ha! ha!—to move the most of them—ha! ha!—from their ground."

"So our scare was for nothing."

"Not exactly, Mr. Outwright," Thaddeus said, the meanwhile holding Simon Hunter's hand in his own tight clasp. "But my friend, Mr. Hunter, had not told us of his interest in the Chicago Exposition, or we would have been less alarmed."

"But does n't Wendell know of the absence of his trusted followers," the pastor persisted.

"Perhaps; but if he does, he can do nothing now. His plan is to stampede the Convention

by a brilliant speech, to be followed by a rush for his nomination by acclamation. Mort Humphrey has kept me posted. It can not be done!"

"I hope not; but keep your powder dry, my friend, and do n't forget to pray," Mr. Outwright said, leaving Thaddeus and his friends to complete the details of their maneuvers in the Convention.

"This beats my day!" said a delegate, looking back over the immense throng that filled the court-room when the Convention was called to order. "Such a crowd to see one man nominated without opposition!"

"What man?" asked a fellow-delegate at his side.

"Throckmorton, of course. There is no other man mentioned, and all the townships have instructed for him."

"Instructed nothing! I was chosen delegate before any instructions were given. I shall vote my individual sentiments. I do n't want any psalm-singing saint to represent me in the State Senate!"

"I should say not! An imp from the regions below would do it better!" exclaimed Seth Russell, who had crowded his way through the press and stood just in front of the speaker, as they waited for the gavel to fall for silence.

"Only your age saves you from punishment," said the rebuked man, hotly.

“Let not that hinder you! But say, was it five or only two dollars that Sam Slimkins gave you out in the lobby?”

“He gave me—nothing,” the delegate said, quickly catching himself.

And so it was in every delegation. There was one or more who objected to being bound by instructions. They were noisy delegates, too. They had no fear of being heard. When Morrison appeared on the platform, cheers and stamping of feet greeted him from every part of the room. He bowed his acknowledgments, and sat down with a bearing born of a sense of his power to control his fellows.

After the Convention had been organized, the chairman—a mild and timid man, with a soft and low voice—called for nominations. There was silence for two seconds, then there arose a cry from every part of the room:

“Morrison! Morrison! Morrison!”

Thus appealed to, he arose, and, declaring his purpose to say but a few words, he launched out into a speech that was marvelous for its cogent reasoning, its brilliant rhetoric, its flashes of wit, and its sweeping torrent of argument. There was no mistaking the outcome of such an effort. Its conclusion was greeted with round after round of applause. The cheering ceased only to break out afresh. The chairman was helpless. His

voice could not be heard in the roar of stamping feet, clapping hands, and pounding of canes.

“Morrison! Morrison! Morrison!” was the cry.

He arose, again bowed his acknowledgment, and sat down, during which time there was silence, followed immediately by a wild uproar, in which the chairman’s gavel, pounding the table, was taken as a part of the applause, and not a call to order. It was a wild scene. Amid it all, Thaddeus sat near Morrison, silent, and as pale as death. A fearful struggle was going on within. It required all the will-power he possessed to keep him from fleeing from the scene of his defeat and humiliation. Morrison was beaming with smiles, and gave no heed to the silent rival at his side.

“Speak, man! speak!” said a whispered voice in his ear. It was Seth’s. “Stand up, and break the spell! In the name of all I have done for you, speak!”

Instantly, Thaddeus was on his feet. The storm subsided for a second, and burst forth anew; but with less force.

“Mr. Chairman!”

His voice rang out, with startling clearness, above the din. He hardly thought he could make himself heard, and was surprised to hear his own voice in that roar.

There was a hush.

“Mr. Chairman!” he commenced again, and for one brief space of time faltered, and then said, with steady tone and a voice free from emotion: “I move you, sir, that Wendell Morrison be declared the choice of this Convention for State Senator, and that the vote be by acclamation.”

This time it was Thaddeus’s friends who sprang into the breach.

“No! no! no! Vote! Ballot! ballot!” came from all parts of the room.

The spell was broken. Morrison’s men were without a leader. Sam Slimkins was there; but he never put two sentences together in the presence of an audience in his life, and was helpless in such an hour as that. Morrison himself dared not champion his own cause, having publicly declined to enter the race, and Robert Morton was in Chicago.

“Order a ballot,” Seth said, stepping down to the chairman.

“Mr. Secretary,” the chairman said, softly, “call the townships.”

In stentorian tones the clerk obeyed, and the ballot for State senator was begun, though no name had been formally presented. The battle was on. Not a township voted solid, and at each township there was a delay until the dele-

gation could be polled. The call was completed. The secretary hastily figured the result, jotted it down on a slip of paper, and handed it to the chairman.

"Read it yourself! Read it yourself!" they called to the clerk.

He took the paper out of the chairman's hands, and read:

"Throckmorton, 77; Morrison, 78!"

There was a cheer, but it quickly subsided.

"Mr. Chairman!" It was Thaddeus again. "I move the nomination of Mr. Morrison be made unanimous."

It was so ordered.

Then the Convention adjourned, and all went home sad. Thaddeus and his friends were sad, because he had lost. Wendell and his friends were sad, because it had been so slight and so dearly-bought a victory.

"It is night, it is night, son of my well-beloved friend," Seth said, opening the door of the *Banner* office noiselessly, and speaking to Thaddeus, who sat in his chair, oppressed by his misfortune. "It is night; but a star arises, and the day is not distant. I will retire."

"May I come in?"

Jennie Jessup stopped hesitatingly at the door which Seth had that instant abandoned to make room for her.

“Do!” said Thaddeus, springing to his feet. He advanced to meet her, and, giving her his hand, stood silent, not daring to say more lest his strong emotion should quite overcome him. At that instant heavy footfalls on the stair announced the approach of several men, and Jennie could only have time to say hurriedly, as she warmly clasped his hand in hers:

“Be comforted! It is far better to *deserve* success than to gain the day unworthily! Good-bye!”

XXX.

JENNIE JESSUP.

THAT night found Thaddeus at Miss Jessup's home; for he felt that he owed it to her to express his appreciation of her sympathy and confidence as manifested by her call at his office, something he had been prevented from doing at the time by the presence of strangers. He rang the bell, and, without waiting for any one to answer, he stepped inside the hall, and was hanging his hat on the rack when Miss Jennie appeared.

"You did n't expect me to-night, did you?" he said, in response to her look of surprise.

"Did not expect you, certainly; but you are welcome, nevertheless."

"I am *sure* I am," he said, seating himself in an easy-chair, and then added: "This is my *other* home, you know. Here I am as much at ease as in my mother's home. Queer, is n't it? I do not feel that way anywhere else in town."

"That is a compliment that I appreciate, as does my mother," Jennie said, blushing in spite of her effort not to do so; "though I believe it is not a new one."

“Hardly,” Thaddeus said, not noticing Jennie’s embarrassment; “for I just now recall that that is my usual preliminary remark here. It takes the place of saying, ‘The weather is fine for this time of the year.’”

“I am surprised, but delighted, to find you so cheerful after the Convention. I suppose you thought it strange for me to call at your office. It *was* a little bit unwomanly perhaps; but I presumed upon old acquaintanceship; and, besides, I thought a word *then* would count more than a score later on—after everybody had expressed sympathy, or you had recovered from your disappointment.”

“That is true. You surprised me by coming; but I did not think it strange, and certainly not unwomanly. Our long-standing friendship, our recent campaign together in the temperance work, not to mention the memory of our school-days,—all made it seem very natural. I came to-night purposely to tell you how very kind it was in you to do that very thing! You are still the whole-hearted and sensible girl you were, Jennie, when we were pupils in the old academy.”

“I am so glad you do not take your defeat to heart,” she replied, earnestly.

“Do you know, I am surprised at myself? At first I was crushed. When the first cyclone

of applause broke upon the Convention, and I saw what a hold Morrison had on the masses, I choked with grief, and was strangled with fear. Nor did I get any relief until I stood on my feet, and moved his nomination."

"Did you do *that?*" she exclaimed in astonishment, interrupting him.

"Certainly. It was the proper thing to do, though it cost me a fierce struggle with pride. I got my reward, however, in the ballot. He was chosen by only one majority; and if I had not spoken, or if I had not moved his nomination, I believe he would have carried the Convention by storm, and I would not have been mentioned. As it was, we measured strength, and, to my delight and his chagrin, it was almost a drawn battle. But I was down—away down—when you came. I felt that I would quit the town at once and forever."

"As your father did," Jennie said, meditatively, at that instant studying the carpet, and not Thaddeus's face. Had she not been, she would have seen the light fade from his countenance before the swift-moving cloud of distress that swept across his memory. For several seconds there was silence, when he said, slowly and sadly:

"An inherited weakness!"

