THE CHILD OF WATERLOO;

OR,

THE HORRORS OF THE BATTLE-FIELD.

By GEORGE W. M. REYNOLDS.

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CHAPTER I.

It was half-past nine o'clock on the evening of June the 18th, 1814. The battle of Waterloo had been fought and won. The power of Napoleon lay scattered in the blood of those who, for his giant ambition, had bled in vain. Many miles of country were covered with a flying host, hotly pursued by those who had earned the laurels of that dreadful day.

The slant rays of the scarcely yet expiring daylight fell across the field of carnage, where lay thousands of human forms dabbled in gore,—

> "The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die."

The sharp rattle of musketry might still occasionally be heard, and now and then the sullen boom of some cannon fired from a height at the gasping, retreating foe. No time had there yet been to attend to the wounded; no time to look for friends; no time scarcely to think upon the various events of that dreadful day's work—a day's work which England can never forget, and which France still shows is fresh in her recollection, as if it were but yesterday she suffered a defeat unparalleled in the history of warfare.

There was one spot in particular where the slain and the wounded lay most thickly. The bodies of men and horses were intermingled in strange confusion. It was a hollow of not many yards in extent, and it would seem as if many had crawled there to die; while others, writhing from their wounds, had rolled into it, and there breathed their last sigh.

A gigantic cuirassier lay dead with his head nearly cut off. By his side was a light cavalry man, an Englishman, who was frightfully mangled, having been borne off his horse by a cannon-ball, which had hit him in the chest, and disfigured him fearfully.

Many others lay in different attitudes; in most cases the ghastly, horrible countenances turned upward, and presenting a most awful distortion of visage.

At the feet of a dead horse lay the body of a young man, who, by his splendid uniform, was an officer evidently of rank. His costume denoted him as belonging to the French army. A large scarlet cloak half hid him, and upon the verge of the cloak lay huddled up the form of a young female, who was either dead, or had fainted after seeking the battle-field, and found some loved object among the slain. Near this group was an English officer, whose horse had been shot under him, and who had been cut down by a French cuirassier before he could disengage himself from the wounded animal. He was a young man, although the quantity of blood which had flowed over his face, and become clotted in his hair, would have effectually prevented any one from recognizing him. The hurt he had received rendered him insensible. It had occurred during the final charge, in which the French had suffered so signal a defeat.

Just as the sun dipped below the line of the western horizon, a cool air swept across the battle-field, and perhaps he was so near recovering from his insensibility that that was sufficient at once to recover him from unconsciousness, for he certainly did open his eyes, though he remained for some moments in that drowsy state which succeeds insensibility, when all objects have that hazy aspect to the mind which makes us doubt if we are not still in the land of dreams.

Intense pain, however, soon convinced him that it was no delusion, but that he really had been wounded, although to what extent he knew not, and was recovering from a swoon on the field of battle.

A temporary accession of delusion came over the young officer as he made an effort to clear the blood from before his eyes, and to look around him on the dead and the dying. He called aloud on several names of well-loved persons, who were not there, but whom he had left in England, when he sought the fortune of war in the army.

"Where are you?" he cried. "Dear ones, where are you now? why do you not come to me? Alice—Alice! Oh, God! could you look upon me now!"

A deep groan sounded near him, and at once recalled him to a sense of where and what he was.

"I am not alone here," he said, faintly. "Why should I fill the air with my complaints? I am one of thousands—of thousands. The night is coming on, or my eyes are dimmed with blood and tears. Tears! no—no. I am a soldier."

Again the groan came upon his ears, and then, from immediately behind him, a quarter from whence he was sure the groan had not come, some one said, in a rich brogue:

"Aisy—aisy! whist! The curse of Cromwell light on the divil who carved out to me this mighty purty slice on the head! It's myself that wonders now where one of my ears has gone to."

"An English voice," said the young officer.

"Who spakes? Did anybody say nothing, bekase, if he did,

let him say it agin; or, if he didn't, why, thin, he needn't, and hold his peace, by the blazes."

This was certainly not the most intelligible speech in the world, and yet it was welcome to the ears of the young officer, who, making a great exertion to speak loud enough to be well heard, said:

"My good fellow, is your name——"

"Rafferty Brolickbones, at your honor's service."

"I—knew it."

"Did your honor? May I be so bould, sir, as to ask what regiment your honor sports your elegant figure in as an officer?"

"How know you I am an officer?"

"Faith, thin, it's dark it is, surely; but there's a fire beyant yonder, and the smallest gleam of it comes and goes, like a jack-a-lantern, on your honor's shoulder."

"Oh, God! I am sadly hurt. I fear I shall—bleed—bleed to death!"

"Amin, sir."

"I am faint—dreadfully faint, with loss of blood—and—and a death sickness is coming o'er me!"

"A——min, sir."

"Curse you!" said the young man.

"Go it agin, sir. Get in a passion. It's as good as a glass of brandy, when that same isn't to be had. Bedad, sir, you were givin' a catalogue of your grievances—now I've lost one of my ears, there's a hole in my shoulder, and one of my legs is broke, in a manner o' spaking."

"How do you mean?"

"Oh, clane and easy, sir, that's all. The blood of the O'Connors of Meath, and the Sullivans of County Cavan, sir, is running about, sir, all round me, like peas in a shovel."

Again the deep groan came upon the young officer's ears, and raising himself as well as he could, although with great pain, upon one arm, he said:

"Speak—speak. Who groans so sadly? Speak, I implore you!"

"*Mon Dieu!*" said a voice. "*Ma chere Louise—ma petite——*"

Then there was a deep sob and a groan, as if it were the last that could come from a broken heart.

"Gracious Heaven," said the young officer, and he let himself fall back again among his own blood.

"Sir—sir," said Rafferty.

"I hear," said the other, faintly.

"Some Frenchman that, I'm thinking, sir. *Polly vous Frenchy*. How are you, old fellow? Whist, sir, there's somebody coming."

Creeping along the battle-field, in a strange, crouched-up attitude, so as to be almost on a level with the heap of carnage that lay about, came a human form. It took a wayward course, now turning a few feet to one side and then to the other. Sometimes stooping down so low as to be nearly lost to view, and at others rising higher, showing a large dusky bulk in the dim light that still lingered on that dreadful field of blood.

The young officer felt a strange sensation of alarm, and he made a sudden and ill-advised movement, by which his wound bled inwardly and came in his mouth, nearly choking him, and producing a sudden faintness which reduced him almost to death; and yet, it was strange, of all his faculties he preserved his sight the last, and, as he lay bereft of all power of movement, he saw the strange, hideous form coming by a devious track closer and still closer to him. Then he heard the voice of the Irishman.

"Whist, sir, whist! It's a female woman, sir. Eh!—did you spake, sir? Eh—eh? Oh, bedad, he's gone to glory. Pace be to him, amin! and great glory above and all around, amin! Sir—sir! Oh, he's gone off. Quiet as a lamb. Pace be to all here, glory and amin!"

On, on came the figure slowly, but surely; and now, as it neared him, the young officer became aware that as far as dress went, it was a female form, and that what had given it the huge, misshapen appearance it had worn at a distance, arose from the fact that she carried with her a large sack, that no doubt was well filled with the spoils of the dead.

The young officer's whole soul was concentrated in his eyes. He saw the robber of the dead pa[illegible] before a heap of slain, and commence the task of rifling [illegible]kets and cutting off costly ornaments from the unifor[illegible] he saw her suddenly pause and start back a step. Then [illegible] saw the glittering blade of a long knife which she held in her hand. It was raised, and poised a moment in the air; then, with a dart forward like a tigress, she buried it in some one's heart, for there arose simultaneously with the blow one short, sharp shriek, and then all was still.

He could not speak—he could not move. He felt that next it might be his turn to be murdered in his helplessness. A cold perspiration broke out upon him—he felt a sort of consciousness that now his last hour had come. Desperate were the efforts he made to shake off the strange waking trance that had come over him, but they were all in vain. There he lay, with the power of fancying all the horrors of such an impending doom as that which seemed now certain to him, and yet without the power to move a limb, or to breathe one word of deprecation.

And Rafferty, too, thought he was dead, and so made no effort for him; and yet what could he do, sorely wounded and with a broken limb? He thought he heard a rustling behind him, as if the wounded Irishman were trying to creep away, and then again every sense that was left him became concentrated in watching the movements of the woman.

Now she was near enough that he could hear she was muttering to herself in a compound language of Dutch, French and German, and he became convinced she was one of those harpies who infest an army, and like vultures, hover on the outskirts of a battle to feed upon the slain.

That the incursions of these people were as much guarded against as possible he well knew; but no human vigilance could certainly keep them out of the field of slaughter; and it was horrible, indeed, to think of escaping absolute death in the con-

flict, to meet it by the hand of a murderess, without even the small consolation of a struggle.

Now she paused at a body which lay not many paces from him, and he saw her lift up one of the hands of the dead man, upon which he supposed there was a ring, for he could perceive that she was shaving away with her knife at one of the fingers, as if it had been a piece of wood that it was necessary for some purpose to sharpen to a point.

All the while, too, she kept muttering to herself upon some indifferent topic, and when she had got the ring off, he saw her give it a hasty wipe, to get rid of the blood and pieces of mangled flesh that hung to it, and then drop it into the capacious sack, which was the receptacle of her plunder.

"Surely," thought the young English officer, "the Frenchman who spoke is dead—happy, happy death!"

Nearer, nearer still came the woman, she was close to him, and as she flung the sack beside him, he heard the jingle of its multifarious contents. She began humming the fragments of some song, while she lifted up first one of his hands, then the other, to see if there were rings. He wore none, and with an oath at her disappointment, she tore open his vest, which was soaked with blood, and laid hold of a gold chain he wore. There was a difficulty in getting it, so she took a grasp of a handful of his hair, and jerked up his head, while she took it off him.

Something, then, seemed suddenly to strike her that he yet lived, and she placed her great brawny hand upon his heart. She felt its faint pulsation, and a chuckle came from her lips. The knife was immediately produced, and stooping over him, she raised it the whole length of her arm above her head to give force to the blow.

Oh what a moment of agony was that! Intense dread burst the fetters that bound his tongue, and, in a voice that might have been heard over half the extent of that battle-field, he shouted,—

"Help!"

"Coming, sir," cried the welcome voice of Rafferty, and in an instant such a tremendous report took place close to his ear, that he was nearly stunned with the concussion.

Rafferty had got hold of a musket by some means, and having leveled it over the dead horse, he fired right into the face of the woman.

"Take that, my jewel!" he cried. "Our side forever and a day. Hurrah! hurrah! What a darlint you are, to be shure, anyhow. Fair and aisy goes a mighty long way, sir. And so you ain't dead yet. It's a shocking thing, it is, sir, to have to blow off the blessed head of one of the fair sex, sir."

CHAPTER II.

So stunning, so close to his very face, and so utterly unexpected, was the report of the musket which had been fired by Rafferty Brolickbones, that the young officer for the moment

scarcely knew whether it had saved him from the dreadful hands of the pluuderer of the dead or not. The voice of the Irishman, however, recovered him to consciousness, and he bent his eyes in the direction where the woman had stood, who, in another moment, but for so timely an interruption, would have put an end to all his pains, and all his expectations, with that knife which doubtless had already found the heart of many a brave fellow.

The bullet from the musket had hit her in the mouth, and nearly literally, as Rafferty had expressed, blown her head off. Her death must have been instantaneous, and there she lay, presenting, from the freshness of her wound, and the nature of it, one of the most hideous spectacles even in that field of horrors.

"And this is war," though[illegible] the young man[illegible] "Gracious God! This is what men call glory."

"How is your mother's son [illegible] sir?" asked Rafferty.

"You have saved my life, Ra[illegible]."

"I hope so, sir; but you know, [illegible] your honor is bad hurt, there ain't so much merit in the thing. It wasn't just the likes of a Brolickbones, sir, to see you murdered in that kind of way; and hedad, sir, the mighty elegant twist I gave my leg, sir, in getting a holt of that musket, is one of them things to remember, sir, without a memyrandum. It was an English musket, sir, and the poor devil who had a holt of it had been dead so long that he hadn't got into a habit of letting go of it."

"It was held by a corpse?"

"That same, sir. A fine young man, no doubt, sir, if one could have come to a judgment—only, as his two legs was gone it wasn't easy! Now, sir, if that had been a French gun, sir—bad cess to it! but it would have missed fire; and then that 'farnel woman would have had two more murders on her soul, for she'd have just settled you and me, nate and aisy, before you could have said, 'Mike, how's your mother?'"

"My good fellow, I owe you a great debt of gratitude."

"Thank you, sir."

"It is I have to thank you, Rafferty; and, believe me, that if I survive the horrors of this day, I will not be unmindful that I owe you my life."

"Faith! sir, that's not much. Pay me off when you see some poor fellow in a bad plight: and when you're walking about like a gintleman in the pride of your heart, and all's nate and aisy wid you, if you see some poor fellow hard up, and an Irish tongue in his cheek, give him a trifle, and tell him it's for the honor of ould Ireland and Rafferty Brolickbones."

"I will—I will."

"That's enough, sir. Did you hear that, sir?"

"I did hear a strange noise."

"Hark again, sir."

The young officer listened, and so strange and terrific a half

shriek, half howl, met his ear, that he involuntarily trembled, and exclaimed:

"Good God! can that sound be human?"

Again it came, louder than at first. Such a sound he had never in his life heard, or, indeed, anything approaching to it. There was a something about it perfectly undefinable. At such a moment, if ever fears of the supernatural might be considered excusable in an educated mind, surely they were when they found a home in the brain of that young officer. In a loud tone of voice he spoke to the Irishman, saying:

"Rafferty, you hear it?"

"Surely, sir, wid my one ear I hear it."

"And can you guess what it is?"

"I think I can, sir. I was wounded at Salamanca, and lay all night half in a ditch and half out of it, sir. Well, sir, toward the light of the morning I heard that same sort of sound, and I thought it was ould Nick, sir, himself, a-playing a kayed-bugle, sir."

"And what was it?"

"Aisy, sir. Well, there was a poor divil who had been kilt intirely close by me; so I says, 'What's that?' says I. 'It's a mad horse,' says he."

"A mad horse?"

"Yes, sir. And here he comes, kicking friend and foe, galloping along like thunder and turf. Oh, bedad! and if he comes this way, we're in for it."

Again the dreadful sound, which to hear for the first time, and not to comprehend, was enough to fill any mind with horror, came across the battle-field, plunging, tearing, snorting, and dashing up the soil with its feet. The creature was dying; but what mischief might it not do before that last pang came which was to close its earthly career—what wounded wretches might it not scatter more pain and a worse death among, as it rushed madly across that field of carnage, sadness, and woe?

"It's coming, sir," said Rafferty, "it's coming."

"Gracious Heaven," moaned the young officer, "is it not enough to endure all the danger of the fight, but there must be these superadded horrors to make war more terrible—to meet death with greater agony."

The mad charger now wheeled suddenly, and reeling from approaching weakness, occasioned by loss of blood, it seemed for a moment about to fall, but still was there strength enough left for another desperate charge, and on it came.

It was a noble animal, coal black, and of immense size and strength. Some of the soldierly trappings still remained—one stirrup only dangled at his side. In less time than it has taken us to say so, it is on the spot where lie those in whose fortunes we are interested. It came from a direction which would bring it across the body of the wounded French officer and that delicate-looking female form which lay crouched up so close to him, as if he, even wounded, were a greater protection than all else from the horrors of that field of blood.

The steed stumbles before it reaches them, but with its whole-

weight it rolls over that sad group, and then makes frantic efforts to regain its feet. One of its hoofs came in contact with the already fearfully-mangled head of the sutler and plunderer of the dead, who had met with so well-deserved a fate at the hands of Rafferty. It was horrible to hear the hideous crash which was produced by the concussion which hurled the body some yards off, where it lay, strangely doubled up, as if in attitude prepared for a spring.

The young ensign shut his eyes, for in another moment he knew the horse would be upon or over him, he felt as if a sudden wind was sweeping past his face. The mad horse had cleared his prostrate form at a bound, and the danger was over.

"Sir," said Rafferty, "a mighty fine jump that, sir. The hind hoof of the creature was not a mile, if an inch was that same, from the top of your head."

The young man shuddered at the danger he had passed.

"Rafferty," he said, "can you hear nothing? Surely there are parties sent across the field to succor the wounded. We shall not be left here to die, Rafferty, shall we?"

"No, sir. But only think what a lot of boys there are on the field, sir, and many of them worse off than we are."

"Not much worse, Rafferty, not much worse."

The same dreadful groan, which at such long intervals seemed to be forced by acute pain from the French officer, now came upon the ears again of the ensign and Rafferty.

"Do you hear that, Rafferty?"

"I do, sir. He's a Frenchman; but then you know, sir, we shouldn't be hard on him for that, he couldn't help it. It's his misfortune, sir, not his fault, poor devil! He couldn't make himself be born in that nate Irish town, Ballyohothershin, you know, sir."

The wounded French officer seemed to have heard what Rafferty said, or, at all events, he heard the voice, if he understood not the purport of all the words. That he could speak English, however, he now proved, by saying a few words in that language.

"Who speaks," he said—"who speaks?"

"It's me, Frenchy," said Rafferty. "*Parley vous, Frenchy,* how do you find yourself, old fellow?"

"Are you badly hurt?" said the young ensign.

There was something in the young man's voice which seemed to inspire the French officer with a feeling of confidence, as he said, faintly—

"I am dying—I am dying! But why should those I love die here—those who had all to lose and nothing to gain by this dreadful day of slaughter? We—we might be satisfied with what we call glory but—but the happiness of those she loved, was ever her dearest delight—her last—last care in this world. I am dying—I am dying."

"I fear," said the ensign, "that we cannot aid you. I am hurt seriously, I think myself."

"And a nice kettle of fish I've made of it, Frenchy," said Rafferty. "*Parley vous, Frenchy.* Keep up your spirits."

"Who is that?"

"An honest friend of mine," said the ensign.

"Thank your honor. I'm as honest as most folks, I shouldn't wonder."

"You are both badly wounded," said the French officer. "When they pick you up, say you know Rouselli, of the *garde cheval.* In the French lines the name is not unknown and not unrespected."

"The French lines!" said Rafferty. "I wonder where there's any French lines now."

"The emperor has won the day."

"I presume," said the ensign, "that you were wounded before the fate of the day was virtually decided. The English are the victors."

"God—God! then all is lost! Oh, my Marie—my beautiful—where are you? It is very dark—very dark—I am dying—where can I find you? Oh, the agony to move—the dreadful agony to move! Horror—horror—horror! She is dead!"

"I am here, close at hand to you," said the ensign. "I cannot move, though. Of whom do you speak?"

"The horse has killed her! The horse—the horse! Oh, to come by such a death as this! but we shall meet again—we shall meet again. Soon—soon—yes, soon. Now—now—hush—hush, little one, hush! Are you dead, too—are you dead, too?"

"It strikes me, sir," said Rafferty, "that the poor Frenchy, sir, ain't in his right mind and senses. Any one would think he was nursing a baby, sir."

Even as the sergeant spoke, the low, half-smothered cry of an infant came upon their ears.

"Hush—hush!" said the ensign. "Can it be possible that there is a child here?"

Suddenly he felt something touch him, and, as well as he could, he raised himself a little, when he found that the wounded French officer had dragged his mangled form close to him, and was looking in his face with an expression of intense suffering and anxiety.

The effort which the wounded man had made to get so far, although the distance was nothing, must, in his condition, have been terrific. He had drawn himself along by one arm, and held tightly to his breast with the other, was as astounding and unlikely an object to see on that field of carnage, as could well be imagined. It was a young child, dabbled in blood—soaked in the red stream which had flowed from the wounds of the officer.

While the young ensign, faint and exhausted as he was, managed to see so much, with pain and difficulty the French officer spoke; but although we may give his words, we cannot point to the reader the wild energy with which he spoke, nor the deep, pathetic tones in which he implored the ensign to grant him the boon he sought.

"You are my foe," he said. "My hand may have stricken

you, or you may have done as much for me; but I am dying, and the fight is over. I can see by this faint light that you are young. Perhaps you have some happy home, where there are smiling faces to greet you—where there are fond hearts that love you. Look at this babe. Oh, if you have known affections—if around your heart are woven those invisible ties which bind all who are brave or generous to some loved objects, you will not refuse my prayer! I am dying. My last words are for your ear—my last thoughts may be elsewhere; but Englishman—conqueror—on this field of blood, I ask you to protect this child. It is not one which will disgrace you."

"It shall never want a friend in me. God forbid that at such a time I should refuse so sacred a trust."

"I—I—have not words in which to bless you. Bless you: take the dearest, but——"

He, with a great effort, laid the infant down close to the young Englishman, who placed his arms round it, saying:

"I swear to you, on the honor of a soldier, that I will have this little one taken care of."

It was a trivial circumstance, and perhaps accidental, but the young babe, for such it was, as if with a consciousness of the words that were uttered, placed one of its tiny hands into one of the young officer's, while with large, lustrous eyes, it seemed to look beseechingly in his face.

The man was much affected as he said:

"Tell me, sir, the name of the child?"

"Mabel."

"And are you its father?"

"I—I—help—help: I die. Water—oh, for one draught of water. Marie—Marie—Marie—my Marie!"

With a strange gurgling sob he fell backward. Blood gushed from his mouth; there was for a moment a curious movement of the limbs, and then all was still. He was a corpse.

CHAPTER III.

EVEN as the French officer drew his latest breath, there came a strange, lurid light across the battle-field. It fell upon the faces of the dead, giving them a supernatural appearance, a singular aspect of renewed vitality, and as shadows were produced by the movements of the light, one could almost have expected to see those stiffened corses lying in their gore rise up again to make that field of blood ten times more hideous than it was.

The light fell upon the sparkling uniform, too, of the French officer, and it fell upon the face of the living child, which the young ensign, who now felt a drowsiness creeping over him he dreaded to encourage, held to his breast.

It did not cry, it did not sleep, but nestled close to him, and looked earnestly in his face. Occasionally, too, it moved one of its little hands, and dipped the tip of one of the tiniest fingers in the world in the pool of blood which was close to it, and then it

would look at the crimson stain, as if, young as it was, it could moralize upon that theme.

The light which had gleamed for one instant had faded away again, and the young ensign fell into a train of musing, in the midst of which he was interrupted by the sergeant, who suddenly said, with a groan:

"No luck, sir; no luck. Parties are in the field picking up the wounded, and they've got lights, sir. Well, sir, they were coming on this way as clean as a whistle, sir, when they met some other poor devil and carried him off; so here we have to wait, perhaps a mighty long time, sir."

"We must take our turns, Rafferty."

"Bedad, sir, I suppose we must. So you've got the Frenchy's child, sir. Do you know, it strikes me you ain't a married man, sir."

"I am not."

"I thought you wasn't, sir; but, however, if your honor goes on in this way, it will be a mighty great convenience to you when you do happen to marry, you know, sir."

"A convenience! How?"

"Why, sir, you'll have a nice little family ready-made."

"Rafferty, you would not have had me refuse to take charge of the poor, helpless little child?"

"Refuse, sir! I have you refuse! Do you think I have no bowels, sir? Bedad, sir, I ain't pagan, anyhow. Refuse, did you say, sir? I'd take the poor little small creature myself if you didn't like the job. Oh, murder, who's this, I'd like to know?"

A tall, stalwart-looking man strode up to the spot. In his hand he held a strange shaped sword; it was short, and wide toward the point. He was dressed in a costume more of a civilian than a military character, and as he came up he said:

"I heard English voices. Where are you?"

"Here, my broth of a boy," cried Rafferty.

"Here, here," said the young ensign; "for God's sake, get us some assistance to take us off the field."

"I will see if I can mention you to any of the parties who are out. Have you seen any French about here? Alive, I mean?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"Confound them—I have not come across twenty alive. Those, however, I have finished."

"Finished!" cried the ensign.

"Do you mane finished," said Rafferty, "to be took as a polite name for murdering, sir?"

"My name is Sternholde. You may have heard of me."

As he said these words he walked away.

"Do you know the jontilman?" said Rafferty.

"I have heard of him. He is an *attache* in some capacity to the staff of Blucher, and came with dispatches to the duke this morning. He is notorious for his antipathy to the French. Some of our men call him the battle fiend, for he never will knowingly leave a Frenchman alive. Even if he seriously

wounds one he will follow him up with relentless severity. He is a powerful man, and reputed one of the best swordsmen in Europe."

"Faith, sir, a lively sort of character; and your friend, who has made you sich a mighty handsome present, sir, of the child, would have stood no great chance, if he had not taken himself off to glory as soon as he did."

"I fear the Prussian, Sternholde, would have killed him, and we were too powerless to hinder it, Rafferty; but see, the light again gleams across the field."

"And great glory to them, sir: they are coming this way, too."

A corporal's party now steadily approached the spot, and with a gush of joy which brought tears to his eyes, he heard the cry of "Wounded—wounded! Any wounded?" uttered in an English voice.

"Yes, here," he said, faintly. "Here."

"And when you have nothing else to do, boys," said Rafferty, "you can come and see how the spalpeens have made game of me, and pick up all the pieces of me somehow."

The corporal who had command of the party, which was an offshoot from a much larger one, commanded by an officer, selected the ensign, and then, as he stooped to assist in placing him in a blanket which was stretched out by the men for his reception, he started with surprise to see the child clinging to the breast of the officer with the greater tenacity that strangers were present.

"A child!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, my friend," said the ensign. "It has been brought to me by some one who is now dead, and I have promised to take care of it. Can you assist me in so doing, and I will take care you are no loser by it?"

"My wife, sir, will see to it, poor little thing. We had one of our own, sir, once."

"You have lost it?"

The man turned aside, and a visible emotion shook his whole frame, as in a half-choked voice he said:

"It was blown to pieces by the explosion of an ammunition wagon."

The ensign shuddered, and still holding the child, he was placed in a blanket and slowly carried off the field: nor was Rafferty left behind, for he was taken likewise by four men of the same party, whom he wonderfully amused all the way by detailing, in his own peculiar manner, the various incidents that had occurred during the time that he and the young ensign had been lying wounded on the field, so that the men thought it no labor to carry him to one of the hastily-arranged military hospitals which were formed for the wounded in every house between the plains of Waterloo and the city of Brussels, which could be made available for that purpose.

The young ensign, before he reached a house, had some more conversation with the corporal concerning the child, and after receiving a solemn promise that he and his wife would take care

of it, and let him know from time to time how it was getting on, he felt so overcome by the loss of blood, which had ensued from his wound, and the agony which the being carried from the field gave him, that he fainted, and remained for many hours in a state of unconsciousness.

During that time he was taken to one of the hospitals, his wounds dressed, and himself placed in as comfortahle circumstances as the resources of the army on the night of that day of carnage could afford.

CHAPTER IV.

We have before mentioned that, lying close to where the wounded French officer had originally fallen, was what appeared to be the lifeless form of a young and beautiful female. From the manner in which her arms were clasped round him, and from the interest he took in the child, it may be well gathered that it was in search of him she had come to that dreadful scene, and then died, believing him to he no more, or at all events, as indeed he was, in too hopeless a condition for recovery to be possihle.

That he had considered her to be dead there can be no doubt; for he had made no allusion to her in the brief conversation he had had with the young English ensign. All anxiety on her account was over, and he had thrown all his energy of supplication into his prayer for protection to the child alone.

But it would appear that this opinion of her death was premature. All who have paid much attention to the various united occurrences connected with the battle of Waterloo, are aware that toward the gray light of morning—the morning after the battle had been lost and won—there fell for ahout ten minutes a smart shower of rain upon the dead and wounded who had been unwittingly overlooked in the exertions that had been made to recover all that were possibly imagined not to have breathed their last, from the field. This smart shower of rain recovered several who had fainted, and were, to all appearances dead, in consequence of it plashing upon their faces, and producing a slight shock to their nearly exhausted system.

Among those who thus awoke from a blessed unconsciousness of much misery, was the young and beautiful girl; for such she seemed who had lain so long in a trance on that fatal spot.

The rain fell heavily upon those fair features, which, no doubt, had been idolized by many a heart. It mingled with the blood which had already soaked her long raven tresses, and made the slight clothing she wore cling more closely to her exquisite form. With a deep sigh, she awoke and looked upward at the dull, gray sky, not yet sufficiently lighted by the rising sun to look otherwise than night-like, and not very dark. For some moments she lay profoundly still. A short, sharp cry of anguish announced that memory had reassumed her scepter, and that the young girl knew now all that had for a few moments been so confused and dream-like.

"Rouselli!" she cried, "Rouselli! My child—my—my child, where are you? I had it here, I had it on my heart. My child—Mabel—Mabel! Oh, God! where is my beautiful child?"

With frantic gestures she rose to her feet, and looked wildly around her.

Her eye suddenly fell upon the dead body of the French officer. The uniform must have been familiar to her, for, without a moment's hesitation, she now flew toward him.

"'Tis he—'tis he!" she exclaimed. "He has my child—my darling Mabel! Rouselli—Rouselli! dead—dead! and I living! where is the child? Not here—not—here! and he alone who could tell me of its fate—dead—dead! Oh! now, kind Heaven, send your lightnings on me, for I am weary of existence. Rouselli, I say. Rouselli, I demand of you my child!"