And when her eyes questioned his, and he saw the regretful look on her face, he added:

“This fleeing from a shadow, I mean. But *I did n't* go, Jennie. Give me credit for *that*.”

“Pardon me! I should not have said that. I did not mean to. Mother was talking to me, just before you came in, and it was in my mind; for she alluded to it. I know how it distresses you. I will not refer to it again.”

“But, as I was saying,” Thaddeus went on, “I was feeling very despondent when you came. Seth was at the door just before you, and, in his peculiar way, comforted me; and then your coming was like a burst of sunshine on a rainy spring day.”

“Thank you! You are truly complimentary to-night,” she said, quietly.

“It is no compliment, Jennie Jessup,” he replied, adopting a form of address that carried them both back to their school-days, and their long, long ago love affair. “I would despise myself to speak compliments merely at such a time. I am in earnest. You will not know what you saved me from—you and Seth. I was at the verge of an awful step—a cowardly step—a disgraceful step. Every true man must feel it to be a disgrace to flee from duty because he must suffer if he stays. Your words—‘It is

better to deserve success and fail than to succeed and deserve failure'—were as a trumpet blast arousing me; and your manner, Jennie Jessup—so hearty, so warm, so unaffected and unstudied—revived my spirit as wine strengthens the faint in body. I have come to tell you that I—I—linger fondly over that scene.”

“I do not deserve such praise,” she said, softly, “and—pardon me—it hardly is right to receive such words from you, knowing, as I do, your relations to Josie Tracy.”

“Do me the honor to believe me when I say that there is nothing in my relations with any one to prevent your receiving such words, or any I may speak, if you will but take them. They are sincere!”

“I believe you, Thaddeus, I could not do otherwise; for you have never deceived me.”

“Never, Jennie, unless I was deceived myself. Sometimes I think I am easily deceived, and may have led others astray on that account.”

“But do you think Cousin Wendell will be elected?”

“O yes; the majority in this district is large, and the opposition have no hope of beating Morrison or any other man on the ticket.”

“Unless he beats himself! Poor cousin Wendell! I am afraid drink will ruin him! Just an evening or two ago he was here, and so intoxi-

cated that he was like a demented man. He said things that he would not have said for the world when sober. He told me a long story about Josie Tracy. Indeed, he said he was engaged to her; but I told him I knew better; that you were the favorite there, and so on. But he ridiculed the idea, and said you were 'out,' and such nonsense."

"Of course," Thaddeus said, evasively, "you can put no confidence in anything a man says when he is under the influence of liquor. And yet I have known men in that condition to tell the exact truth. It seemed an accident; not a deliberate purpose."

"And another thing he told me seemed queer. I wish he had not told me, even if it is not true. He said he had been spending weeks in straightening up Judge Tracy's title to his property; that perhaps the whole thing would have to go through the courts."

"Nonsense!" Thaddeus said, impatiently. "There is no better real estate lawyer in the nation than Judge Tracy. It is incredible that a man whose opinion in such matters is taken as law by everybody, should himself be the victim of a defective title, or should depend on so careless a lawyer as Morrison for clearing away a cloud."

"But he said," persisted Jennie, "that the

defect was in the title before Judge Tracy's day, and that it did not appear until he wanted to sell a part of his estate."

"Perhaps so; but I can not believe it. I will quietly look into it myself. While Morrison is running for office, I will be looking up his title to landed estates, if what he told you is true," he said, with a forced laugh.

"What is true? About Josie, or the judge?"

"Both!"

"For years and years our family had trouble about titles. Of course I do not know much about it; but I have heard mother and Uncle Morrison talk it over. They do not agree in every particular, and it is hard for them to keep in good humor with each other when that subject comes up. It is so annoying! I would rather lose a small fortune than to go into the courts, and have family matters looked into by strangers. So mother says, too. She is proud of her family name. One thing, though, I never could understand, and that is why Uncle Morrison is so wealthy, and mother has only barely enough to keep her. It seems to me there was an unfair division somewhere."

"Not necessarily," Thaddeus said, thoughtfully. "Your uncle is a great man to make good bargains, and his real estate deals have been wonderfully profitable. Your mother, I suppose,

has been content to take legal interest on her money, and—”

“Not so. Her money is with Uncle Morrison’s. At least he pays her interest. But why does his grow into houses and farms, and ours not?”

“That is a question,” Thaddeus said. “While I am studying Judge Tracy’s titles, shall I look up your matters? Seeing that it is all in the family, I might just as well,” he said, gayly.

“Do!” Jennie replied; and then the conversation drifted off into other channels, and Thaddeus found ten o’clock all too near, as they reviewed together school-days and after years.

“Well, well!” he said, rising to go, “if one had told me at five o’clock—when I was murdered figuratively by your cousin—that at ten o’clock I would be laughing and chatting with you, like a real live man, I should have thought him daft!”

“Come again—soon!” Jennie said, extending her hand.

“May I?” he asked, eagerly. “Though this *is* my other home, I like to be *asked* to come, and like to be treated a little as if I were *not* home-folks when I go away,” he said.

“I was going to walk to the gate with you,” she said, laughingly; “but as I would not do *that* with any but home-folks, I will stop here.”

"Do come!" he replied, taking her hand upon his arm, and without much entreaty she permitted him to lead her to the gate.

"If there is n't Seth Russell!" Thaddeus said, as he passed out into the street, and waited until the old man joined him.

"Good-night! Sweet be thy dreams," he said, bowing to Miss Jennie; and then, turning, he walked off with Seth, who did not, apparently, see the young lady at the gate, yet, notwithstanding, he saw and understood.

"Son of my beloved friend, the polar star is unchanging. Whatever sea you are on, let its light be your guide! God is unchanging. With him is no variableness, nor shadow of turning! God is love! Hence true love changeth not. True love is the polar star of human life. Son of my beloved friend, take your eyes off the moon's fair face, though she sweeps the heavens in queenly beauty! When the moon has gone from sight, the polar star remains. The moon is friendship; the star is love!"

"What an odd fellow you are!" Thaddeus said, impulsively, and reached out his hand to clasp that of his faithful guide; but at that instant he darted into an alley, and was gone, calling back impressively:

"Remember what I say, and mark it well—mark it well!"

XXXI.

TWO CALLS.

THE office of the recorder of deeds of Bramble County gave up to Wendell Morrison some very surprising secrets as he was gathering information concerning the title to the piece of property Judge Tracy had contracted to sell at such a good bargain.

The same records were open to the inspection of Thaddeus Throckmorton, or any other person who cared to examine them; so when he began to follow the indications brought to view at his first real search after the truth—a task taken up out of curiosity, after his call upon Miss Jessup the evening of the day of his defeat in the Convention—he was surprised at the revelations the musty old books made. But the political campaign was at its height soon afterward, and his duties as editor and reporter—for he must be both—interfered with his searching the records, and he was compelled to defer full investigation until after the election.

But Morrison was not less busy, having calls to speak every day up to the time of election. He, too, was compelled to put off his investigations to a more convenient season.

His district was thought to be so reliably certain that he was taken by the Central Committee to other portions of the State, where he did efficient service for his party, and returned home in time to vote, with accumulated laurels, and a dazzling name as an orator. That he had kept sober during his speech-making tour was a great delight to his real friends, and a sore disappointment to his political enemies, who had predicted his return in disgrace before a week had passed. They were false prophets, every one of them.

He had written to Miss Josie nearly every day of his absence. He could not well avoid it, for she wrote to him every day a letter that was intended to restrain him—if a letter could do such a thing—and was also intended to foster and develop her love for him. She felt the need of loving him more, if she was to be his wife, and deliberately set about to develop her love to a proper degree. She forgot his weaknesses, his meannesses, his heartlessness, and thought only of the brilliant orator, the successful lawyer, the rising politician, the humble suppliant at her feet, the very gallant and always entertaining escort. She forgot his carousals, and remembered only his conquests. She forgot his broken pledge to sobriety, and remembered only her promise to be his wife. With the forgotten

things behind her, and the remembered things before, she wrote, every day, womanly and yet guardedly ardent letters to her lover. But as she wrote she caught herself blushing painfully, though in the privacy of her own room. Blushing, not for love of the man she called her betrothed, but because the words she traced were so dazzling and so empty; because they so mocked the throbbings of her heart.

“It is false, and I will not send it!” she said once, twice, and very often as time slipped by, when a sheet of note-paper had been filled with words of affectionate regard; so she tore it into shreds, crushed them in her hands, and crowded the mass down deep in the silken bag that hung by her desk for such scraps. But straightway she would begin another letter, would write more deliberately, and choose her words more wisely, and the corrected epistle would be mailed in haste lest it, too, should find its predecessor in the dark depths of the bag that beckoned it to its legitimate resting-place.