She knelt down by the side of the corpse, and overcoming, from the stronger impulse of maternal affection, her dread of so fearful an object, she searched the folds of the cloak, which still partially hung around the body, with the hope of finding somewhere the only object of her solicitude; but soon she became convinced that search was fruitless, and what pen can describe the dreadful despair which then came over her mind, and nearly drove her to madness? For a moment she clasped her hands, and cast an appealing look to Heaven, as if about to utter some prayer, but the intention deserted her. Her mental agony was too much even for prayer to soothe, and with wild screams that brought more fears into the heart of many a poor fellow, who lay at his last gasp on the damp earth, she fled over the field of battle.

She had no hope of finding the object of her love. Her flight from spot to spot, and the frantic manner in which she called upon her child, were rather mechanical movements than dictated by reason.

In this state she neared the town of Huguemont, which had been the scene during the preceding day of so much hard fighting, and where so many corpses lay strewn about in the wildest disorder.

"Mabel!" she still shouted, "Mabel—Rouselli, my child! Give me back my child! Heaven, give me back my child! Why, oh, why delight me with such a gift, but again to tear it from my doting heart? Mabel—Mabel! My child—my child!"

Suddenly, then, from among the ruins of the town-house, there darted out the figure of a man, and heedless of where he trod, whether it was on the dead or dying, he rushed toward the female who there stood in such an attitude of woe.

With a fiendish laugh he seized her wrist, and throwing off the undress military cap he wore, he cried, in scarcely less wild accents than she herself had been speaking in,—

"Do you know me?"

She turned her eyes upon his face for an instant, and then, at the same moment that she made a vain effort to escape from the clutch he had fastened upon her she shouted the name of—

"Sternholde!"

"Yes," he cried, ferociously, "I am Sternholde, whom men call the 'Battle Fiend.' Where is he? I would not name him. Where is he?"

"Dead—dead! Beyond the reach of your vengeance. Give me back my child."

"Dead! Rouselli dead! D——n!"

"Give me back my child."

"Death and fury! What mean you? Where is that child, ask I? Where is it—at Brussels—in France? Where, tell me where?"

"You cannot deceive me, villain. You, and you only, would snatch it from my arms. Restore it to me, Sternholde. The child, at least, never harmed you. Restore it to me. My Mabel—my child!"

"By Heaven, woman, I have not seen the infant! The knowledge of its existence added fuel to the flame of hatred which burnt in my breast already sufficiently fierce. Tell me where it is, and life shall not long linger in its frame!"

"You know too well. Why will you thus torture me by a pretended ignorance of that on which you are too well informed? Oh, Sternholde! surely you have some touch of human pity left for me? What have I done—what have I done?"

"Favored and advanced the doings of others. In that way you have injured me. And now, by this pretended ignorance respecting the child, you would balk me of my vengeance."

"Sternholde, you mock me. Oh, give me back my babe. Surely—surely, you would not keep so young a child from its mother. Remember, I am now its only friend."

"Its only friend, are you?"

"I am; for, on my soul, I assure you he is dead."

"Curses on the hand that laid him low! I wished him dead, but it was that I might kill him. What is it to me that he is dead if another hand slew him? A thousand, ay, nearly a hundred thousand, better men than he, have this day shared his fate. The very air is heavy with the scent of blood. I had always a hope of meeting him—wherever France was engaged in warfare, there was I in the opposing ranks. Wherever a solitary traveler of that nation could be traced, I was on his footsteps like a bloodhound."

"Peace—peace."

"Nay, you shall hear. I always had my knife ready; I would spring upon them unawares, and, like some avenging spirit, I would take the life of him who had no fault but that he spoke the native language of Rouselli."

"Sternholde—Sternholde! Let me lead you back to that one subject which fills all my heart."

"What is that?"

"My child—my child! Sternholde, you have hidden it somewhere!"

"Fool! think you that if I had met that infant, it would have lived? And think you I could refrain from exulting in its death? Take me to the spot where lies Rouselli's body. I

would feast my eyes upon the corpse—I would look upon his face again, even though it be in death."

"No—no. I could not if I would; in my frantic eagerness to search for my lost little one, I have wandered from the spot, and now I know no more than you do where to search for his remains."

"You would cheat me of my vengeance—but you cannot."

"I do not comprehend you."

"Rouselli lives—he lives! This story of his death is a fabrication to cheat me of my revenge. I'll not believe it—Rouselli is not dead!"

"These eyes beheld him."

"And yet I'll not believe it. But let me test the truth. If Rouselli, who removed you from my heart, be dead, that tie is broken."

"It is broken."

"Well—if you have lost your child amid this scene of carnage, that tie is broken."

"No, no, no. Death has not claimed two victims."

"Doubtless he has. Will you fly with me, and let the past be as a dream, to which we will not again refer? Marie, will you fly with me?"

"With you, Sternholde—with you?"

"Ay, wherefore not?"

"Rather say wherefore. I will not think of such an act."

"Then I am convinced Rosuelli lives. He who betrayed you—who betrayed my sister Bertha—the beautiful and the good. You hear I can name her without shrinking, without tears. Well, you know how much I loved her. She was *his* victim. Can you wonder that I look for great revenge now? I have registered a vow to exterminate him and all who belong to him. The family to which he belongs shall fall to rise no more. His means shall become the means of those to whom the law will give them. His name shall not live in the memory of the next generation."

"He is dead. What more would you? It may be madness to seek revenge at all, but yet there is something of human nature in it which discriminates between the innocent and the guilty; but it is the act of a fiend to punish, or seek to injure those who have done no wrong, but merely have the misfortune to be connected with the guilty. Farewell—farewell."

"Not so, Marie. We part not thus. Marie, I have a secret to communicate to you, and there is no more fitting time than this. Marie, I love you still!"

The young mother stepped back a pace or two, as she repeated the words—

"Love me still!"

"Yes, with all my ancient fervor. Therefore I ask you to come with me. A dim shadow of my early dream of joy may then be fulfilled. You have no ties now. Away with all vain regrets. I love you still; I feel I love you still."

"And think you I could, for a moment, dream of yoking my fate to such a one as you? You, who breathe an atmosphere

of murders! You, who have not even the poor credit of being ashamed of your foul deeds! You, the assassin of harmless men because you were foiled in your revenge upon one who had really injured you! You, a man in whom cruelty became a principle because your revenge meant to be cruel! No! sooner would I pass away from this great world, and all its troubles, along with the heaps of slain who lie here around, than I would for an instant dream of uniting my fate to such as thou art!"

"Taunt me not. For your own safety's sake, taunt me not."

At this moment the low winding note of a bugle came upon their ears, and Sternholde started, as he strained his eyes in the direction whence it came. A body of Prussian troops, which had been pursuing the French for some distance, was returning, and taking the nearest route to Brussels, across the plain of Waterloo.

Now, too, were to be seen in the dim, waning light, the dusky forms of the soldiers as they came on at an easy pace, not absolutely formed in rank, but so much together, that at a word of command they could take close order, and assume a stricter appearance of discipline. The first rank that were advancing consisted of a body of light infantry, of some thousand or so strong. Each man was carrying his musket as it best suited him, and the ranks had the straggling appearance they present when troops are on the march, and permitted to relax in the order of their steps.

Now and then the bugle sounded to bring up stragglers, and, after this tolerably strong body of infantry, appeared a dense mass of cavalry, covered with dust and foam, and bearing many external evidences of how hotly they had pursued the retreating foe for some distance, as well as what casual encounters they had had with some of the hindmost of the flying host.

These troops had pursued the French some leagues from Waterloo, and were only recalled when all effectual opposition was at an end, and the remnant of Napolean's army was scattering itself over too wide a range of country to render pursuit at all available or desirable.

Infuriated at the opposition of Marie to his wishes, Sternholde drew a pistol from his pocket, exclaiming:

"Before yon advancing column nears us, choose between death and a voluntary flight with me."

"'Voluntary!"

"Pshaw! I have no time to cavil about words. Make your choice—I swear that you shall die by my hand, or follow me at once into the ruins of this house."

"I will not purchase life," said Marie, "by dishonor; but while I have it, I will do my best to retain it. Help, help, help!"

As she spoke, she rushed off in the direction of the advancing troops, and so sudden and unexpected was the movement, that Sternholde let her get a considerable distance before he leveled the pistol after her retreating form. Then he found to

his mortification, when he pulled the trigger, that the recent rain had damped the powder, and no discharge followed.

Casting the weapon at his feet with an oath, he produced another, but by this time some of the foremost of the advancing soldiers had seen Marie, and were running forward to meet her, for her cries for help had reached the ears of hundreds of them. One fleet runner just met her, and caught her in his arms, as Sternholde fired the second pistol; which was fully discharged.

"Hit, by Heaven!" he cried, as he saw the soldier and Marie fall to the ground together. "Hit, and her weight has knocked that meddling fool over."

A rattling discharge of musketry was immediately sent after him, but he plunged into the ruins of the still burning farmhouse, and was on the instant lost to view, apparently quite unhurt from any of the random shots which had been discharged after him.

CHAPTER V.

FIFTEEN years had passed away since that memorable battle of Waterloo had been fought and won.

The political events which followed that awful conflict had not then fully developed themselves, but they were doing so rapidly. Peace had been restored to Europe, but the angry passions which many years had fostered and generated, now only slept for a time or felt themselves chained down by the force of circumstances.

But what changes, amid all those which have been produced by time and circumstances during those fifteen years, have occurred to those persons in whose fates we have become interested, from watching for a brief space of time, what occurred to them on that field of carnage, when the name of Waterloo was fresh in the minds of men, and the account of the most sanguinary conflict of modern times appeared to Europe more like a dream than a reality, bringing in its train such important results?

What has become of the young ensign who lay there so badly wounded, and thinking of the happy home he had left, to engage in such a scene, and make one of the miscalculating people who prefer doing the fighting abroad to paying for it at home? Where is he, and how has he prospered or retrograded in his circumstances since that awful day?

And the young child whom he made so ready a promise to protect—where is she—Mabel, as she was named? Fifteen years must have made great alterations in her, if still she be numbered among the living.

And the battle-fiend—Sternholde, the wild, revengeful man, who had conducted an interview on the field of blood with the bereaved young mother, that said so little for his head or for his heart—does he still continue his mad career, or has the grim hand of death been laid upon him, and stopped him in the midst of his atrocities?

And Rafferty Brolickbones, who feared to be picked up in so many pieces from the field of Waterloo, that some of them would be lost—where is he? Has fifteen years quenched the sparkling, merry humor of his heart? Have they dimmed his perception of the ludicrous? Have they attacked in any way his love for whisky?

Let us cast about for some chance of discovering the whereabouts of some of those whom we have mentioned, and whose fortunes we still propose to follow. With a foreknowledge of where to look, we cast our eyes upon one of the most romantic and delightful spots in Cumberland. It is summer time, and all is fresh and beautiful, and full of radiance, joy, and beauty.

In one of the most favored spots that the country could present for many miles around, was an ancient, large, rambling, roomy, handsome farm-house. The house and farm attached went by the name of Moncton Friars, and since the memory of man, in the way of tradition, from father to son, it had never known any other appellation.

It is the same month, June. in which the battle was fought which laid upon the field of Waterloo, Henry Morton, the young ensign who had been so badly wounded; it was the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. The slant rays of the setting sun were just streaming over the lands of the farm, and the glaring light of day had given place to the mellower and more welcome radiance that filled the evening air, when a solitary figure might have been seen winding its way along the winding pathway in the wilderness.

The form was that of a young girl, although from her stature, which was tall, no one would have thought her really so young as she was. She was attired, not showily, or in costly garments, but her appearance had about it that ineffable grace which betrays at once the tenderly-nurtured girl, who has been carefully watched and tended by the sleepless eyes of fond affection. A straw hat was carelessly thrown back from her head. so that the whole contour of her face was visible. Her eyes were of the darkest hazel; full of intelligence and power, and intellectual beauty; her cheeks presented the clear, transparent color which health and pure air can only give; while her mouth, beautifully curved, and full of expression, would have been a long study for the longest summer's day that ever dawned. Her hair was not black; but it was so nearly so, that, while it had all the beauty that black could have as a contrast, it had likewise the silky fineness which seldom belongs to that color. It hung in masses of wavy tresses about her neck and face, and then far down her shoulders, where, with a gentle, springy motion, as she walked, it danced upon her snowy breast, as if proud of the resting place it had obtained.

And yet, with all her beauty, all her intelligence, and all the tender care which had been bestowed upon her, there could have been observed by an attentive observer an air of sadness upon her face. At times, too, this air of sadness would deepen into positive melancholy, and then a sigh would come from her heart, as if, despite all incitements to serenity and joy, there

was still a something hidden there which marred the beauty of all things and tempered the young happiness of her heart to a sedater feeling.

What could it be that interposed its cruel blight upon the joy of one so fair and surely so good? Too young was she for those ill-impressed affections that bring more tears than smiles; too young to have yet discovered that the flowers of life only bloom in such rich beauty on the world's threshold, and that, after that, they are few and far between. And yet she was unhappy.

But now she raises her eyes to Heaven, and clasps her hands; she speaks, and her words fall like low notes of distant music on the ear.

"He will tell me all to-day," she said; "he has promised he will tell me all to-day; I am the child of mystery. I have no kindred, none to love me with that love which should spring from a mother's heart. I am desolate, very desolate."

A tear stole down her cheek, and fell upon one of her small, exquisitely shaped hands. Oh! what beauty, what intelligence there may be in a hand! She started as the pearly drop made its presence known by thus gently flowing from her eyes.

"For shame!" she said; "is this true? Is this grateful? Who has been so tenderly—so kindly, fondly nurtured as I have been—upon whom has so much care been lavished—upon whom have the eyes of true affection beamed more devotedly? and yet I weep and say that I am desolate. No—no—no; I may be sad at times, but I am not desolate, while warm, kind hearts exist beneath that roof which will ever, to me, be a hallowed spot. rendered sacred as the home of dearest affections.

"He will tell me all. now, to-day," she said again; "he has promised to tell me all, and yet, how little is that all he says. And, when I wept upon his breast, and begged to know the story of my life, he said he knew so little that he had not told me, lest I should be unhappy by losing my spirits in wild conjecture."

A ray of sunlight, which had suddenly dipped from behind a projection of the house, fell upon her face, and she turned aside to avoid it.

On the moment she became aware of the presence of a stranger in the wilderness, who was leaning against the trunk of a tree at some distance, and who seemed to be most intently observing her.

CHAPTER VI.

So unusual a sight was a stranger in the wilderness of Moncton Friars that for a moment Mabel could hardly believe the evidence of her own eyes to the fact that there was with her on that spot, which she thought secure from all intrusion, one whom she knew not.

He did not speak. He looked tired, travel-worn, and exhausted. The apparel he wore had evidently seen much service; it was patched and repatched clumsily in all directions; shoes he had none; and one of his feet was bleeding as if from some

recent injury he had received from a flint casually trodden upon. Round his head he wore a colored handkerchief, and above that again was a slouching hat of the most ragged and wretched description.

His eyes were small and ferret-looking. The forehead had that shelving shape which betokens in its possessor cunning without wisdom; and about the mouth there was some unfortunate curve which could not well be defined, but which gave an uncommonly villainous expression to the whole face.

The first impulse of Mabel was to fly from the spot, when he now began to move toward her; but she checked herself in that and paused, as his attitude was respectful, and he took off the slouched hat he wore. Then, in whining accents, which must have been the result of long practice in mendicity, he said,—

"Sweet young lady, take some pity on a poor man—an old soldier, one who has fought the battles of his country, and kept the domestic hearths free from the invader. Have compassion, dear young lady, on an old soldier."

Mabel was almost too terrified to speak, for he kept coming still nearer to her each moment. However, she mustered courage to address him in answer to his mock submissive appeal.

"If you go around," she said, "to the front of the farm, you will be relieved. No one is turned away from that door unrelieved, who is considered worthy."

"The front of the house, miss?"

"Yes. Go there."

"Lord bless me! if you knew how far I have traveled, and how long ago it is since I've tasted food, you would not ask me to go so far."

"It is a mile to the nearest place," said Mabel, "at which you could purchase food, were I to give you money. It is not a fourth part of that distance to the front entrance of the farm. Besides, you are trespassing here; and, however charitable Mr. Morton may be, I know he does not approve of intrusions on to those parts of his grounds which are set apart for the exclusive use of the family."

"Morton—Morton!"

"Yes, Mr, Morton."

"Then, what place is this, miss!"

"Moncton Friars, it is named."

The man advanced another step, and in a voice which betrayed some agitation, he said—

"Girl—I—I beg your pardon, miss—was Mr. Morton ever in the army?"

"He was," said Mabel, surprised at first at the question, although a moment's consideration told her she need not be, as that was a fact known to the whole country side. "He was, but is not now."

"He—he was, but is not now," repeated the man, as if the words possessed to him more than common interest.

Mabel was going away, but he called out to her:

"Stay—stay. I—want to know more—I must know more—that is, I humbly request to know more."

"I cannot remain to answer the questions of a stranger," said Mabel.

"By Heaven!—no. Pardon me, miss. Your father, Mr. Morton——"

"He is not my father."

"Not your father! Not—not—not your father! What then—what then, I say? You are too young to be his wife. What—what——"

"This is impertinence," said Mabel; and, feeling a degree of alarm which she would not show, she hastened to leave the wilderness. Fain would she have run from the place, but a sense of pride, and a natural courage which she possessed, forbade her to do so, and she only walked at a rapid pace. Some distance lower down in the wilderness was a swinging gate, which led to a pathway direct to the farm-house, and it was that which she now wished to gain. Before, however, she had proceeded far, she heard the hasty patter of the man's bare feet upon the pathway behind her, and she felt assured that she was pursued. A pang of fear came across her mind, and she quickened her speed. She knew that she was being overtaken, and that there was no time for her to open the gate and pass through it, so she at once turned upon her pursuer when she reached it, and with her hand laid upon it, and a face as pale as marble, she said:

"What means this conduct? Is this the way you advance your claims to charity?"

"D——n your charity!" cried the fellow; "why did you run from me in that way for?"

"How dared you pursue me?"

"Because it was my pleasure. I want a few plain answers to a few plain questions; and you had better give them to me at once."

"Beware, sir; I am not so far from home but that I can summon assistance. I pity your wretched condition, and am disposed to forgive even this outrage, if you at once desist from following me."

"Can you, indeed! You carry it with a high hand. The more I look at you the more I feel inclined to insist upon an answer to my questions, the first one of which is, who are you?"

"Who—who am I?"

"Yes, who are you? What's your name? Who are your friends, girl? Are you any relationship to Morton, or none?"

Mabel looked fixedly at the man, and the idea crossed her mind that surely he must know something of her history, or he would not be so curious concerning her.

"Your manner convinces me I am not wrong, that I have not been walking over England years for nothing. You are not a daughter—indeed, you are no relation of Morton's. Was he at the battle of Waterloo?"

"He was."

"I knew it. The very man. D——n! what a treat. You

are a beautiful girl, and like one whom I knew long ago. I thought so, when first you turned your head, and I saw your face; but, somehow, then the likeness vanished, but now it has come back again, and I know that I am not mistaken. Answer me what I would ask of you, and then you may go where you please, and as soon as you please. What is your name?"

"My name is well known; it is no secret. My name is Mabel."

"I guessed as much," cried the fellow, in a tone of exultation. "You have no friends; you are kept by Captain Morton—for he is a captain in rank—in charity. You know nothing of your own history."

"Gracious Heaven. who can you be who have acquired so much knowledge of what I am?"

"Ah, who can I be?"

"Tell me, I implore."

"Oh, you are beginning to implore, are you? Ha! ha! what an odd thing, to hear a fine young lady, such as you are, so proud and haughty, imploring of a poor beggar, without a shoe to his foot."

"You shall be rewarded; you shall not long remain in such a situation, if you can tell me who I am. If you know the secret of my birth——"

"I do know it."

"Oh, tell me—tell me, I beseech you; keep me not in ignorance; tell me, I implore you, tell me."

"There are two words go to that bargain; you must answer me some questions first; and remember, if you cavil over your answers, or refuse the information I seek, I leave you, and you will never know who you are, for the secret is buried here and nowhere else."

He struck his breast as he spoke, and eyed her fixedly. She trembled, and held on by the gate for support, as she replied,—

"What questions I can and ought to answer, I will answer, with the hope that you will be explicit upon that subject which is dear to my heart, and which has given rise in my mind to so much endless, painful, and all-engrossing conjecture."

"I will satisfy you."

"On your oath, swear to me that you will."

"I swear that I will. Answer the questions which I shall ask of you, freely, and I will then answer you as freely all that you can ask of me."

"I will, I will. Yes, yes."

"By the bye, first and foremost, have you any money?"

"A small sum; you are welcome to it."

She produced her purse, and he at once snatched it from her trembling hands, and placed it out of sight in his bosom, as he cried, with a brutal laugh that made the very heart of poor Mabel turn cold—

"This will do for the present. Ha, ha, ha! This will keep the enemy at bay for the present. By G——d! it strikes me very forcibly that, in a short time now, I shall cut a very different appearance to my present one. D——n these rags, they become me about as well as a scarecrow."

Already did Mabel begin to repent of the hargain she had made, when she saw what a hrutal exultation it produced in the mind of the fellow who had so far induced her to hold a conversation with him on a subject upon which she had never opened her lips to any one save him who was her benefactor, and all to her that a parent could be.

Even now, could she have succeeded in doing so with any degree of safety, she would have flown from the spot, but she dreaded to make the least movement to undo the swinging gate, lest he should rush forward and lay violent hands upon her; and what could she, young and delicately formed as she was, expect to he ahle to do against the reckless ruffian who stood before her?

When he had indulged himself as much as he wished in his contemplations of a change in his prospects, he bent his keen eyes upon Mabel's face, and in a voice of triumphant malice he cried:

"Come, then, is Morton rich?"

"I—I believe he is rich."

"Good. Is he married?"

"Yes," said Mabel, pleased to find the questions such as she could answer without any hreach of confidence.

"Has he ever told you how he came hy the care of you?"

"Never."

"You don't know, then, any other name than that of Mabel?"

"They call me Mabel Morton; I know no other name, although I know that to that one I am not entitled."

"How old are you?"

"I do not know; I think I am about sixteen."

"Right; the presumption is correct. What's at the end of that gold chain round your neck, eh?"

"A cross."

"A cross! let me see it."

"No, no; I have given you what money I had; that I do not value, hut I will not part with this. It is precious to me, for it was round my neck when I was an infant, and I have often been told hy those who have been so kind to me, never to part with it."

"Indeed; you won't show it to me?"

"I will not."

"It is made of hrilliants set in a white-colored gold."

Mabel started.

"You seem surprised, hut you see I know a thing or two. It is of value—I mean it is of intrinsic value. If you preserve it with any notion that it will assist you in discovering your parents or family, you are wrong, it will do no such thing—I know better. Give it to me. I can tell you more in one minute than ever you could discover by any one's recognition of that cross in a hundred years."

"I will not give it to you."

"Remember, I have told you nothing."

"Then tell me nothing; I have promised not to part with this, and I will not."

"Confound your obstinacy! you will just give me the trouble of forcing it from your neck."

"You dare not do so," cried Mabel; "I tell you again and again you shall not have it. Help! help!"

"Ay, you may call, your voice won't carry to that house yonder. Give me the cross, I say."

"No, no, spare me that; you shall have more money to-morrow; I will bring you its full value in gold, if you will name the sum."

"You will?"

"I will; but this I cannot, dare not, part with. You would not murder me for what to you can possess no value but its worth in money?"

"Murder! I want only to look at it, if you will keep your word about bringing me the money to-morrow. The cross is worth fifty pounds."

"I have not such a sum. Good God! where am I to get fifty pounds? It is not possible, it is not possible!"

"Then must I have the bauble."

At this moment, from some part of the plantation, there came the sudden and sharp report of a gun, and the stranger gave so alarmed a start, that Mabel seized the opportunity, and, opening the swinging gate, she darted through it. Recovering, then, from his momentary surprise almost immediately, he, with a furious bound, and an oath, darted after; but scarcely had he got half a dozen yards from the swinging gate, when a large hound sprung into the middle of the pathway between him and Mabel. At so great a speed, however, was he coming on after the flying girl, that he could not stop himself till he was right upon the dog, who took a tolerable mouthful out of the fellow's leg. Rage, although excessive, by no means deprived the beggar of sufficient reason to make him understand the propriety of falling back out of range of the dog's teeth, and he accordingly placed himself on the other side of the gate with a quickness that would have done credit to a harlequin.

Well did Mabel know that she was safe the moment she saw the noble hound, and she immediately turned with a flushed face and confronted the fellow, and as she rested her hand upon the head of the hound, said:

"If I were as full of the passion of resentment as you are of wickedness, I could, by a word, set this creature on you, and perhaps your life would fall a sacrifice to your wish to do a deed of violence. You are a thief. You would have robbed me, and because you thought yourself the stronger, you would not have cared what degree of violence was necessary to deprive me of the trinket which I told you I set the most intrinsic value upon."

"Ah, but remember I have something to tell you about your real name and your family, you know."

"I will hear nothing—I will hear nothing," said Mabel, "from such a man as you are."

"Then beware!"

"I heed not your threats. Leo, boy, look at him!"

The dog advanced close to the swinging gate, and then sat down and stared the man in the face, while he now and then gave a low growl, and licked his immense tongue round his jaws, as if to warn him that if he attempted to move away, another grip would be the consequence.

"Mabel!" at this moment cried a voice, and a young lad, whose age might be the same as hers, or possibly a year older, made his appearance, carrying in his hand a light fowling-piece. "Mabel, you here!"

"Yes, Charles, yes—yes. I have been frightened by that man."

"Indeed! Let him take care of himself."

"Leo has him safe, Charles—Leo has him safe. But I think I will let him go now."

"Go! No such thing. Hallo, you fellow! Oh, look, Mabel!"

The man had produced a long glittering knife, and, with a fiendish expression, he suddenly cried,—

"Now send your dog on, and I'll soon let out his heart's blood."

"Drop that knife," said the lad, as he presented his gun. "Drop that knife, or, as you are a living man, I'll send a charge of number four in your face."

"Let him go—oh, let him go!" said Mabel, who felt much terrified at the turn affairs had taken. "Leo—Leo! Here, boy!"

The dog came to her immediately, and she cried out:

"Go—go! you are free to go."

"If it's your wish, Mabel, to let him go," said Charles, "he may; but my brother Henry, I know, if he was here, would not."

"Hark you, Mabel," said the fellow, as he turned away, "the wisest thing you ever said in your life, was 'let him go.' You'll live to know that some of these days, and that at no very distant time either."

So saying, he dashed off among the trees, and in a few moments completely disappeared. Poor Mabel was glad to lean upon the arm of Charles Morton, for that was the youth's name, and what with the fright, and the tumult of her thoughts, joined to the exhaustion of more exercise than she had been accustomed to, she had only strength sufficient to reach the threshold of the farm-house, and then consciousness deserted her, and she fainted, to the great terror and grief of her young companion, who filled the hall with his lamentations.

CHAPTER VII.

THE cries of Charles very quickly brought every member of the household to the spot, and from the nature of his lamentations, the excess of his grief, and the frantic manner in which he called aloud for aid, every one feared that some dreadful and serious calamity must have befallen her, who was the beloved of all hearts, from the highest to the lowest, in that pleasant and united household.

The dog, too, and dogs will often do such things, actually participated in his master's grief, and when he heard Charles calling out in such tones, he set up a howl that was heard far and near, and added greatly to the scene of confusion and dismay that now ensued. Old women don't often make very valuable discoveries; but it was reserved for an ancient nurse in the family, who came hobbling up when Mabel had been raised from the ground, to ascertain really what was the matter.

"The dear child has only fainted," she exclaimed. "Lord bless you, in my time, when I was young, a matter of fifty years ago, the young ladies never dreamt of fainting. Bring her along—bring her along."

Henry Morton, who had in common with every one else heard the outcry which was made in the house by his brother and the dog, had rushed to the scene of action; nor was his wife far behind him; and taking the light form of Mabel tenderly in his arms, he carried her into the nearest apartment, and laid her on a couch.

"Poor Mabel!" exclaimed his wife; "we will have medical assistance, Henry; I will send some one."

"If you wish to do so. Alice, certainly; but if it be that she has only fainted, you can do as much for her as any medical man."

"Brother," said Charles, addressing Henry, "let me get medical advice, will you? I can ride the bay mare over to the village and get the doctor."

Henry was upon the point of saying that he gave his full consent for Charles to go, when a voice, which our readers could have recognized, chimed into the conversation, saying:

"Don't, sir, now don't be after sending for these rogues of doctors, sir, to poor Miss Mabel; bless the lights of her two darlint eyes, sir, don't do it. It's always dangerous to send for a doctor, sir."

It was no other than our old friend, Rafferty Brolickbones, who held and had held ever since that memorable day when fate had thrown him and Mr. Morton, then the young wounded ensign, together on the field of Waterloo, a high place in the latter's esteem.

"If so be, sir," he added, "you will have a doctor, let me go. sir, and not little Charley here, who is all of a shake, like an ould jelly bag, if you plase, sir."

"No, Rafferty, there is really no occasion."

"Thank you. sir. Bedad, I didn't think as there was. As for fainting, its mighty genteel nowadays, sir. More's the pity it was invented. But as for doctors, sir, I can tell you there's mighty great danger of having them. The old man, sir, my father, never had a doctor all the days of his life; but, at last, one day, he had two, and, sure enough, that settled the business, and he went as dead as nothing, sir, before you could say pace to him."