What could Wendell do but answer these daily missives? And answer them he did; answered them as he answered all his letters, promptly, briefly, and without unnecessary gentleness. Without his knowing it—for he did not take time to think about it—his answers all took the same shape, and amounted to the same thing.

“Miss Josie”—they would begin, and then would rush on like this, in a very clear, but exceedingly fine hand:

“Yours received. Glad to get it. Did me good. Write again. Great meeting last night. Crowded house. Fine music,—and a splendid speech, they all say. Have no time to write. See the daily. WENDELL.”

He need not have suggested that she should look up what the dailies said about him. She saw the papers, and was not insensible to the reflected honor. Truly Wendell Morrison was famous. His speeches were printed in full many times, and the papers lauded him to the skies. But she was not satisfied. She fed on husks. Her heart was starving, and she did not know what was the cause.

“He will be home to-morrow. I wonder if he will call here first?” she said, musingly. “I hope so; for it would be very humbling to my pride not to have at least a call at once.”

And her pride was humbled! Why should Wendell call on her, when he arrived home to find that, while he was gone, his hired servants had been asleep, and his enemies had sowed tares in his political field. With the quick apprehension of a trained politician, he discovered signs of defeat at his very door. With consummate skill and unparalleled energy, he rallied his forces, and pushed hard for victory. In

vain! He was not elected! The whole State was carried by his party, but his district elected the opposition candidate. It was very mortifying. Telegrams of condolence poured in upon him; but they could not change the result, and went but little way toward healing the wound. He sat gloomily in his office the next day, surrounded by a group of his local adherents, listening with curling lip to their explanations of the causes of his defeat, and casting off with a sneer their well-meant but ill-chosen words of consolation, committing them all with angry vituperation to the lowest depths of Hades, when some one said, in a low tone:

“A lady, Morrison, wants to see you.”

“Who is it?”

“Miss Tracy, I believe.”

“Tell her I am busy. Call again some other time.”

No need to tell her. She had heard, and she retreated down the steps in hot indignation, her eyes blinded by tears of stricken pride. But she did not call again; nor did Morrison call on her until several days had passed, and the news of his defeat had ceased to be a current topic. That call was very unsatisfactory, except in one particular. He asked, and she readily granted, an indefinite postponement of their marriage, which had been set for the holidays.

Wendell's bearing toward Thaddeus changed completely after the election. Instead of haughtiness and a domineering manner, there appeared studied politeness and courteous consideration. He seemed to accord the young editor a footing equal to his own, and treated him as a peer and not as an inferior. The responsive soul of Thaddeus ran to meet these overtures of peace, and rejoiced that the *Banner* had given Wendell unfaltering support, and his defeat could not be charged to silent resentment of that paper on account of the loss of the nomination.

"It almost pays me for what I suffered, to see Wendell so humbled and so softened by his failure," Thaddeus said, to Jennie Jessup, one evening, a month or two later.

"And it pays me," she replied, with pardonable flushing of her face, as she slipped her arm in his and led him to the parlor, "for all I have suffered these years, to see Thaddeus so humbled and so softened by his failure to win an heiress that he will come back to his always faithful and devoted Jennie, of school-days' attachment."

"Come back?" he exclaimed. "I am not sure that I ever got away; though, I must confess, I tried very hard. But do not blame me, Jennie; that is, do not censure me too strongly. I thought I might just as well marry rich as poor; and, then, there was much that was congenial between

'the heiress' and myself—if you will persist in calling your old friend by such a title."

"That is right, my dear. You are good at confessing. No, I do not think you ever really got away; for, 'can you tell me how love cometh?'" she said.

"'It does not come,'" he quickly answered; "'t is sent.'"

"And, 'can you tell me how love goeth?'" she asked brightly.

"'It was not love that went,'" he said, laughingly.

"Of course not; for you are here," she returned, warmly. "So, now, we will let that subject drop, for a while."

"About a minute?" he asked, teasingly.

"Yes—or a half."

"But, before I forget it, did you not tell me, Jennie, your mother had a genealogical chart of her family?"

"Yes; one reaching back to the family that first came to America."

"Well, let me take it when I go home. I have run against a snag in my search in the records that it will help me remove. Now, do n't forget. You promised it to me the last time I was here, but let me go off without it."

"I suppose that is what brought you down to-night?"

“Partly—principally, perhaps.”

“Well, if you take it with you, you will have no excuse for coming to-morrow night.”

“O yes, I will! Choir-practice, you know?”

“That reminds me! Let us look over this new anthem-book. It has such lovely duets in nearly every piece. Mr. Outwright said, last Sunday—you were not there, you know—that he was hungry for another duet; that he had not heard us sing any since the temperance campaign. Let us surprise him next Sunday?”

“Good! He deserves to be surprised. He is so like a father to me.”

“There! I guess that will do for one!” Jennie exclaimed, two hours later, as they went through, the third time, a faultless arrangement of a striking duet.

“There!” Thaddeus exclaimed, in the same breath. “The clock in the steeple strikes ten, and I am not at home yet!”

And so it was that, in the hurry of his departure, taking into account the many hindrances—finding his hat, his gloves, and so on—the chart was forgotten again, and the next day nothing was done by him in his search among the musty records. But Wendell was buried in the great books that were to play such a part in the affairs of both Miss Tracy and Thaddeus Throckmorton.

XXXII.

SEARCHING THE RECORDS.

THERE was one thing Wendell Morrison knew about Judge Tracy's real-estate affairs before he began the search of the records: that was, that a large part of the estate was Mrs. Tracy's by will of her father. Wendell knew this through common report, and not from the testimony of the records. In his search he came upon the will, and found his belief confirmed thereby; but he found more. He discovered that this estate—Mrs. Tracy's—descended to Miss Josie at the death of her mother, and that a stated amount of the income therefrom, a very handsome sum, was to be annually paid to Miss Josie after she was of age. But as Judge Tracy was sole executor of the will, without bond, and as Miss Josie was careless of her rights—seeing her father supplied every want, real or imaginary, in a generous way—it was doubtful whether the stated amount had annually been paid over to her. If it had not, a small fortune belonging to Miss Josie was in her father's hands.

“In bank-stock, doubtless,” Wendell said to himself, with a low whistle of satisfaction as he

replaced the documents he had been examining in the probate judge's office.

He turned from his investigation of the will to the record of deeds, further to trace the title he was endeavoring to quiet, and was surprised and startled to find that Mrs. Tracy and Miss Josie had transferred to Judge Tracy all their right, title, and share in the Lysander estate, the consideration, as the record had it, being "one dollar in hand paid, and love and affection."

"Fools! fools! fools!" he said, slamming the pages of the huge record together, and turning to leave the office. He had spoken aloud.

"Who are fools?" the clerk asked, looking up from his desk.

"Everybody!" Wendell exclaimed, throwing open the office-door in a vengeful way, letting it swing back into its place with a loud bang.

The clerk smiled broadly, and kept on at work; while Wendell sought the privacy of his own office, and took what consolation he could get out of his expensive cigar, as he meditated upon how to get rid of his engagement to a penniless "heiress." He meditated only a few minutes, however, and then sprang to his feet, saying wrathfully:

"Everybody is a fool, and I am the biggest!"

Immediately his dark face took on a more cheerful expression, and a smile played about

his lips. He gathered up his memoranda concerning the title in question, and returned to the office of the registrar of deeds, quite gayly entering upon the work he had so recently abandoned in disgust.

"It is a small matter after all," he said, and laughed softly at his own foolish fears of a short time before, "that she deeded the property to her father, since she is his *only* heir."

While Wendell was in the office of the registrar, Thaddeus came in, hastily examined a record, and went out.

"What is Trockmorton up to?" the clerk asked Wendell.

"I do n't know. Why?" Wendell replied, carelessly.

"I supposed you would; for he has been tracing the Morrison real estate."

"How 's that?" Wendell asked, interestedly.

"He has been making inquiries about the Morrison genealogy, and looking through the records for Morrison transfers."

"I can not guess," Wendell said, with a tone and an air that were meant to convey the idea that he *did* not care.

The clerk had left his desk, and was standing by the table where Morrison had a huge volume spread out, expecting, no doubt, a bit of gossip, or an inkling of Throckmorton's purpose. Wen-

dell's sudden relapse into indifference puzzled him, and as no further information was given or requested, the clerk returned to his writing, and the attorney continued his searchings in silence.