"Ah," chuckled the old nurse, "she is coming round again; dear, dear me, what has been the matter? You must help her

to her own room, Mr. Henry, and then she can lie down and rest herself a little. See, she's opening her eyes."

Mabel was certainly recovering, for now she gave a faint, sigh, and opening her eyes, she gazed around her with looks of confused surprise, but when she saw around her those well-known familiar faces which were so dear to her, and which had ever beamed upon her with so much kindness, she burst into tears.

"Ah, now, that'll do her good," said the old nurse.

"Hush—hush!" said Henry. "What has alarmed her? She seems evidently in a state of great nervous trepidation."

"A strange man," said Charles, "whom we met in the wilderness——"

"A strange man?"

"Yes, Henry; I was out shooting. It was late, but, you know. I wanted a bat for my museum, and I had just taken a shot at one, when Leo, who was with me, seemed to hear something he didn't approve of, so off he set, and I followed him. Sure enough, he led me to where poor Mabel was trying to run away from one of the greatest ruffians I ever beheld."

"Rafferty," said Henry Morton, "take some one with you, and search the wilderness. If you find this fellow, take him to the cage, and, by fair means or foul, we'll convince him that we are not with impunity to be thus treated on our own grounds. Charles can describe him to you."

"Come along, my boy," cried Rafferty. "Bedad we'll find him, and, Charley, if he don't resist we'll make him, and have one of the most illegant rows in all the world."

The young lad was nothing loath to follow Rafferty Brolickbones, who the reader will perceive was a privileged person, and was permitted just to say and do what he liked at Moncton Friars.

Charles Morton, too, was the more willing to go, since Mabel was on the point of being removed to her own room, whither he knew he could not intrude, and what was the house to him if he were not to see her until, most likely now, the following morning?

* * * * * * *

When Rafferty and the young ensign Morton were, along with the child which had been placed in the care of the latter, taken from the field of battle, they were carried to different hospitals, and there remained for a considerable time; and what was strange enough, Rafferty, although to all appearance much more considerably injured than the young officer, recovered much the soonest, and without the loss of any of his limbs, although the battle had cut him up severely. Not unmindful of the great service which had been rendered to him on the field of Waterloo, Morton, as his own wounds healed, and convalescence began to approach, had made frequent inquiries after Rafferty, and sent him the means of procuring many indulgences he would else have never seen. The consequence of all this was, that when Rafferty was able to move about, he got leave to visit the ensign, who received him with great cordiality and kindness, and

from that day forthwith Rafferty installed himself as a sort of follower and confidential attendant to Morton. We forgot to add, when talking of his wounds that he lost an eye, and that circumstance invalided him, so that he got his discharge and a pension, and might have gone back, had he wished it, to the Emerald Isle; but when Morton spoke to him on that subject after they both landed in England, he said—

"No, sir, I'll stay by you, sir, now. You've sold out now, sir, and I've had my eye poked out, sir, which has turned me out; so, by your lave, sir, I'll stay by you, if you can make me any way useful."

"I do not want to make you useful, Rafferty. If you like to reside at my estate in England, you shall be welcome."

"An estate, sir?"

"Yes, Rafferty, in Cumberland."

"Oh, then, sir, I shall find abundant things to do. I'll make myself generally useful, like a maid-of-all-work, sir. I'll wring the pigs' necks and scald the poultry, sir, dig up praties, and kiss the maids."

"We can dispense with the latter accomplishment, Rafferty."

"Very good, sir, I don't want to interfere with you, sir, in any little matter—very far from it, sir, I assure you, always."

With this understanding Rafferty Brolickbones went with Captain Morton, as he was frequently called—for, although he had left the army, he was gazetted a captain before he did so—to Cumberland, and never was any human being more astonished and delighted than was Rafferty with Moncton Friars. And although having all the appearance of an idler about the house and grounds, Morton soon found him of inestimable value from the fact of his being so thoroughly trustworthy and confidential—he was here, and there, and everywhere, and the greatest torment the world could have produced to any one who attempted any peculations at the farm, or who avoided, or attempted to avoid, doing his duty. And yet he was a general favorite, and at any merry-making of the farm laborers and servants, Rafferty was in immense request, and the life and soul of the party—he could dance, sing, shout, jest, drink, and fight; in truth, Rafferty's accomplishments were of a very numerous nature, and he soon became as much at home at Moncton Friars as the most ancient of its inmates, and as much a part of the place as one of the wings of the building itself. His attachment to the whole of the family was immense, not that that family was a very large one, for, until Henry Morton married, which he did not do until he had been nearly five years settled on his estate, it merely consisted of himself and Charles, and little Mabel, who certainly made the house look much more cheerful and inhabited than it would have looked had she not been there to make a little bustle in it.

Morton had liberally remunerated the sergeant's wife, who, during his detention at the hospital in Brussels, had taken charge of the infant, and he had agreed with her that she should bring it to him in Cumberland, which she did, and after experiencing the munificence of his recompense to her, she left the

young child of the battle-field, and again rejoined the regiment in which her husband served.

Of course it became quite a settled thing in the neighborhood that the child was Mr. Morton's, and some blamed him furiously for having it in the house, while others as vehemently praised him.

Still he kept his own counsel, and with a rare discretion, Rafferty kept his, so that no one was at all aware of the real facts of the case.

When Henry Morton married, however, surprise reached its climax, for everybody, of course, then supposed that the child would be sent off, but no such thing occurred; and, to the intense astonishment of everybody, Mrs. Morton was seen leading about the little Mabel, then five years old, with an air of the greatest fondness and affection for it. Some were indignant; some pretended to look wise, and to shake their heads, as if they knew some solution of the mystery, which they meant to keep entirely to themselves; and some ladies of the neighborhood went so far as to cut the acquaintance of Mrs. Morton for her want of spirit. She ought, they contended, to have turned out of the house the little girl the moment she came home. But then women are so dreadfully virtuous—especially when they reach a certain age—that they forget altogether to be charitable.

But Mrs. Morton and her husband lived together in the greatest harmony and paid not the least attention to all these insinuations; so that in time the more sensible people ceased to speak or think about it; and the orphan child, who had been so happy in finding kind friends, was called Mabel Morton as naturally as if she were one of the most acknowledged and well-known members of the family.

And so she grew in years and beauty, and was the delight of both Mr. and Mrs. Morton, who had but one child of their own, which they had lost at an early age. They never had another, and so the full tide of their affections was strangely enough cast upon those who, in one case, had no natural claim at all, and, in the other, only a collateral one.

Charles Morton and Mabel—the two happiest hearts that ever beat—were attached playmates, brought up together completely as brother and sister, and receiving all the care and attention from Mr. and Mrs. Morton, as if they had been their own children.

But although Morton would sooner have parted with all he possessed in the world besides than with Mabel Morton, as she was called, yet it must not be supposed that he had made no effort to discover who and what she was.

These efforts, though, he had made with great secrecy and caution. It was to gratify a natural curiosity he did so, and not to awaken any claimant for his young charge.

It will be recollected by the reader that all he knew of Mabel consisted in the very brief conversation he had had with the wounded French officer, and that he had said so little, in consequence of the dreadful state he was in, that even whether he was her father or not was a doubtful point. The young female

whom he had called Marie, and who, to all appearance, lay dead by his side, Morton knew nothing further of than that such a form did lie there. Of her subsequent proceedings he was ignorant, although the reader has had some insight into them.

Around the neck of Mabel he had found the cross which the audacious and brutal beggar in the wilderness had alluded to, and which he had really described so readily and so truly; but beyond the letters at the back of it of M. R., it afforded no tangible clew.

He had likewise heard the name of Rouselli; but so confused had been his own perceptions, in consequence of the anguish of his wounds and the weakness incidental to them, that he could not tell to whom it belonged, or in what manner it had been used.

He took a journey to Paris, and made cautious inquiries, but could learn nothing satisfactory. The only shadow of intelligence he got was from an old soldier, who was in the Hotel d'Invalides, at Paris, and who told him that as he lay upon the field of Waterloo, badly wounded, a beautiful young female passed him, with an infant in her arms, uttering lamentations, and apparently looking for some one among the dead or the dying.

This was all he could learn. There was no officer of the name of Rouselli who had been at Waterloo, he was assured, and fearful of awakening surmises unfavorable to the peace of Mabel, he gave up further inquiry, and returned to England with a determination never again to revert to the subject, but to inform Mabel, when she should come of an age to understand the nature of the intelligence, of the means by which she had come into his possession and under his protection.

CHAPTER VIII.

As may naturally be presumed, both Mr. and Mrs. Morton were extremely anxious to know the prime cause of the alarm which had ended in Mabel fainting. They knew that she was not of a timid disposition, because they had taken care, in the course of the very excellent education they had given her, that she should not be made so. They knew that she was not one who gave way readily to alarm, or who would feel at all inclined to make "a scene" about nothing.

From Charles they hoped, after Mabel had been duly conveyed to her own room and left in charge of old Deb, than whom no one was more capable of taking charge, to hear, at all events, an accurate description of the man who had terrified her; but, as we are aware, Charles had left the house with Rafferty, and, to tell the truth, Henry Morton did not feel very much displeased to hear that he had done so, for, notwithstanding he had given in to Mabel's feelings, and taken no energetic steps to have the daring and audacious beggar apprehended, yet in his heart he would have had no objection to have him lodged in the cage by Rafferty and Charles.

Foiled, therefore, in getting any information from any one else, Morton eagerly waited until Mabel should herself be sufficiently recovered to give him her version of the affair.

As the indisposition was of so very simple a character, and arose rather from the sudden revulsion of feeling at finding herself safe at home, than from any continued terror, it soon yielded, and a glass of wine restored her completely to herself, so that she was able to come down-stairs again and join those whom she always called father and mother, and who, for the care they had taken of her, were eminently entitled to the distinction.

Morton kissed her, and so did his wife, and then they sat her down on a sofa between them, and he said,—

"Tell me, my dear Mabel, what it is that has so much terrified you, and I will take steps to prevent for the future such an occurrence as my darling Mabel being annoyed within sight of her own home."

"Ah," she said. "I will never go out without Leo with me."

"A wise resolution, dear Mabel."

"And yet, Henry," said his wife, "it is something quite new in our peaceful place and neighborhood that any of the family should require protection—we have not an enemy."

"This was some stranger," said Mabel. "I am certain, from the questions he asked, that he was quite strange to Moncton. He seemed like some wandering mendicant, who, when opportunity offered, would scruple not to enforce his demands, and convert an appeal for charity into a robbery."

"Did he rob you, my dear?"

"He has my purse."

"Now, really this is too bad. This man must be apprehended. Mabel, why did you not mention this before? We cannot be trespassed upon, insulted, and robbed all at once with impunity."

"Let me tell you all that occurred before you come to any decision," said Mabel. "There is more in the affair than meets the eye, at least I fear so."

"You fear so, Mabel? what have you to fear?"

"Nothing. I know that your persevering love can protect me from harm, and yet am I full of fears."

"This is inexplicable."

'Tell us all, my dear," said Mrs. Morton. "We will hear you with patience, and then, as you say, decide."

"You know," said Mabel, "that some time ago Mrs. Claxton, at the village, told me that I was not your child."

"Confound her!" said Morton. "I heard as much. That woman is enough to breed contention and unhappiness among a regiment of angels. Hang her long tongue, what business was it of hers?"

"It was none, indeed," said Mabel: "but when I told you, you will remember that you said, 'Wait till the next anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, and you shall know all that it concerns you to know, that it is in my power to tell.'"

"I did—I did."

"To-day is the 18th of June, and my mind was full to over-

flowing of a subject so interesting to me. I knew from your answer that what Mrs. Claxton had said was so far true, however wrong it was of her to say it, and I became extremely anxious to know what I was, and how I came to be with such kind friends who were not related to me, and yet were all the world to me."

"But, my dear, what has this to do with your being alarmed in the wilderness by the too abrupt importunities of a mendicant, or the rougher wickedness of one we may call a highwayman?"

"You shall hear."

Henry Morton and his wife exchanged a glance of alarm. Mabel then proceeded to relate to them with particularity everything that had occurred, and concluded by saying:

"Dear, kind, good friends—parents, as I may indeed call you—can I now do otherwise than believe that this man, desperate as his demeanor was, and despicable as was his conduct, knows something of me which I would give worlds to hear?"

Morton was silent for a few moments, and his wife hid her face in her handkerchief. The same dreadful idea had come over both of them, that in that interview which Mabel had had with the stranger, there was the commencement of some train of circumstances which might tear her from their arms.

Mabel was inexpressibly grieved at these symptoms of disquietude which her friends betrayed; she threw herself on Mrs. Morton's breast, and exclaimed:

"I know it, I feel assured that there is some dreadful mystery attached to my birth which you dread to disclose for fear of the unhappiness it would give me. But do not keep it from me; let me know the very worst, and in your love I will find a joyful recompense for any other evil, be it what it may."

"No, no; you are wrong, Mabel, you are wrong," said Morton, with tenderness. "You do not guess aright the cause of this emotion which we feel. It is on your account, but not from the reason you fancy."

"Then tell me all. Redeem the promise which you made to me, and tell me who and what I am."

The Mortons looked at each other distressfully, and Mrs. Morton said:

"Mabel, will you leave us, and allow us to consult upon what is best to be done in this matter?"

"Oh, that you would trust me," said Mabel, as she rose to proceed to the door.

Henry Morton went after her, and took her hand tenderly in his before she could pass out of the room.

"My dear Mabel," he said, "believe us, it is not that we hesitate about trusting you that we hesitate to tell you all we know; but there are many things to be considered."

"I meant my words not for a reproach," said Mabel, her eyes filling with tears as she spoke.

"I know you did not, dear Mabel—I am sure you did not; but be calm and patient. Believe—continue to believe, as I know you do, that we have your best happiness at heart."

"I do—I will."

"And you will be guided by us?"

"In all things."

"Then leave us now. In an hour we will speak again upon this subject."

"And may I then come to you?"

"Yes, do, dear Mabel, come to us. We shall be ready then to converse more freely: but, remember, let the determination to which we may come be what it may, it will be dictated by but one motive, and that is, your happiness."

"I know it—I know it."

She passed from the room, and immediately Henry Morton turned the key in the lock of the door, so that no one could intrude upon them unawares, and then turning to his wife, he said,—

"Alice, Alice, it has come to this at last. My constant dream of apprehension has begun to assume an aspect of reality. This, I feel convinced, is the beginning of the train of evils which may destroy our happiness."

"Oh, Henry, we cannot part with her: she is to us, and has ever been, all that a dear, devoted child should be. We cannot part with her, Henry. Say you will not."

"Not unless she herself should wish to leave us."

"And that she never will."

"Never—never. She loves us too well for that. But now let us consider; if this indeed be the commencement of events which may end in Mabel being claimed from us, how are we to defeat them?"

"In such a case as this 'tis easy."

"I cannot see any way."

"And to me all is plain and clear. Listen, Henry, and your better judgment will be convinced, and furnish me with fresh argument to maintain the position that I take up."

"Speak—speak, Alice, I will listen."

"Who, Harry, saved her from inevitable death but you—who looked to her welfare at a time when most would have been selfish, and had every sympathy used up in a consideration of their own sufferings—who tenderly nurtured and saw to her welfare and wants in the early years of childhood but yourself? Then, who can love her as you love her? And for ten years, too, which have seemed short because they have passed away happily, have not I been as a mother to her? Then who can love her as I love her, and as you love her? 'Tis against nature, Henry—'tis against all justice; and besides, those who have not tended her as we have, never can really love her as we love her."

"Alice—Alice! I know not what to do."

"Why, after all, Henry, he who died upon the battle-field, and consigned her to your care, may have been her father, and, in that case, you have a right to protect her."

"But he did not say he was her father."

"Death alone prevented him."

"I know not that. Some other explanation may have lin-

gered on his lips than that, when the hand of death stopped his utterance."

"Husband—husband! do you want to break my heart? I cannot, will not part with her!"

"Oh, Alice! what would you have me do?"

"Adopt some policy which will enable you to resist every attempt to take her from us, until she is over age, then tell her all, and leave her to her own judgment and her own affections."

"Ah! there is something in that suggestion."

"There is, Henry. You see," added Mrs. Morton, with eagerness, "that by so doing, we insure the happiness, for some years longer, of ourselves, as well as our dear, dear Mabel."

"She is happy with us."

"Most happy; she has often wept upon my breast, and blessed us both. Oh, she is very happy with us, indeed."

"That comes across my heart like a good reason."

"It is a good one. I knew, Henry, that you would soon see what was right in this matter."

"But how would you do it?"

"Firstly, you must still keep Mabel in ignorance of her real history; and Rafferty alone, of all our household, knows it as well as ourselves."

"He would not betray us."

"I know he would not—he is faithfulness itself."

"Then we are safe."

"But what shall we say to Mabel?"

"Tell her that we are her nearest and natural protectors. Tell her that many reasons have combined to prevent you from letting her know so much before, but that she has no nearer friend than you, although there may be persons who will pretend they are so, and seek to induce her to leave us."

"Alice, I yield. You have overcome me; I yield to you—let it be so; and at once, before I sleep to-night, I will make out a written statement of the whole of the circumstances under which I found her on the field of Waterloo. That shall be pinned to my will, so that should anything happen suddenly to me, it would be found there. When she is over age, and capable of saying of her own free will that she chooses to stay with us, she shall know all."

"Be it so, Henry, you have given me new life; be it so."

"It shall—it shall."

"And you will be firm. You will see something of this mysterious man, you may depend, Henry. He will not let the matter rest; you are sure to hear yet something of him, but you must be very firm, indeed—you must be extremely firm."

"I will—I will. Rafferty shall sign the paper I write out, containing the full particulars of how Mabel came into our hands, and then, although we may be doing a little wrong, I think we may seek for some excuse in the motive."

"Let it be so then. Oh, Henry! if you had not consented, I think I should never have known happiness again."

"And Heaven can only know how much I love her," said

Henry Morton. "I would not lose her for the wealth of worlds."

At this moment there was a gentle tap at the door of the room, and both Mr. and Mrs. Morton started at the sound.

"'Tis she—'tis Mabel," said Henry Morton.

"Yes—yes. Be cautious. Calm her fears, but tell her nothing, Henry. Be very cautious!"

"I will—I will."

He rose, and unlocking the door, found a servant instead of Mabel, who said,—"If you please, sir, there is a beggar at the front gate."

"A—a beggar?"

"Yes, sir," the man continued; "but he insists upon seeing you. He says he has not seen you since you were at the battle of Waterloo, fifteen years ago."

Morton staggered to a seat, as he said, in a faint voice:

"Show him into the library, and let no one see him—let no one see him."

CHAPTER IX.

When the highly disagreeable man, who had filled poor Mabel with so much consternation in the wilderness, was compelled to fly before the attack of Leo, he took his way toward the neighboring village, full of the most malignant feelings.

By the direct and undeviating route he took, it would seem as if he were well acquainted with the way, after he had once got clear of the wilderness belonging to the estate. He muttered to himself as he went, and now and then he would clinch his fist, and shake it in the air, as if he wished to give potency to some threat which arose from his hard heart.

"So—so," he said, "she defies me; she is not quite the yielding creature I somehow expected to find her, and yet I don't know why or wherefore I ought to have had any such expectations. I came upon the very estate unawares, and upon her more unawares still. She is beautiful—she is very beautiful."

He decreased his walk, as if some sudden thought had struck him; and, after a time, burst into an exultant laugh, as he cried—

"Yes—yes. By heaven! a glorious plan—a most glorious plan! who can gainsay it? no one. The grave—the grave is over them all. Ha! who have we here?"

A lad was slowly approaching the stranger. He was a country-looking fellow, too. He dragged one foot after the other, as if to walk was quite a trouble; but still he seemed intent upon saying something to the uninviting personage who had been so much engrossed until that moment with his own evil thoughts and impulses.

"I say, old fellow," said the boy, "oh, what a trouble!"

"What's a trouble?"

"I—I had something—to—ask you."

"Well, what is it?"

"You don't look over bright. Is begging a trouble?"

"Confound you! do you want to insult me?"

"Now, don't get into a passion. I sha'n't if you do. It is such a trouble."

"What on earth do you want?"

"I suppose, oh, dear, I must explain, what a trouble! I'm the farrier's apprentice, and shoeing horses is such a trouble."

"And you want to do something else."

"Yes, if it's no trouble. I'd have run away a long while ago, only it's such a trouble to me."

"You are an oddity; but I can tell you, that through life you will find that everything has its troubles, my friend."

"Oh, lor!"

"As I tell you will you find it."

"Oh, I wonder if it's much trouble to die some day. I like going to sleep; it's no trouble. I don't like waking up. There's the trouble of dressing and the trouble of taking one's breakfast. They call me 'Troubled Tom' in the village. Oh, lor! what a trouble!"

"Curse you!" said the mendicant, as he walked on; "what do you trouble me for?"

"Oh, that's the way," moaned Troubled Tom. "Nobody really likes trouble, though some people are hypocrites enough to pretend that they don't mind it. Hoi! hoi! hoi"

"What now? what now? Eh?"

"Nothing. I was going to say something, but it is such a trouble, I really can't?"

"If I come back to you I will give you some real trouble," said the beggar angrily.

"There," said Troubled Tom. "He's off in a rage now. I can't get into a passion—it's such a trouble. I sometimes wish I could. There's some of the other boys in the village, they bonnets me, and all sorts of things, and I don't wop 'em, it is such a trouble. Oh, lor!"

On the first raised bank he came to, down sat Troubled Tom, and in the course of a few minutes he was fast asleep, muttering now and then in his dreams,—

"What a trouble!"

The mendicant pursued his way till he came to the village, and then he walked direct up to the Morton Arms, which was the only place of entertainment for man or beast the place afforded. His appearance, as our readers may well imagine, was not one likely to be hailed with satisfaction by any publican; and as the landlord of the Morton Arms was himself at the door, he commenced, the moment he espied the approaching form of the stranger, shaking his head at such a rate, that it would seem as if he really never intended to leave off.

Still the mendicant advanced undauntedly, and when he came so near that the portly landlord felt himself compelled to get out of the way or say something, he cried,—

"My man, we are very sorry, but we really cannot afford to be charitable; times are hard, prices high, money scarce, and taxes horrid. You'd better go somewhere else."

"What do you mean?" said the mendicant. "Who asked you for anything, eh?"

"Why—a—a—I certainly cannot say—a-hem!—that you did; but, my friend, I had good reason to suppose so, surely—a-hem!"

"I will give you a word of advice, friend. Don't estimate people by their looks, or you may make some odd mistakes occasionally, I can tell you. A gentleman may strut about in the costume of a beggar. Look here."

The fellow took from a concealed pocket in his tattered apparel some silver, which he showed to the landlord, and which had such a mollifying effect upon mine host of the Morton Arms, that he did move out of the way, saying:

"Well, my friend, if you really came to spend, instead of begging money, you will find the tap-room the first door on the right."

"Good. Let me have brandy and something to eat."

"Humph!" said the landlord, when his ragged guest had passed into the house; "brandy and something to eat. A very tidy order, truly, for a vagabond such as that. Howsomdever, one man's money is as good as another's any day in the week, so here goes. I'll serve him myself, though, and take care to have the money before he takes any of the drinkable or the eatable."

With this prudent resolve, the landlord, whose name was Toggs, set about obeying the order of his mysterious guest.

Toggs then himself took into the tap-room the ardent liquid which had been ordered, along with some bread and cheese. He found his guest looking as much at home as any one well could. The tap-room of the Morton Arms at that time boasted of no other occupant, and the fellow sat with his legs upon a chair he had drawn opposite to him, looking for all the world, as Toggs said to himself, as if he were the sheriff of the county.

"Fifteen-pence," said Toggs, as he laid down the refreshments, but not so far out of his reach that he could not, should he see occasion so to do, lay hold of them again with sufficient rapidity.

"Good," said the stranger, as he threw down a shilling and a sixpence, which after ascertaining they were both good, Toggs transferred to the canvas pocket in the apron he wore, and from the similar receptacle on the other side produced the change.

"Have you sprightly neighbors hereabouts?" said the mendicant.

"Oh! ah—yes."

"What sort of neighborhood is it?"

"Why, a very good sort of neighborhood in its way."

"I saw a large, handsome-looking house in the neighborhood, close to the lake."

"Oh, that's Captain Morton's."

"Indeed! Then it was his daughter whom I saw, I suppose, in the grounds—a pretty, dark-haired girl, of about sixteen?"

"His daughter—well—but it's no business of mine; but they do say that the young lady is a natural daughter of Captain

Morton's, and the only wonder is, that the wife takes to her in the way she does. They tell me that Captain Morton brought the child home to the hall all of a sudden, and nobody knew anything about it but himself and Rafferty Brolickbones."

"Who may he be?"

"An Irishman who was in the war with Captain Morton—not a bad fellow in the main, and about as good a customer as I've got hereabouts. A discreet man too—never takes a drop too much; indeed, I have my doubts if any quantity at all that he could hold would be too much for him."

"Indeed! And this Captain Morton, has he children of his own?"

"He has not. There's Charles, his brother, lives with them, and Miss Mabel, as they call her, as sweet a young creature, too, she is, as ever the eyes of man looked on. Of course she is no customer of mine, so I can't be prejudiced in her favor, you know: but she is quite a young angel, that she is."

"I have seen her. The girl is pretty; there can be no two opinions upon that head. Can I sleep here to-night?"

"Sleep? Oh, why—we have beds."

"Pho! bother your beds. Anything will do for me. A bundle of straw in an empty room I prefer."

"Then we can easily accommodate you with that," said Toggs, with a feeling of relief that so very unpromising a looking customer did not contemplate getting between the sheets of the beds of the Morton Arms.

"Be it so, then. I will remain here to-night; and remember, landlord, I am not what I seem."

"Are you not?"

"No. Now, what do you take me to be? Answer candidly; I shall not be offended. You don't know but what I am playing a part, and would like to be complimented upon my appearing in it. What do you take me to be?"

Toggs looked posed.

"Pray, excuse me."

"No, no, no."

"Well, then, my friend, if you will have it—mind I don't say you are—but you seem to me, mind you, to be the dirtiest and most outrageous blackguard that I ever saw."

"Thank you."

"You would make me tell, you know."

"Very good—very good. That's just the character I wished to assume, I assure you."

"Well, then, you do it so well, that any one would swear it came quite naturally."

"Clever," said the stranger—"clever! You are a wag—quite a wag, I can assure you."

At this moment the sound of horses' feet pausing at the door of the public house, met the landlord's ears, and he rushed out to the porch, in the hope of receiving under his roof a more engaging looking customer than the mendicant who was in the tap-room, and with whom, for want of something better to do, he had been amusing himself in gossip,

"A customer worth having, I hope," said Toggs, as he flourished a white napkin, and rushed to the door.

CHAPTER X.

THE person who had halted at the Morton Arms was a young man, who from his general appearance, seemed to have ridden far. He was covered with dust, and his horse, as well as he himself, looked jaded and anxious for a rest. As he reined in his steed, he looked anxiously up at the sign of the public-house, and, when the landlord made his appearance, he said:

"And this, then, is the Morton Arms?"

"The Morton Arms, sir," said the landlord, "as you remark, and very much indeed at your honor's service."

The young stranger dismounted, and said:

"Let my horse be well seen to, if you please, show me to a private room, and bring me some of the best wine you have."

"Certainly, sir—certainly—most certainly. God bless me! what do you get in people's way for?"

These last words were addressed to the mendicant, who had followed the landlord to the door, and was now run against by him as he turned to enter the house.

"Look where you are going another time," said the beggar.

"Confound you!" muttered Toggs. "You might make yourself useful, and hold the gentleman's horse till Jem, the hostler, comes, as you are here now."

"It's the very thing I was going to do," said the mendicant.

He placed his hand on the horse as he spoke. The young traveler was about to follow the landlord into the inn, but he suddenly paused, as if a new thought had struck him, and returning to his steed, he commenced unbuckling the saddle.

"Oh, sir, we'll manage all that in a minute or two," said Toggs; "pray don't trouble yourself."

"No trouble," said the stranger. "I have some matters in the pocket of the saddle, which I prefer having in my own room."

Any one who at that moment could have seen the countenance of the mendicant might well have started at the perfectly demoniac expression of rage it assumed. Fire seemed to flash from his eyes, and it was evidently only by a great effort that he succeeded in keeping himself from exhibiting some loud and violent ebullition of temper.

The traveler was too busy himself taking the saddle from his horse to take any notice of the countenance of the mendicant. By the time he had nearly finished that operation, Jem, the hostler, made his appearance, and lent his aid.

"Carry the saddle at once to my room," said the traveler to him.

"Yes," said Toggs. "No. 8, Jem. No. 8 will be the gentleman's private room. Your bedroom, sir, will adjoin it. I presume you intend to honor us with your company?"

"Yes. And perhaps more than one night."

"Thank you, sir, thank you. Very much beholden to your honor. This way, sir, if you please."

"No. 8," muttered the mendicant--"humph! No. 8, and the bedroom adjoins that room. 'Tis well—'tis well."

He gave the horse a kick which set it rearing and shying, and then he walked into the house again, whither had gone Toggs, the hostler, and the traveler, whose steed, had it not heen so weary as it was, might have started off after the rough usage it received from the beggar.

"A pretty fellow you are to mind a gentleman's horse," said the hostler, when he came back.

"Mind it yourself, and be d——d," was the polite reply.

"You are a beauty."

"There's two of us then."

"How long are you going to stay here—I should like to know."