Wendell returned, after a time, to his office, quite well pleased with his day's work; but disturbed in mind by the information that the clerk had imparted. If true, and he did not doubt it, there must be some object back of it. What interest had Thaddeus in Morrison affairs? That is the question Wendell pondered upon. He had given little heed to Thaddeus's visits to Mrs. Jessup's home. It possessed no significance to him. He did not know that Miss Josie had broken an engagement with Thaddeus to accept him; though he knew Thaddeus was not then, as formerly, a frequent caller at Judge Tracy's. He attributed that more to Thaddeus's increasing independence of thought and action, as manhood took on strength and wisdom. What attracted his attention and awakened surprise was mention of property interests. He thought hard and fast, and, after a long time, came back to the remembrance that his Aunt Jessup had not quit-claimed her interest to his father. That remembrance was an electric-shock.

"Jupiter Pluvius!" he said, excitedly. "I will make father get that deed this very day."

With that he hurried out on the street, and

made a tour of the principal business places, hunting for Major Morrison, that he might lay the matter before him. He came back to his office, a half-hour later, vexed because he had not found his father, and was surprised to see him sitting in Judge Tracy's big chair, awaiting his son's return. Wendell lost no time in stating the case. His father heard him through, and said:

"It surely is recorded, Wendell; for Judge Tracy told me at the time that he would get it. I supposed he had it. Ask him about it, and if he says he did n't, I will see to it at once."

Major Morrison's quiet and confident manner had its effect on Wendell. He admitted he was too hasty in his conclusions, and the two drifted off into other subjects. When Major Morrison had gone, Wendell went to a compartment in the office-safe where he knew Judge Tracy kept deeds and kindred papers, and examined the vast collection carefully. He did not find, as he hoped, the unrecorded quit-claim deed; but he did find, very unexpectedly, a document that repaid him for his trouble, he thought. It was an old deed, conveying one hundred and sixty acres of Missouri land to Richard Throckmorton "for and in consideration of one dollar in hand paid, and legal advice and services in the case of *The People vs. John Thompson.*" This yellow and

soiled document—colored from age, and soiled by repeated handling in shuffling the pile of papers of which it was one—had no filing marks on it, and Wendell rightly concluded that it had never been recorded, either.

“I will make a memorandum of the land, and look it up,” he said, putting the papers back in the safe. “If I find it is worth anything, I will trade for it—at least, buy Thad’s equity. I suppose he is in profound ignorance of this property.”

The mail that left Brambleville an hour later, carried a letter to a prominent law firm in the county in Missouri, where the land was located, in which Wendell asked for information as to the probable value of the land described. In a few days the answer came, and it startled Morrison by its statements. The land lay adjacent to Kansas City, and, the letter said, was very valuable acre property that could be platted, and made an addition to that booming city.

“Here’s my chance!” Morrison said, striking the desk a resounding blow. “I’ll buy up Mrs. Throckmorton and Thad before they know what they are selling, and will pocket the profits.”

Nor did he lose any time in making his proposal to Thaddeus. He appeared unconcerned, and as having only a moderate desire for the property when telling Thaddeus about it, and

said to conclude with, "Of course your equity is all I buy. It would have to go through the courts, and your father's death would need to be proven some way. I may lose all I put in it, but still if you would rather have a thousand dollars than your right to this property, just say so, and I will give you a check, or at least father will."

Thaddeus was in his shirt-sleeves in the middle of the composing-room, where Wendell found him helping the printers get out the *Banner* on time.

After several seconds of silent consideration, he began, "I will take it," but, turning abruptly, gave some order to the foreman before completing the sentence.

"All right," promptly replied Wendell, "I will bring father up right after dinner."

"Hold!" Thaddeus called. "You do not understand me. I will take it under advisement, and will talk with mother about it."

"You will!" Wendell exclaimed, very visibly nettled by this unlooked-for step. "Do so, if you think best; but, mind you, I do not make that proposition indefinitely. Perhaps by to-morrow I will have changed my mind. Indeed, I am almost sorry now I offered it. It was a foolish thing to do without seeing the property; but I did it, and will stand by it until morning."

"Very well," Thaddeus said, quietly, and

turned to his work without so much as a word of surprise at the discovery.

Wendell returned to his office in a rage. He well knew that Thaddeus would not sell at any price he could name, if he took time to investigate the property.

Wendell was correct. Thaddeus investigated and immediately declined even to name a price he would sell for.

Wendell consoled himself by thinking the title would probably be very much clouded by tax-sales and delinquencies of various kinds, and in the end Thaddeus would rue his refusal to sell.

It was about this time that Mr. Outwright called upon Thaddeus to make inquiries about the Tingleman children.

“Who helps you take care of them?” he asked, and then remarked, “Some money could be appropriated out of the Charity Fund on Thanksgiving-day, if you think it right to be done.”

“Thank you,” said Thaddeus, coloring slightly. “Mother has learned to love the little fellows very much; and they love her, I am sure. We do not think of them except as part of our family. I would just as soon think of taking charity money for myself, as for them. I do not miss what they require, but I would miss them if taken away.”

Those were simple words, spoken in unaffected

manner, as Thaddeus leaned upon the showcase in which the fine cards and stationery were kept, the minister just in front of him; and yet there was something in the words, or perhaps in the manner of the young editor, that touched Mr. Outwright's heart, and he said impulsively, laying his hand in a blessing upon Thaddeus's shoulder:

"God bless you! You are an odd fellow; but I am sure the Father will reward you for caring for his orphans."

"He does," Thaddeus replied, earnestly. "He does, Mr. Outwright. I get back in money all I spend on them, and get back in love and friendship all I give them, and more too."

"I believe you do! Well, I will not trouble myself any further about your wards, since you and the Father have such a perfect understanding of the case. I am willing to trust you both, or either of you."

"Thank you!"

"Well, I hope the boys will grow up to be industrious and bright, and will, by and by, take the *Banner* off your hands, and keep you in old age as you keep them now."

"I hope so," Thaddeus said, with a smile; and the pastor went out to look after needy orphans, who had no such protector as this "odd fellow," as he so often called Thaddeus.

An hour later Thaddeus was surprised by a call that was unheralded, for Henry Tingleman walked into the *Banner* office, and abruptly said:

“I have come for my children!”

For a moment Thaddeus was puzzled to make out who the man was; for he was greatly improved in appearance since they last met. He was well-dressed, had a cleanly-shaven face, and wore an air of self-respect and reliance.

“You have!” Thaddeus said, arising to greet him. “Why, Tingleman, you have been made over! Where do you come from?”

“That’s right, Throckmorton, I have been made over, and I come from Kansas City, praise the Lord!”

“But you are not after the boys!” Thaddeus said, with keen disappointment, remembering how his mother would hate to let them go.

“Yes; I have come to take them off your hands. I suppose you thought I had forgotten them and you; but I had n’t. I am doing well out West. I am joint car-inspector for all the roads in the city, and have been converted to Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord!”

“Tingleman,” Thaddeus said, eyeing him closely, and feeling a thrill of pleasure he could not describe, as he looked upon the sober and sincere man before him. “Tingleman, when I last saw you, you were a swearer, and now I hear

you blessing the Lord instead of cursing. You used to drink, and now you are sober. You do not know how happy it all makes me!"

"Nor you do not know how happy it makes me. Praise the Lord!" Tingleman replied. "I am not the same man. I have been born again, and I have come to show the boys their father."

"To be sure! And now let us hasten, for I am keeping you from them. It is dinner-time anyway. How glad mother will be, and yet how sad, too, if you take her boys from her!"

It was very late in the afternoon when Thaddeus returned to his office; for he lingered long after dinner at home with his mother, Tingleman, and the boys. His friend had much to tell him about Kansas City. Thaddeus was delighted to learn from this disinterested witness evidence of the value of all real estate in that city at that time. He returned to his work with a lighter heart than when he went home; for the boys were to stay with them until Tingleman should have a home of his own.

"That will be a long time," he said, softly. "I can not forget my angel in heaven long enough to think of another."

But Tingleman had another object in returning to Brambleville. He had met in the West a man who said he was Richard Throckmorton, and who had made special inquiry for Thaddeus,

though he knew not his name, designating him only as "my child," and Tingleman wanted to satisfy himself of the stranger's identity before he accepted his statements, or made known his discovery.

XXXIII.

AN UNEXPECTED RETURN.

RICHARD THROCKMORTON came home; but he came as he had gone, silently in the dead of night, unannounced and unexpected—unexpected by all except one, and that was Seth Russell. From the day he heard that Throckmorton was alive, and had been seen by Tingleman, Seth met every east-bound train, whether it came at noon or at midnight. He watched with feverish anxiety for the stepping off of the cars of one who would be so strange as to justify his asking him if he were Throckmorton. He came one midnight when Seth and the night operator were the only persons at the depot when the train rolled in. No need to ask if that were Throckmorton! Seth recognized him at sight. Who would not recognize that tall form, that massive head, that bearing of a king, if he had ever seen it before? And yet the form was bent, the hair was long and white as the snow, the large mouth was uncovered by moustache, though a long beard exactly matched the hair in color, and the eyes were almost hidden in the mass of wrinkles that encircled them, ex-

cept when opened in surprise. There was a childlike simplicity and timidness in the movements of this stalwart man that belied his appearance, and that touched all hearts. His manner was that of one lost in deep study, and not until he was engaged in conversation did the awful truth flash upon the inquirer out of the mass of bright and beautiful ideas expressed in elegant language, with which he repaid such attention given him. He was sadly bereft of reason. He lived in the past, with just enough of attention to the present to keep him from accident. His mind was strong and active, and he would grasp and hold any form of information while in actual use; but then would follow lapses of memory and failure of volition, that were distressing in the extreme. Such was the man that Seth Russell met that midnight hour. He followed him away from the light of the depot window, as he started aimlessly down the street, and, when in the shadow of a building, he overtook him, saying:

“Is n’t this Richard Throckmorton?”

“The same, at your service. And who are you?”

The haughtiness with which the answer to Seth’s inquiry was spoken, was in painful contrast to the timid and wistful asking of the question that followed.

"I am Seth Russell. You know me!"

"Seth Russell!" Throckmorton exclaimed, in tones of glad surprise. "Seth Russell, have n't I been looking for you everywhere these years and years?" and immediately the strong man was overcome, and was a child again. He broke out into tears, and sobbingly said:

"Why did n't you come, Seth? I could n't find my way back. I have tried to get here, but always got lost somewhere."

This was said in weak and cooing tones, Throckmorton, the meanwhile, hugging his friend close to his breast.

"O my friend! my friend!" Seth exclaimed, as he hid his own tear-stained face in the bosom of his friend. It was clear to Seth that Throckmorton was unbalanced in mind. At once he had the key to his long absence. Sound in many respects, his mind was unreliable in many others.

"Will you let me lead you home?" Seth asked finally, taking his hand, as one child walks with another whom it loves.

"Yes, Seth, lead me home. The child, Seth? Is the child here, and is it well?"

"The child, Richard, the child!" said Seth, with difficulty suppressing the sobs that were breaking his heart. "The child will make you glad. It is here, and is well."

"And Alice, Seth? Is Alice well? Does she forgive me for not coming sooner?"

"Yes, Alice is well, and is waiting for you. She forgives you, and loves you dearly."

"Does she?" Throckmorton said, and, softly laughing, walked with Seth along the one-time familiar streets, heeding nothing, and eagerly stretching forward to get to Alice and the child, clinging to Seth's hand with a clasp that clearly showed how afraid he was that he would lose him.

At that very hour Thaddeus was in Kansas City with Tingleman, hunting for the man who said he was his father. Tingleman had been careful to learn the elder Throckmorton's residence, and all he could tell about himself; but when he returned, and Thaddeus with him, the old man had gone, no one knew where. So it happened that Mrs. Throckmorton was alone when Seth brought her husband to her.

"Here he is!" Seth said, as he led Throckmorton in. Mrs. Throckmorton having hastily dressed and come down in answer to Seth's assurance that it was he who wanted to see her a minute.

"Not Richard!" she said, standing for a moment like a statue, her hands clasped before her, and her face darkening with grief, and almost instantly lightening up with joy and love. That

word "Richard" startled Throckmorton into consciousness. With stately grace, he stepped toward her with beaming countenance, and said, in tones that belonged to the long, long ago:

"Alice, my darling!"

"Richard, my precious husband!"

She clung to his neck, and kissed his lips, his face, his forehead repeatedly and passionately, while he held her close in his love-strong arms, and looked into her eyes with melting tenderness, softly saying:

"Alice, Alice, my darling."

Presently he released her, and with an expression that sent a chill to her soul, he said, moving toward the stairway:

"The child, Alice! I must see the child!"

"What child?" she asked wildly, guessing the truth, and yet refusing to believe it.

"My child—our baby! Where is it?"

"It is night," Seth said, gently. "Let the child sleep, Richard. In the morning will be better."

"Well," he replied submissively, and taking the chair offered him at once became silent, answering all questions in monosyllables, and failing to recognize even his wife. She, poor soul, sat sobbing her life away. Her Richard had indeed returned for one blissful moment, but was now gone again. Would he ever know her again?

Like an infant they put him to bed, and then sat down to watch by his side until day should dawn. He slept peacefully while the wife and friend comforted each other in that hour of sadness, and dwelt lovingly upon the scenes and happenings of the years long gone.

"He has not moved for an hour!" Seth said, as Mrs. Throckmorton put out the lamp and threw open the shutters. "I was afraid *that* would awaken him," he added, and going softly across the floor to the bed, he bent down to catch the sound of his breathing. He heard nothing. He put his hand on the forehead of the returned wanderer, and it was cold! He placed his finger on the pulse, and it was still! The sleep he slept was that which knows no waking. For him the morning had dawned! With a sigh of relief, Seth turned to Mrs. Throckmorton, who had been watching his movements with keenest interest, and said, very softly:

"It is better so. He is at rest!"

"Not—not—dead?" she gasped.

"Dead!" Seth replied, chokingly; for though it were better so, he felt the loss of one he had counted as alive through so many years of uncertainty.

Weeping silently, Mrs. Throckmorton kneeled by the bed, took one cold hand in hers and pressed her cheek to it, and thanked the Father

for the privilege of knowing the day, the hour, and the place of her beloved Richard's death.

"It is not so hard now," she said, arising and turning to Seth a tear-stained but peaceful face; "for I know we shall meet *soon!*"

"Ah, so we shall!" Seth said; but there was no smile upon his face. He brushed his hand across his eyes, and said: "I can not see!"

"Are you ill?" Mrs. Throckmorton asked, anxiously; for a death-like pallor had driven the ruddy glow from his cheeks.

"I think not. I have lost much sleep lately. I will go now and tell some friends, and then try to sleep a little. I will be back after dinner, if not before."

Within half an hour after Seth left, a score of sympathizing and rejoicing friends had gathered at Mrs. Throckmorton's. The news of Throckmorton's return and death spread rapidly through Brambleville; but a piece of news more startling still followed close upon it. When Seth Russell reached his own door he sank upon the porch exhausted, and died in the arms of his wife as she attempted to lift him up!

When Thaddeus received the telegram containing the startling news of his double loss, he was astounded, and almost overwhelmed by its suddenness! He had counted so much on seeing his father! He had so longed for one word

of a father's blessing! Taking Tingleman with him, he hastened home.

The two life-long friends—Richard Throckmorton and Seth Russell—were buried at the same hour, and very near each other. The vast concourse of friends who witnessed the burial returned to their homes to praise the two, and to wonder what such deaths and such scenes portended for the survivors.

Thaddeus, sorely stricken, would have fainted by the way but for the upholding of a Divine arm, and would have died of grief but for the refreshing love of a heart that beat in sympathy deep and true; for neither had she known a father's love and protection.

XXXIV.

THE DAY-DAWN.

THERE is no antidote for grief equal to self-sacrificing labor for others. So Thaddeus found. Brambleville had lost much of its brightness for him, since Seth Russell fell asleep for all time. Life itself took on a somber hue when his father came home and died, leaving him without even the consolation of a single word of blessing. And yet the memory of Seth's unselfishness was a benediction, and the remembrance of his cheerfulness inspired to like endeavor. Thaddeus lingered long over the account his mother gave of the intense desire of his father to see "the child—our baby!" He recalled again and again the noble form, the massive head, the striking features of his sire as he saw him clothed for burial, and the recollection made him proud and happy. Nevertheless there came hours of intensest sorrow because he had never known the love, the strength, the wisdom, the helpfulness of so noble a man.

He mourned over the sudden departure of his old friend Seth. He wished that he might have been there so that he could have told him

that indeed "the night *was* passing, and the morning was near," as he had predicted; for the discovered possession in Kansas City had been sold for a sum that was beyond his fondest hope.

So, despite the rays of light that penetrated the gloom that enveloped him—despite the sweet recollections that relieved the sorrowfulness of his meditations, he walked wearily, and was almost ready to sink under his unexpected burdens. In his pastor he found a sympathizer and a helper.

"It is true, my friend and brother," Mr. Outwright said, as he sat by the editor's table one noon hour—"it is true that life is essentially a tragedy. However bright and joyful its beginning, death is its end. However sweet human companionship may be, heart-breaking separation is the result. But be not discouraged! Life is before you! Up, and prove yourself a hero! Your opportunity has come! Your triumph is at hand! Rise to meet your new responsibilities, and you shall be strengthened as your day demands! But I need not thus entreat you, for I know you will."

"By the help of the Master, I will!"

Thaddeus arose, and leaning over his desk, gave his hand to the minister in token of the sincerity of his pledge.