"Should you?"

"Yes, I should. Because if anything's missed we shall know pretty well who's got it. You look so very honest!"

"Hark ye, friend," said the mendicant; "there's one of my looks that you have not yet translated. I'm a little dangerous now and then."

"Are you, indeed? There's an old muzzle in the stable that I'll pop on you in a moment, whenever I think you want it."

Feeling quite satisfied then that he had got the best of the encounter, Jem, the hostler, walked away, leading the horse, and whistling as he went.

"Fool that I was," muttered the mendicant, "to waste words upon such a man as that. When shall I be able to subdue this headstrong passion which has caused me to fail in so many of my schemes and projects, and which will ruin this, the greatest and most important of them all, if I am not careful? Let me consider—let me consider. I have done no harm as yet."

He threw himself into a seat, and for more than half an hour was lost in deep thought. No one came near him for the whole of that period, for the whole establishment was busy with the new guest, who seemed a man of wealth and substance, for everything he ordered was directed to be of the very best description, and he never asked the price of anything, so he was considered to he a guest well worth attending to, and just the sort which Master Toggs would have been glad to see come a little oftener to the Morton Arms than they did.

The night was a very dark one, hut the air though was pleasant and refreshing, and as the window of the room in which the young traveler was placed opened upon a well-kept garden, he had opened it, and there sat silently examining some papers which he had taken from a carefully secured pocket in the saddle he had been so particular about, and which lay on the ground close to his feet. He had two candles upon the table, and the rest of the room, for it was a good-sized one, was in that state of semi-darkness which the inefficient light of candles always produces.

There was upon his countenance a look of great anxiety as he appeared to be comparing some of the papers with others.

Some, too, he read carefully through, and in his pocket-book he made various memoranda in pencil from time to time. Then he suddenly rose and clasping his hands behind him he paced the room to and fro for nearly a quarter of an hour, evidently in deep thought, and then he, as suddenly as he had risen, sat down again, and carefully collecting all the papers, he replaced them in the pocket of the saddle from where he had taken them. Having done this, he immediately rang the bell.

Toggs himself waited upon a guest who promised to be so well worth the waiting on, and he was in a few minutes in the room.

"You pleased to ring, sir?" he said.

"Yes—yes."

"What can I have the honor and the pleasure, sir, of bringing you?"

"A bottle of Madeira and two glasses."

"Directly, sir."

Toggs backed out of the room as he would have done out of the presence of royalty, and when he was gone the stranger said—

"He surely, at all events, can give me some information, and to get it from him I foresee I shall be forced to endure a world of unmeaning gossip, which will dreadfully weary me; but it must be so, and I am resigned to the affliction. He must know something that will be useful on the mission I have come so far to fulfill. God send it may be a successful one. He comes."

When the landlord entered No. 8, with the bottle of Madeira, and the two glasses, it was with such a profusion of bows, that he could hardly get them placed upon the table.

"Pray sit down," said the traveler, "and make yourself comfortable."

"Thank you, sir, thank you," said Toggs, just sitting on the extreme edge of a chair, so that the slightest knock in the world to any of its legs must have precipitated him on to the floor; "thank you, sir;" and then, with a miraculous kind of speed, he wiped out both the glasses, and held them up to the candle to see if they were perfectly clear, after which he uncorked the Madeira, and placed it before his guest.

"Help yourself, landlord," said the stranger, after he had poured out a glass; "what sort of a neighborhood is this?"

"Neighborhood, sir—neighborhood? How odd!"

"Odd, is it?"

"Not at all—oh, sir, not at all; only I've been asked that before to-day, that's what made me say how odd. As for the neighborhood itself, it's a likely enough neighborhood, sir. Do you think of settling hereabouts, sir?"

"No, no, I have no such intention; my home is far distant from here. Have you any families of note residing about here?"

"We have, sir. There's the Dowager Lady Muddlebustle; and then, to my mind, the pleasantest people are the Mortons."

The stranger gave a slight start, and spilt a little of his wine, as he said:

"Oh, the—Mortons. A large family of them, I suppose?"

"No, sir. Captain Morton——"

"Captain in the army?"

"As was, sir—as was. He was in a many fights, sir: and the battle of Waterloo, too, sir, I've heard. In course I can't say on my own knowledge, 'cos I wasn't there to see him, but they do say as such was the case, sir."

"Indeed! And his family?"

"Oh, he's got no family—always excepting one."

The landlord here winked mysteriously, and the stranger said:

"What do you mean? I really do not understand you!"

"Oh, well, he's got one. A pity it's a gal, sir; a wonderful pity she's a gal. That's what I always do say. A wonderful pity, sir—a-hem! There's two sides to a blanket, sir."

"So I suppose."

"Well, captains, you know, will be captains. Miss Mabel——"

"Ah!" cried the stranger.

"Good God! sir, what's the matter?"

"Nothing—nothing. Go on, Mr. Toggs, and never mind me. A sudden sort of spasm, you see, which comes over me, now and then. You mentioned that a young girl named Mabel, formed one of the captain's family? Is she beautiful?"

"A angel, sir—a angel."

"And her age?"

"About sixteen—may be younger, may be older. Jem, the hostler, thinks she's 'rising' sixteen, but I don't."

"And she is known to be his daughter?"

"Not a bit—not a bit. Know, indeed! Lord bless you, of course nobody says nothing to him about it. He's not the sort of man to ask questions of in an off-hand way, sir. He'd soon put anybody down, he would; only we know she isn't his wife's child, and we know she's nobody else's; and when we put it all together, and take that from this, and this from that, and give it a turn in our minds, you see, sir, we comes to a conclusion, and we says, 'Miss Mabel is the captain's—of course, she's the captain's and very much to his credit, too, that he will have her home in the way as he does."

"He has to exert his authority, then, on that point?"

"Oh, no—oh, no—oh, no. They all like her, they do. I heard from Sarah, which is parlor-maid at the Hall, that when the captain thought of sending Miss Mabel to a school somewhere to be finished off, Mrs. Morton cried for two days, till the captain had to say he wouldn't have her finished at all, and she should stay."

"It is strange that so much affection should subsist between the captain's wife and one so peculiarly situated as this girl."

"It is, sir. That's what I often say. It's wery extra amiable, it is, sir. A long way over proof, I should say, speaking in a spirituous sort of way."

The young stranger produced an elegant gold watch, and exclaimed, as he glanced at it,—

"Past nine, I declare; I knew not it was so late. I shall

go early to bed to-night, Mr. Toggs, for I have ridden far to-day."

The hottle of Madeira was now exhausted, and as Toggs had sufficient rationality left him to understand that the consultation of the watch was a hint to be gone, he rose accordingly, saying,—

"Sir, if there is anything else the house affords, I can only say you have hut to signify your commands, sir, and it's yours."

"Thank you; in half an hour I shall retire for the night."

"Very, good, sir."

"Do not let me he disturbed; and before I retire, I shall go and look at my horse, as I make it an invariahle rule so to do hefore going to bed myself."

"Certainly, sir, certainly."

Toggs again bowed himself out, and off he ran to Jem, the hostler, to announce the intended visit to the horse.

"And quite right, too," said Jim. "How's he to know what sort of a conscience resides in my busem, eh? How's he to know as the most conscientiousest 'ostler as never lived is me? He'll find the 'oss as right as a trivet, let him come when he will; I know he will. I've give him a hard rub down and a soft rub, a hrush of the feet, and I've stopped his fore-feet as well as ever a fore-foot was stopped."

"Here he comes, Jem."

The young stranger came down-stairs, and Jem, stepping up to him, said,——

"Want to see the 'oss, sir?"

"Yes."

"This way, sir, please—this here's the way."

Holding his stable-lantern as high as he could, Jem led the way to the stahles, where, to do him justice, he had done ample justice to the gentleman's horse.

"I have not visited the stable from any suspicion that you had not properly attended to my horse," said the young man; "hut as I always proportion what I give a hostler to the state in which I find my steed, I always go myself and look at it."

"All right, sir."

"A half-crown placed in Jem's capacious hand, showed the estimation in which the stranger held him; and then they were both on the point of leaving the stahle, when they were confronted by the mendicant, who said in an insolent tone,—

"You seem mighty liberal, sir; perhaps you'll pay me now for holding your horse."

"Who are you?"

"You may well ask, sir," said Jem. "He's a vagahone, sir, a out-and-out vagabone, sir, that's what he is, and you don't ought to give him a farden."

"Nor shall I."

"Then you may be damned!" said the fellow, "and I tell you what it is—I did intend to sleep here, hut I won't now; I'll walk on, if it's ten miles further, to the next inn."

"How dreadful!" said Jem. "Why, I'd a stood a pint at any time to get you in that mind, old fellow. He's disgusted

with us, sir, and won't patronize us any more. Ain't it a dreadful pity?"

The traveler made no remark, hut walked on, although he heard the mendicant say, in a loud voice,—

"I shake the dust of this house off my shoes—I leave it never to return to it. Let me be cold, hungry, or weary, I will never again set foot beneath the roof of this house. I leave my malediction upon it and all its inmates."

CHAPTER XI.

THE young guest of the inn hade the landlord good-night, and retired to his chamber. Jem then related how the mendicant had taken offense and left the house, which was declared to be an amazingly good riddance of had ruhhish hy the landlord, who, in proportion as he congratulated himself upon the departure of the beggar, was loud in his praises of the guests he still retained.

All was still at the Morton Arms. It was midnight. For nearly an hour every one within the building had retired to rest. No guests were expected late at that country place, and, after eleven, the most profound repose generally reigned throughout the whole district. The distant hay of some house dog, or now and then the low of cattle, or the crow of some more than commonly fidgety fowl, were the only sounds that ever hroke upon the profound stillness of the village.

And now the moon has risen, hut not high in the heavens, so that there is ahundance of shadow yet. The hour of midnight has solemnly pealed forth from the village church, which was situated in the center of the graveyard, where reposed the remains of many who had been horn, had lived, and had died within the sound of the old church hells.

A conspicuous object in the churchyard, close to one of the windows of the sacred edifice itself, is the monument of the Mortons, which covers the entrance to the family vault, an excavation of considerable extent, stretching under the marhle flag-stones that pave the church. This monument was a long square huilding, having few pretensions to anything in the shape of architectural heauty; it was more intended as a covering for the entrance of the vault than anything else.

The moon had risen in the sky on the other side of the church, so that the whole of the tomh was in darkness, owing to the hroad, hlack shadow of the ancient building falling full upon it, and stretching far heyond it over many a humbler resting-place for the dead.

From among the tall rank grass which grew between the wall of the church and this monument of the Mortons—a space not ahove two feet in width—arose as the midnight hour was struck, a human form.

With stealthy steps he walked out from that place of concealment, and stood for a moment listening among the tomhs. It was the mendicant, who had so recently affected to take leave forever of the Morton Arms. For more than five minutes he listened attentively, and then he felt satisfied that all was still.

"Silent as the grave!" he muttered, "silent as the grave! and I am cramped up so that I can scarcely move. Curses on that queer place to work in! I have, however, made a hole in the brickwork now large enough to get through, so that at the very worst I could conceal myself in the vault. Some folks would not like such a place of refuge; but I have seen death and its victims in too many shapes to care how it is presented to me now. A vault, indeed! What is a vault to me?"

He listened again, but all remained as still and calm as before, and then picked his way slowly among the tombs in a crouching attitude, for fear of being seen by any one who might by possibility be out, or who might be looking from one of the cottage windows of the surrounding picturesque-looking habitations.

"So," he muttered, as he walked nearly to the confines of the space allotted for the repose of the dead, "so they fancy I have gone, and that they are rid of me, which no doubt pleased them much, as they have a richer guest at the Morton Arms; but they are most grievously mistaken, as yet they will find. I will go truly, but not till I have left behind me some stronger remembrance than an empty curse."

The mode of entrance and of exit which was attached to the little rude churchyard, consisted of a wicket-gate without a fastening, so that any one, at any hour, could seek that place of holy and hallowed thoughts without having to apply to any official upon the subject. Through the wicket-gate passed the mendicant, and from there he gained the principal thoroughfare in the village. It was not, however, as may be well supposed, his intention to linger long there. Darting across the main street, with great rapidity, he was soon in the gloom of the large shadows cast by the moonlight on the hedgerows and gardens. He had taken care to note well the position of the inn, and now his object evidently was to gain the back part of the building, which was by no means difficult of access to any one who knew the route to take.

"Let me consider," he said; "I cannot be wrong in my man. Young, rather tall, and inclined to be fair; gray eyes, and riding a valuable bay horse. Yes, he is my man; I must and I will have those papers. With them, to achieve all I wish will be easy; without them, I can do but little, if anything. I will not be foiled. A man who has no scruples as to the means, can almost always accomplish what he determines upon, and no scruples have I. I have waded through blood enough not much to mind another murder."

By this time he had arrived at a farm, which divided a long strip of land, which was converted into a kitchen-garden, from an adjoining meadow. This kitchen-garden actually belonged to the inn, so that, when he crept under the fence, which he did, he was actually on the premises which it was his object to reach. He paused a moment now, to listen if any sound met his ear indicative of any one stirring in the inn; but all was as still as that lonely graveyard in which he had concealed himself for several hours.

"All's safe," he muttered: "all's safe. Now, to think of

what I have to encounter. There is no doubt about my effecting an entrance to the house. I wonder if that rascal, Jem, the hostler, lives at the inn, and sleeps in it. He have I most to fear. I don't seem to care for any one else, but I do for him."

He came now upon some outbuildings belonging to the inn, and he felt that more caution even than before was necessary.

"I wonder," he muttered, "that the place is left so much exposed."

Scarcely had he spoken these words when he heard the low growl of a dog, and he was immediately as still as a rock. A short, sharp bark now proclaimed that the suspicions of a dog were thoroughly awakened, and it likewise enabled the mendicant to find in what quarter his danger lay.

"This hinderance," he muttered, "must be put a stop to at once, even if I run some risk in so doing."

Instead, then, of, as might naturally have been supposed, taking some other, and, perhaps, more circuitous route, to escape the dog, he turned toward the quarter from whence the sounds came. Upon looking over a low wooden fence he saw a mastiff dog chained up, but regarding him with hostile looks. The moment the dog saw him, it flew to the greatest length of his chain, and began a furious barking, which would soon have had the effect of rousing everybody in the inn, had it not been very suddenly and completely put an end to by the boldness of the mendicant. He did what ninety-nine men out of a hundred would have scrupled very much to do; that is, he sprung over the fence in a moment, and, with a knife in his hand, he closed with the dog, which, of course, laid hold of him in an instant. His right hand, in which he had the knife, was, however, at liberty, and he plunged it as fast as he could do so, and withdrew it again, reeking with blood, into the side of the animal. So very unequal a contest could not last very long; and, after a few moments, the dog relaxed his hold, and sunk on to his side, exhausted through loss of blood.