"Amen!" Mr. Outwright responded, feel-

ingly, and both sat down, too much affected to say more for a few minutes. Presently Thaddeus spoke :

“Then you quite approve of the proposed temperance meeting at the Church, with Tingleman as the chief speaker?”

“Most heartily! It can not fail to do good. He can speak from experience, both as to the curse and the cure. We have had quite enough of the curse. Now let us learn something of the cure from one of the victims.”

“What he can do on the platform is a question. He is wholly without practice. He tells me he never undertook to speak longer than three minutes in his life. But he says he knows his experience by heart, and is quite sure he can not tell it all in even an hour. *He* has no fear, and I do not know that *I* should have any; but I am a little afraid he will break down.”

“Pray for him, my friend; pray for him, and God will do the rest.”

“I do pray for him, and he prays for himself, too, every night at our family worship. He makes a good prayer.”

“But how long will he remain here?”

“I do not know. He has a leave of absence for two weeks, but he says the time of his return will depend on the outcome of this meeting. I have an idea that if he succeeds here he wil

want to go on a lecture tour; at least will want to visit all adjacent towns, and relate his experience. He is intensely in earnest, and says he can not do enough to make good the ruin his past life has wrought."

But little did Thaddeus know what Henry Tingleman meant when he said the time of his return to Kansas City would depend on the outcome of this proposed meeting in the cause of temperance reform. Nobody knew except Tingleman and his God!

"Have plenty of good music, and keep it before the people in the *Banner*, and we will have a crowded house and a rousing time. Good-bye! God bless you!"

Mr. Outwright went out, and Thaddeus turned to his work, hurrying through it that he might have time to devote to the details of the new temperance movement. The announcement that Henry Tingleman, a converted gambler and drunkard, would tell his experience, brought an audience that filled every available space in the largest church in Brambleville. To be sure, a hundred more could have been seated in the Music Hall, and another hundred could have found standing-room there; but Tingleman said: "I must be in the house of God if I tell my experience. I was born there, this last time, and I can talk better in my Father's house than else-

where. God is my Father, and the Church is my mother; so let me stand between them and speak!"

Who could deny him his request? The music was good, even excellent; but the people assembled had no ear for the music, though it was received with manifest approval. The prayer by the pastor was touching and full of power; but the people were waiting for Tingleman, and had no thought for the prayer. Up to the offering of the prayer, Tingleman sat on the platform, pale, silent, and greatly agitated. He was dismayed by the sea of faces before him. He thought only of the people, and his thoughts fled affrighted from him. His breath came hard and sonorously, and he was on the eve of fleeing when Mr. Outwright kneeled in prayer. Tingleman kneeled too. The vast audience gave but little heed to that prayer. But it was otherwise with Tingleman. He followed every word, and clung to every petition, saying "Amen!" in his heart to every sentence. There were three in that assembly, at least—the praying pastor, the frightened servant, and the Blessed Master! The three were enough!

"Now, Lord," the pastor said, "give thy servant, who is to speak to-night, thought and utterance. Give him power, and may he magnify thy saving love!"

They arose from their knees, and the congregation sang a moving song.

Tingleman leaned over, and whispered to Mr. Outwright:

“You have saved me! That prayer saved me! The Master is with me. I know he will help me!”

And it was so!

“My friends,” Tinglemen commenced, in a clear, strong voice, his perfect self-possession and evident earnestness reassuring his friends and confounding his enemies, scores of whom were present in the gallery, and standing in the back part of the Church, “I am to tell you to-night of a cure for drunkenness. That I have been a drunkard, all of you know; and a score or more of my former companions in sin, who are here to-night—I see them standing there and sitting up yonder in the gallery—could, if they would, testify to the awful truth that I was no common drunkard, but an uncommon one; for I descended to the lowest depths. To my shame I say this. To my shame, and to the praise of my dear Master—who is also here to-night—I will tell you the story of my cursed life in the service of sin, and my happy life since I have been cured by the touch of Divine love.”

There was a pause, during which the silence was so perfect that the ticking of the clock

against the gallery front sounded like the strokes of a hammer on a distant anvil. Tingleman stood with bowed head, and his body trembled with strong emotion. Lifting his eyes, and steadying his voice, he went on:

“But first let me tell you of an angel I once knew. She was an angel on earth as truly as she is now an angel in heaven. Will you pardon me for this personal allusion? And yet I need not ask that, for all I say to-night must be purely personal. Need I tell you I mean my wife? Should I speak of my love for her, you might well hiss me down; for, though I worshiped the ground on which she walked; though her words were honey, and sweeter than the honeycomb to me; though her caress was balm for every wound, when I was sober, when I was myself—I gave her a hovel to live in; I stopped her sweet mouth with gravestones; I put her warm heart under the heel of my devilish appetite, and left her pure soul to the care of strangers—when I was drunk, when I was driven by devils with whips of scorpions! Her love could not save me. It was like a child couching in the path of a hungry lion! Let me now go back and tell you how I was debased, and how I have been saved.”

For an hour he talked, and for an hour that audience was submissive to the power that was

in the man; but not of him. They laughed and they cried, they cheered and they sat silent, as he told his story of ruin and redemption. No pen can adequately describe his conversion as he told it that night. Indeed, as he depicted the scene, Mr. Outwright exclaimed, under his breath:

“Inspired! Inspired!”

And so, indeed, it appeared to all when he exclaimed, in exultant voice and with beaming face:

“The Great Physician cures drunkenness! The love of Jesus alone can save a polluted soul! I am saved, praise the Lord!”

When he shouted these words and stood silent, a heavenly light falling over him, the congregation, under the leading of Thaddeus, arose and sang:

“Jesus saves! Jesus saves!”

But no one was prepared for what followed; for Tingleman had taken counsel of no person as to the step he was about to take. In the silence which followed the singing of the verse just mentioned, in the hush of expectancy, Tingleman, who had remained standing, said, in sad tones, in a voice husky with emotion, and with a pallid face that told plainly how deep was his feeling:

“My friends, one word more. I can not per-

mit this opportunity to pass without saying something that will distress you, I fear, and yet I must say it. First, though, let me publicly declare my debt of gratitude to Thaddeus Throckmorton for his persistent interest in me. God bless him! Let me publicly declare my obligation to Mrs. Throckmorton for the care she has given my children. I want her to keep them a while longer; for I suppose their father must leave them, though he longs to take them to his heart. But I have a duty to perform. Let me do that duty. Though redeemed from sin, though cleansed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, though my pardon has been signed, sealed, and delivered by the King,—yet—yet— Dare I say it? Dare I, with prison-gates opening before me, with a felon's fate awaiting me,—dare I say what is now trembling on my lips to be said? Yes; in the name of my Blessed Master, and by his help, I can and do say it, let the consequences be what they may! Before the law of my State I am a guilty wretch, worthy of punishment. I will take my punishment. I am a burglar! Judge Tracy's house, and several others in this place, were burglarized by *me*! I await the action of the law."

He turned and walked off the platform, and left the church by the rear exit. The great congregation sat stupefied. The pastor beckoned

them to their feet, and in words spoken but little above a whisper, he dismissed the people, and they went out, wondering what would come of it all.

Tingleman went straight to Thaddeus's home. The next day, as he expected, he was arrested; and refusing bail, though urged upon him by Thaddeus and others, went to jail to await his trial at the next term of court.

A large reward had been offered for the detection and conviction of the burglar who had been such a terror to Brambleville in the past. It was too good a chance for the chief of police to miss, and hence the prompt arrest of Tingleman.

XXXV.

MISHAPS AND HAPS.

MANY who doubted the genuineness of Tingleman's conversion, and who listened to his recital of his personal experiences with but little real interest, were convinced by his confession and his willingness, almost eagerness, to suffer punishment at the hands of the courts. They said he proved his faith by his works.

Not one in the audience that night gave closer attention to what Tingleman said than did Miss Josie Tracy. She was, in the depths of her soul, a believer in abstinence from the use of intoxicants, and she detested the traffic in liquors with intensest feeling. As Tingleman talked, she forgot who he had been, and looked upon him as only an ardent advocate of the principles she loved so dearly. She was charmed with his frankness, delighted with his burning love for the Master, irresistibly attracted by his manner of delivery, though at times uncouth and a little boisterous.

She fell to planning how she could enlist him in a temperance campaign—forgetting, for a moment, her relations to Wendell—and had a

series of meetings arranged in her mind, when his confession came like a stroke of lightning, and demolished her fine castles in the air. She had thought how, at the close of the meeting, she would go to him, congratulate him on his success, assure him of her sympathy, and was going to say, "I am proud to be called your cousin"—a relationship the judge had never acknowledged between himself and Mrs. Tingleman; but, alas! for such a fair speech and such a late rendering of justice. The confession spoiled that!

And yet she could not get rid of the confession, nor could she banish from her thoughts his touching allusions to his wife, and the utter failure of her pure and unfaltering love to save him from drink, and that, too, when he loved her so passionately.

Slowly and painfully she reached the conclusion that it was folly for her to hope to save Wendell in that way. She shrank from a life that should take on a tithe of the misery which Tingleman had said his habits had brought to his home. The more she thought upon it, the stronger became her desire to escape such a fate. But how? What excuse had she? Not deception. That would have done once, but not now; for she had condoned Wendell's relapses, and after them had replighted herself to him—not

formally, of course; but by consent, at least. And thus the days went by, with ever-increasing agony of soul. Was there no deliverance? In sheer desperation, and with but little concern as to what would come of it, yet with a feeling that she owed something to Tingleman, and with a belief that she could, by ministering to him, forget her own misery, she determined to visit him in jail. It was easy to induce Jennie Jessup to accompany her; for had not Thaddeus been to the jail every day? and where he went she loved to go. Together they called, and found Tingleman in the debtors' room, and not confined in the cell where other criminals were locked up.

While they were visiting the prisoner, a most extraordinary occurrence was taking place in the registrar's office. There was not a more prudent business man in Brambleville than Judge Tracy; but he had suffered himself to become connected with a prosperous farmer in cattle speculation, and after a little went into speculations on the Chicago Board of Trade, and finally was involved in a wild scheme to force a corner on lard. Draft after draft was sent forward to cover margins until his available resources were exhausted. At the last, his partner gave a check for a large amount, signed by the firm name, and it came back to the home bank for collec-

tion. Judge Tracy was director in that bank. The check was honored, but the president required a mortgage to secure the bank. This was promptly given, and it was quietly put on record. But Wendell Morrison saw it, and he knew that should the Chicago transaction fail, Judge Tracy would be bankrupt; for the mortgage included even the home-place. That afternoon the news was published all over the country that the lard corner had failed, and its backers were ruined.

Without the appearance of undue haste, and yet so soon after this startling news reached Brambleville that one might suppose he had not heard of it at all, Wendell was sauntering up the broad pavement leading to Judge Tracy's door, deliberately scheming to provoke a misunderstanding, and make that an excuse for breaking the engagement.

He found Miss Josie in the parlor with his cousin Jennie Jessup, having just returned from the jail. They were enthusiastically planning a campaign, when Tingleman should be pardoned; for Thaddeus had said, though convicted, as he probably would be, the governor would pardon him on the petition that would go up from Brambleville.

Wendell listened to their conversation, and found in it his wished-for pretext. He pre-

tended to be incensed at such scheming, with such a man as Tingleman for the leading part.

"Cousin Jennie," he said, with ill-concealed scorn, "you do discredit to your family!"

"Pardon me, Cousin Wendell," she said, rising, her face flushing deep red as she spoke; "but I think not. But I will bid you good-bye, dear," she added, addressing Miss Tracy. "Cousin Wendell called to see you, and I must go home anyway."

Kissing Miss Tracy, she went out, leaving the two alone in the parlor.

"Miss Josie," Wendell said, when his cousin was gone, "I hope you will not do anything of the kind. You quite forget your position. Tingleman is a self-confessed burglar, and, until very lately, a notorious bum, drinking and gambling and—"

"Excuse me, Mr. Morrison! Consider what he *is*, not what he *was*. He is a self-confessed burglar; but he is also a self-confessed Christian, and is willing to suffer for his sins, in order that his Christian character may the more clearly be seen."

"Quite true, my—Miss Josie; but let sentiment and gush control you, and where will you end? Though it pains me to do so, I must be firm, and must insist—not to command you—that you have nothing to do with this business."

"You forget, Mr. Morrison, that we have not reached the place where you may command me," Miss Josie replied, with flaming cheeks.

"Then you insist on having your way in this matter?"

"I most assuredly do!" she said firmly, her face burning as fire in her hot indignation at his cool dictation.

"I must warn you of the consequences," he said, with exasperating coolness.

"What are they?" she asked.

"A broken engagement."

"I accept them!"

"Do I understand you?" he asked in surprise, a little taken aback by her prompt reply.

"I hope you do," she said, facing him unflinchingly. "The consequences are a broken engagement. I accept it."

"Do I understand you to mean that you desire to be free?"

"That is my desire," Miss Josie said, with intense earnestness. Continuing, she said: "And I understand *you* to mean that *you* desire to be free. I am not surprised, except that it has come sooner than I expected. I grant you your request. You are free!"

"But we part as friends?" he said, seeing that he was dismissed, when he had come to dismiss her.

"As friends," she replied. "You asked for release. I granted it. And now I take mine, and give you back this ring."

He took it mechanically, looked at it a moment, slipped it into his vest-pocket, mentally calculating its worth when returned to the jeweler, and said, rather stiffly:

"I bid you good-afternoon!"

"Good-afternoon!"

Miss Josie sought her own room.

"What a happy escape!" she said aloud, as she rocked restlessly in the little chair she had had since a girl. "What a happy escape!"

Then, bathing her flushed face, and changing her street attire for something more comfortable, she threw herself upon the sofa, little knowing that she had indeed escaped a cruel fate. But, poor heart, another bitter experience was awaiting her—the crushing sorrow attending the wrecking of a fortune in an hour. She knew not that at that moment the roof above her head belonged to another.

Wendell did not stop at half-steps. Before another week had passed, he had dissolved partnership with Judge Tracy. He looked upon the judge as a crushed man. He did not expect him *ever* to rally from the blow. He could do better alone in the law-business, and he was soon established in another office.

It was well. Thaddeus had been admitted to practice long before this; but as he could not dispose of the *Banner* office, he kept right on editing the paper, though his heart was in the law.

The dissolution notice of Tracy & Morrison was scarcely in type before Thaddeus was in Judge Tracy's office, seeking an interview.

"Judge," Thaddeus said, holding his friend's hand in a tight grasp, "I can not forget that you were my father's friend; nor can I ever forget your kindness to me when starting in the newspaper business. I hope you believe me, Judge, when I say I despaired of ever making you understand how deeply grateful I have been."

Thaddeus paused a moment, for his voice was heavy with emotion.

"Sit down! Sit down!" the judge said, with unsteady voice, pointing to a chair, as Thaddeus released his hand.

"Let me beg of you to command what service you will of me, and I will gladly respond. You know what fortune has befallen me. I am free now to leave the *Banner* office. I want to enter the law, regularly and permanently."

Judge Tracy's sore and hungry heart divined his meaning at once, and he cast a quick and inquiring glance at Thaddeus, and said:

"Would you come in with me *now*, when I am a ruined man?"

"If you would let me," Thaddeus said, humbly.

"Let you! Thad, I want you! I am broken in heart, in fortune, and almost in mind, and yet I have business here for others that needs attention that I can not give it. It would be worth ten years of my life to have some one I can trust to take it. Will you help me, Thad?"

"Say no more, Judge! To-morrow, if you say so, to-morrow I will move in. I have already engaged Ralph Reynolds to take the *Banner*."

"Come right along! Come to-day, if you will! Stay while you are here!"

When Thaddeus left, the judge strode homeward with such haste, and at such an unusual hour, that his wife went half way down to the gate to meet him, supposing he was ill or out of his mind.

"What, dear! What now?" she eagerly and anxiously asked.

"Good news! I have a new partner, and business will go right along. Thaddeus Throckmorton is going in with me! He is not brilliant, as I have always said, but he is honest and true. I would trust all I have in his hands!"

The judge faltered, for his voice was getting more tears in it than he could manage. Adversity had crushed his heart and had opened up a fountain long sealed. Passing into his study, he

closed the door, and, burying his face in his hands, let the tears flow and trickle through his fingers to the floor. He was glad and thankful for this young and wise and vigorous friend!

Thaddeus gave himself to the judge's business, and, after weeks of weary work, it was settled in such a way that, though every foot of land Judge Tracy had possessed, including his home, was mortgaged, he was permitted to retain his residence property; and after another long delay it was deeded back to him. Just how it was done no one knew, except Thaddeus, and he never told.

Tingleman was convicted and sentenced, as was expected; but he did not see inside the prison-walls, for he was promptly pardoned by the governor on the petition of all Brambleville, except the saloon-keepers. He did not return to Kansas City, but spent his time in going from town to town in that vicinity "lecturing," he said, but knowing ones called it "preaching." Whatever it was, it was wonderfully effective. Miss Josie called him "Cousin Henry," and with her mother, went with him to many of his appointments. She was a great help to him. She freely, but judiciously and very kindly, criticised his speeches; pointed out errors, and suggested improvements, until he came to be reckoned one of the most eloquent advocates the temperance

cause had. She was very proud of his native ability, and justly so; and she took great delight in his manifest improvement under her tutorage. His large-heartedness, his entire consecration, and his success won her heart to warmest praise. He came to look upon her as his chief support. Her advice was always the best. Her choice was always his. She had no occasion to worry over the problem of saving him as she had done in Wendell's case. *He was saved!*—saved by love divine and grace omnipotent!

The next year witnessed a campaign that included the whole State—every city, and all the larger towns sharing in the grand work. But before it was commenced, there was a quiet gathering of a few friends at Judge Tracy's, when Mr. Outwright pronounced the words that made Henry Tingleman and Miss Josie Tracy husband and wife. The announcement of the marriage came as a great surprise to many people; but they were thinking of Miss Tracy, the proud heiress, and Henry Tingleman, the burglar and drunkard. *That* would have been a shocking union, indeed! But the two thus united were Miss Tracy, a young lady of poor but respectable parents, and Henry Tingleman, the Christian gentleman and eloquent temperance worker. Such a marriage as that was not only not astonishing, but was most eminently a happy con-

summation, since it was productive of untold good to multitudes, who listened and rejoiced as they sang and spoke, night after night, for a whole year.

As for Thaddeus, he was wedded to his mother's happiness. The years slipped by. He grew in experience, and increased in wealth, and became a leader in all great reforms, filling Judge Tracy's place in public affairs, as well as managing his law business.

As for Miss Jennie Jessup, she, too, was devoted to her mother. True, through Thaddeus's efforts they came into possession of a very profitable piece of real estate, which, but for his investigation, would have remained in the undisputed estate of the Morrisons. The proceeds from this property enabled them to live entirely at ease. Both Thaddeus and Miss Jennie were happy and contented. They watched with tenderest care over the mothers as they descended to the river's brink. They were much together; for their homes came to be side by side—new and handsome residences on the principal, indeed the only, avenue of Brambleville. They had promised "to wait," and they were waiting, very patiently and very lovingly, until the time should come when one home should do for both, and when neither heart would feel that it had lost a treasure.

XXXVI.

A DOUBLE ACCIDENT.

DESPITE his drunkenness, Wendell Morrison had phenomenal success as a lawyer, and never lost his prominence in political circles. He turned his attention to criminal practice, from which he received large fees, and was called to defend cases in all courts of the State. He ceased to be the genteel and always polite lawyer, and grew into a heavy, brutish, and boorish politician, whose claim to respect rested only upon his unaccountable success at the bar and the political arena. He was despotic and selfish, and yet men fawned upon him and shouted his praises on every occasion. Among his relatives none were more attached to him than his Aunt Jessup, and he reciprocated her affection as far as it was possible for one of his nature to return affection in any degree. In her old age she trusted implicitly to his advice and his control.

One beautiful autumn day, when Jennie was in Mrs. Throckmorton's home, Wendell drove up in a handsome new phaeton, and asked his aunt to take a turn about town, saying:

“You are the first to ride in it. I would not

let my own mother ride in it until I had taken 'Aunt Jessup' out for an airing."

"Is the horse quite safe, Wendell?" she asked, when about to step in the phaeton.

"Safe as myself," Wendell said, as he stepped in after his aunt was seated.

The horse was a fine specimen, high-spirited and powerful, strong enough to draw a dozen light phaetons like the one to which he was attached. He was kind, though so high-spirited, but very full of play as well. Had Wendell only been sober! But he was not.

A piece of paper blew down the street. The horse, more in play than in fright, turned sharply about, overturned the phaeton, and then, in fright sure enough, ran down the street, dragging Wendell under the overturned vehicle for some distance, having left Mrs. Jessup in front of her own house, unconscious and dying. Before the sun went down her spirit took its flight. Wendell was carried home, cursing the horse and the cause of its fright. He lingered several days in misery from internal injuries, and died at the very height of his fame and his power—died, when he might have lived for years had he left strong drink alone. The injuries received were not sufficient causes of his death. He might have recovered from them very speedily, if his physical condition had not proved specious, and

his recuperative powers had not been undermined by the use of intoxicants.

* * * * *

"Which shall it be?" said Thaddeus, as he stopped on the walk, half way between the two houses, one evening, as he and Miss Jessup returned from a moonlight stroll; for Henry Tingleman had come down for a little chat with Mrs. Throckmorton, and they could be out without leaving her alone with the servants—something Thaddeus never did, except at urgent calls to business.

"Which shall it be?" Jennie said, repeating his words with a different inflection. "I say *neither!*"

"But were we not to decide when we came back whether we would take your house or mine?"

"And I have decided!" she said, turning away, and walking off a little alone. "I say *neither!*"

"Pray, then what?" he asked.

"A new one! Let it be '*our house!*' One we both shall plan, and both help to build. One which *we* shall occupy first of all," she said, blushing, as she came back to him extending both hands, which he clasped in his.

"As you say, my queen. But, dear, that is so long to wait! A year at least! Even by this pale moonlight you can see what 'waiting' has

done for me," he said, turning the side of his head toward her, that she might see the gray hairs which whitened the lock he brushed back over his ear.

"But what is a year to the twenty I have waited?" she replied.

"Please do not be so exact, dear!" he replied, deprecatingly. "It is time you and I begin to forget dates. As dear old Seth used to say, we must count how *young* we are, not how *old*."

"Be it so. Let me ask: Is it not the custom for the groom to take his bride to his home? Shall not that decide?"

He put his arm through hers, and, gently turning her about, started to walk toward his own home, when there emerged from the shadow of the great trees, Mr. and Mrs. Christie.

"Hello, Thad! Ha! ha! We thought we would—ah!—take a little walk—ha! ha!—down your way, a kind of a—ha! ha!—anniversary parade, as it were—O! ha!—or a promenade, I should have said."

"That *is so!*" Jennie replied, enthusiastically. "This is your anniversary! Five years is it?"

"Ten!" said Mrs. Christie, with a kind of triumphant air.

"One! Ha! ha!" Mr. Christie said. "Only one, Thad—ha! ha!—if it is a day."

"Ten to Mrs. Christie, and one to you, Mr.

Christie. Where 's the compliment?" Thaddeus asked, laughingly.

"It is really only five," Mrs. Christie said; "but I have had happiness enough for ten years; so I call it ten."

"It is really—ha! ha!—only five; but—ah! O!—I have lost my reckoning—ha! ha!—and always say one, to be sure!"

"We have your cards, my dear," Mrs. Christie said, speaking to Miss Jessup, while the gentlemen discussed some other topic. "I am *so* glad for you. You will have a jewel of a husband. It is so nice you can go to your Aunt Morrison's. And then, will you come right home to Mrs. Throckmorton's?"

"Not for a year. We shall go to Europe. Thad's mother is going to Judge Tracy's until we come back."

"That will be nice!"

"And then we shall go right into our new home. We expect it will be done and furnished by that time. All the plans are made, and the furniture selected."

"How lovely!"

"Mr. and Mrs. Tingleman will occupy our house—my house, I mean—and when we come back we are going to give them a deed for it. But *that* is to be a secret, mind you. Do n't tell."

"Excuse me, but—ah! ha! ha!—Miss Jessup,

I may never have the opportunity again of walking with you—ha! ha!—not as Miss Jessup. Ha! ha! Do me the honor!”

Mr. Christie bowed profoundly, and offered his arm to Miss Jennie, who accepted it with a gentle bow, and they moved down the avenue, leaving Thaddeus and Mrs. Christie to follow, strolling around the square in the bright moonlight, and returning to Thaddeus's home just as Mr. Tingleman came down the steps, saying:

“I'd better be going, for here come Josie and the boys after me!”

And so they were coming. An animated trio, indeed they were! The two boys had Mrs. Tingleman by her arms, and were hurrying along, talking rapidly, and all as happy as birds.

“The happiest family on earth!” Tingleman said, proudly, pointing toward the three, and striking his breast softly.

Mr. Christie and Thaddeus smiled incredulously, and looked down into the faces of the ladies at their sides, and both said in the same instant:

“Except ours!”

“That is odd!” Tingleman exclaimed; waving his hand in greeting to his wife and the boys, and continuing; “we are each contending for first place in real enjoyment at home. My home is heaven!”

“It *is* odd,” Thaddeus said, laughingly; “but then we are all odd fellows!”

“So you are,” Mrs. Tingleman said, coming up just then, “or rather *were*, before the boys and I arrived. But see, we make you even; for there are just eight of us.”

Without suggestion from any one, but by mutual impulse, each locked arms with those on either side, and thus made a complete circle, while Thaddeus said:

“Odd fellows indeed! But, linked by Truth, we make a perfect chain of Friendship and Love!”

The End.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00024741369