"So much for you, and be d——d to you," said the beggar, as he cut the poor animal's throat from ear to ear.

Then he rose, and commenced sucking the blood from the only bite he had himself received. He continued this operation for some minutes, spitting the blood he extracted from the wound repeatedly out of his mouth: and then, with an oath at the delay which the occurrence had occasioned him, he once again turned toward the inn with stealthy steps. Scarcely had he left the place where he had had such a contest, so brief, and yet so sanguinary, with the mastiff, than a human form rose up into a sitting posture, and some one, whom our readers will not fail at once to recognize, ejaculated:

"What a trouble! That was that beggar fellow. I know him. I—I wonder what he's up to. What a trouble it is to wonder!"

Down lay "Troubled Tom" again upon a truss of straw, on which he had been now for about six hours, fast asleep, and still muttering faintly:

"Everything's a trouble," he again fell fast asleep.

It was well, no doubt, for Troubled Tom that he did consider

it too much trouble to follow the mendicant, or, in the furious frame of mind that individual was, it is more than likely the poor fellow's troubles would have been all ended with the same knife that had taken the life of the mastiff dog. So deep, however, had been the sleep of Tom, that he only awakened at the end of the fray, and he went to sleep again without knowing that the dog was dead.

The mendicant, when now he reached without further interruption, the back door of the inn, found no difficulty in undoing the fastenings, and in a moment was fairly in the house. He closed the door, but took care to leave it so that he should himself be able to open it at any moment he pleased, and then listened for a length of time sufficient to be quite convinced that no one was stirring in the inn. He now slipped off his shoes, and commenced his progress into the interior of the building.

The Morton Arms was one of those straggling-built places; a sight of which at once convinces any one that it was not an object how much ground was occupied by it. It had in it a number of passages, and no less than three staircases, so that a stranger might be considerably puzzled in finding out all the ins and outs of such a building. By, however, an accurate investigation, conducted as carefully as he could in the dark, of which way he went, the mendicant made sure he should be able, if any sudden movement were necessary, to find his way back again, and so he went up the principal staircase toward the floor on which the best beds were situated.

Suddenly, when he least of all expected it, a light flashed across his eyes, and he had just time enough to throw himself down flat on the floor, when he heard a footstep coming up another staircase, which led to the floor on which he then was. Slowly came he who was approaching, and, to the surprise of the mendicant, he saw that it was Jem, the hostler, who was yawning, and carrying a candle all one side as he went.

"The deuce!" muttered the hostler: "how stupid of me to fall asleep in one of the stalls. I—I am as cold as an icicle, and I don't see why now I shouldn't turn into one of the spare beds; old Toggs will be none the wiser. I don't want any sheets, and I can easily put it up all straight and smooth in the morning. I'll—I'll—ah! how sleep—y I am, to be sure. I'll turn into No. 6. That's a nice enough room, is No. 6. Hilloa! what a goose I was, to be sure, to fall asleep in the stable. I haven't the least idea of what o'clock it is."

At this moment the village clock struck one.

"One!" exclaimed Jem. "The deuce! and I got to be up at five. Here goes for a snooze in No. 6."

So saying, and tumbling about from very sleepiness, he opened the door of a chamber and went in, closing it after him.

In a few moments the mendicant rose, and with the expression of a perfect fiend upon his face, he shook his clinched fist in the direction the unconscious hostler had taken, as he muttered, in a low growling tone:

"You are a doomed man; but not by my hands shall you fall. I need not take that trouble. It will be done for me. It shall

be done for me, if any violence is necessary to-night. You will be hanged or transported, my friend. Your evil genius has delivered you into my hands."

He now gathered more boldness, for he reasoned with himself, "If he, the hostler, could carry a light here, and create no alarm, why may not I? I have the means of getting a light. Yet, stay; what a glorious thing it would be now to possess myself of his."

He approached the door of the room into which the hostler had gone, to listen if he could hear if he were sleeping or waking. When he got close to the door he found that it was but imperfectly shut, and opened with a touch.

The candle was upon a table. To secure it was the work of a moment, and then the mendicant left the room again as noiselessly as he had entered it. Looking about him he saw the number 8 upon the door, and he at once opened it and walked into the private apartment of the young traveler.

The first glance sufficed to convince him that the saddle which contained the papers he wished to appropriate to himself was not there. He knew from the position of the house that the next room must have the moonlight in it; therefore, he would not take the light with him, but he placed it in a corner of the room. He then slowly approached the inner door, which opened to the sleeping chamber of the traveler. He placed his ear against the panel, and listened for a few moments; all was still, and then he slowly turned the handle of the lock. It fell back easily, and in another moment the slumbering man was at the mercy of one who had no atom of that quality in his composition.

As he had anticipated, the moonlight came into that room sufficiently to make every object in it plainly visible. By the foot of the bed he saw the saddle, in the pocket of which he doubted not were the documents which he had so much set his heart upon possessing. On the table, too, were various articles, one of which was a purse, which, from its weight, seemed to be tolerably well filled, and which the mendicant immediately possessed himself of.

He seemed to be fully convinced that rapidity of action now was of considerable importance, and, hastily laying hold of several small articles—not that he wanted them for their value, but that he intended to cast them into No. 6, where was sleeping the unconscious hostler, in order to throw suspicion upon him—he placed them in his pockets, and then he laid his hands upon the saddle, and with his knife commenced ripping it open in search of the secret pocket that contained the papers.

In a few moments he found a small packet, tied round with a piece of green silk. He could hardly keep from expressing his satisfaction as he found it, and, in an instant, transferring them to his pocket, he rose to his feet, and was on the point of rushing to the door to escape with his prize, when he heard the bedstead creak, and casting his eyes upon the bed, he saw the young traveler looking him full in the face.

For a moment fear paralyzed him. During that moment the

traveler placed his hand under the pillow on which he had slept, and drew forth a pocket-pistol, which, without any further ceremony, he discharged full at tho midnight robber's head. The report in a room, and at such a still hour of the night, was tremendous.

The mendicant thought he was hit, but a moment's reflection convinced him that although the bullet must have passed very near indeed to his face, it had missed him. Then, with a shout of rage, he rushed upon the young man before he could rise from the bed, in much the same manner as he had rushed upon the dog, and with the same knife he inflicted a deep stab in his breast. With a groan the traveler sank back, weltering in his blood on the bed. To leave the room was now the work of another instant; he knew that the pistol-shot must alarm every one in the inn, and that his only chance of safety consisted in the rapidity with which he could leave it. Still he would not forsake his idea of revenge against the hostler, for the little dispute he had had with him, and as he passed the door of No. 6, he threw into the room the knife covered with blood, and several of the little articles he had taken from the sleeping chamber of the traveler, and reached the back door of the inn before anybody was fairly up. He opened it in a moment, and passed out into the open air, carrying his shoes with him. These he put on quickly, and then took to flight with all the speed he could.

He speedily reached the village High street; but here he found that a new danger awaited him, for a number of men conducting horses to some cattle fair, were passing through the place, and just as he appeared among them, some window of the inn was flung open, and the loud discordant springing of a rattle fell upon his ears.

"Some thief," cried one of the men, as he made a dart at the mendicant. "There he goes."

The beggar eluded him, and dashed across the village in the direction of the churchyard, cursing his evil destiny that had exposed him to such a danger, when a few moments earlier, or a few moments later, would have altogether avoided it. As many men as could be spared from the care of the horses, ran after the flying mendicant, without having the least idea of what he had done, or indeed being quite sure that he had anything to do with the circumstance that had induced the springing of the rattle. They were swift runners, and reached the wicket-gate of the churchyard a moment after he had passed through it. They saw him threading his way among the gravestones, and suddenly make, what appeared to them, a headlong dash at the very wall of the church, and from that moment he disappeared and no trace of him could be found.

CHAPTER XII.

"WHAT a trouble!" said Troubled Tom, as he awoke from being actually trodden upon by the mendicant, in his rapid flight from the inn, after committing the dreadful deed of blood he

had done. "What a trouble—it is hard a poor fellow can't have a sleep without being bothered. There goes that fellow again, I do declare. I'd make a row, only it is such trouble. I thought I heard a noise just now, but, really—ah, what a trouble!"

Down lay Troubled Tom to sleep again, and in another few moments he was as sound in repose as before. But he had seen the mendicant now twice, when that personage little suspected any human eye was upon him, and although, slow thinker as was Troubled Tom, he placed no importance upon the circumstance, yet he would soon be doomed to discover that it was of the greatest possible interest to some one. The report of the pistol simultaneously awakened every one in the inn. The landlord, Master Toggs, sprung out of bed with a bewildered look and cried out aloud,—

"Coming, coming, coming!"

Jem, the hostler, awakened, and sat bolt upright with a half sleepy stare, as he said,—

"What's the row now?"

At the moment that he said so, something fell on his bed, and this extra circumstance so bewildered him, that he began rubbing his eyes, and remarking to himself,—

"I suppose I'm fast asleep still, and it's some odd dream; that's all I can say about it."

But Toggs felt convinced that his alarm was no dream, especially as he now heard the banging of doors, as some of the female part of the establishment were aroused.

"Is it a fire, or thieves?" he heard the cook exclaim, in a loud voice, and then came a scream from Susan, who was the "odd woman" of the establishment.

"It's something or another," said Toggs, and accordingly he rose, and opening his window, which was to the front of the house, he commenced springing the rattle which had caused so active a pursuit, and so nearly a capture of the mendicant.

The springing of the rattle at once convinced Jem, the hostler, that there was something more in it than a mere dream, and he at once rushed out into the corridor.

In the state of drowsiness he was in when he had so surreptitiously taken possession of No. 6, he had not thought it necessary to divest himself of all his apparel, so that he was quite dressed sufficiently to be able to make an appearance.

"Hilloa, Toggs—Master Toggs," he cried, "what's the row? Who's got hold of you?"

"Nobody," cried Toggs. "What's the matter?"

"Can't say, on my life. You are making such an infernal riot with that rattle that I don't think we shall ever know."

"Didn't you hear a noise?"

"Yes, I did, but what it was I can't guess. Here comes somebody with a light. I suppose you are quite aware, Toggs, that the somebody who's a-coming is the cook or Susan. It's no business of mine, but you've forgot your breeches, and that shirt of yours isn't so long as it might be."

"God bless me!" said Toggs; "really, I did forget;" and he

dashed into his room again to array himself more properly, just as Susan, the "odd woman" appeared with a candle.

"Oh, Jem, whatever is the matter?" she said, holding the candle at an angle of about twenty degrees, so that the grease came from it drop by drop on to the floor. "What is the matter?"

"Don't know," said Jem. "Toggs is a-making himself respectable, and when he comes out, perhaps he'll tell us. He sprung away at the rattle, and ought to know what for."

Toggs now, having made the necessary addition to his toilet, came out, and the first words he said were,—

"What is it all about?"

"Don't you know, sir?" said Susan. "Cook's in *highstewricks*, sir, with the fright of it."

"Fright of what?"

"Ah, she don't know, sir; and that's what I thinks makes her so very bad."

"Then, does nobody know?" said Jem.

"Not I," said Toggs. "I only know there was a great noise; and I very much wonder that the gentleman in No. 8 has not been disturbed by it, as we all were."

"Hang it all! I forgot him," cried Jem. "Something's happened to him, or he must have been disturbed. It isn't in human nature to sleep in the middle of such a racket. Come, and let's have a look at him. My mind misgives me, Toggs, but something queer has happened to him."

"Good gracious!" said Toggs, "you don't mean that, Jem?"

"Yes, I do. Come on."

"Lor, shall I wenture, too?" said Susan.

"Yes," cries Jem. "Let's have lots of witnesses. Come on, both of you—come on. I feels, as sure as that we are alive, something's amiss with the gentleman in No. 8."

Jem was looked upon at the Morton Arms as a sort of oracle, and, therefore, the words he uttered indicative of a belief that something serious had happened to the gentleman in No. 8, filled both Toggs and the odd woman with so much alarm that they both trembled as if they had the ague as they followed Jem to that room.

The door of the bedroom was a little open, and with a feeling of certainty that something terrible was within, Jem pushed it wide open, and with the candle in his hand, which he had taken from the old woman, he entered the apartment, while the landlord and Susan lingered for a moment at the door.

The traveler was sitting up in his bed, his face was ghastly pale, and both his hands, through the fingers of which blood was trickling, were pressed upon the wound which the mendicant had inflicted on his breast. There was no mistaking the look of agony which was upon his face. He was dying.

"Good God!" said Jem, as he actually reeled back a pace or two toward the door as this dreadful sight met his eyes. "Good God! look here!"

"Eh?" said Toggs. "Don't terrify me; what is it?"

"Come in, for Heaven's sake!" said Jem. "Here's murder done!"

Susan gave a scream, and fainted off hand at once in the outer room, while Toggs, to the full as pale as the wounded traveler, looked into the room with horror-stricken eyes.

"Help—oh, help!" said the traveler, faintly. "Oh, God! I bleed to death. Help—help—help!"

Jem recovered all his faculties in a moment.

"Toggs," he said, "stay here, and don't move for your life. I'll get Mr. Bland, the doctor, in a minute."

Without waiting for the reply of Toggs, Jem dashed out of the room down the staircase, and out into the village, like a madman.

Toggs obeyed the injunction of Jem not to stir from the spot in its most literal sense, for he remained exactly as he was, about two inches within the doorway of the chamber, which, henceforward, was to possess so fearful a notoriety, glaring in the face of his murdered guest, with a mixed expression of compassion and fear.

"Help—help!" groaned the wounded traveler. "Help! Don't, oh! don't let me die for want of help!"

"He—he—he's gone for the doctor, sir," stammered Toggs. "I'm a fool, and can't do nothing. Jem's gone for the doctor, sir. Oh, Lord! what will become of us all?"

"I—I—cannot live long now! Hear what—what—I have to say, ere I am—a corpse!"

"Yes, sir—yes, sir. God bless you, sir! I'll hear you."

"Heaven have mercy upon me, and give me leave to—to—speak—a moment without—this anguish."

He paused a moment, and rocked himself gently to and fro. The perspiration fell from his brow on to the bed. Toggs saw it fall, and he trembled in every limb himself, expecting each moment that his strength would fail him, and he should faint away upon the spot, without hearing what the dying man wanted to say. The wounded traveler spoke again, but his voice was getting weaker and weaker.

"I—I want, before I die, to see—Captain Morton."

"And so you shall, sir," stammered Toggs. "But who did it, sir—who hurt you?"

"A man—came into the room. I fired a pistol at him—missed him, and he sprung upon me with a knife."

"Who was he, sir?"

"I—I cannot tell."

Slowly the wounded man sunk back on the pillow—a deep groan came from his breast, and Toggs jumped out into the outer room, just in time to run against Jem, who had returned, exclaiming:

"He wants to see Captain Morton."

"Captain Morton, of the Hall?"

"I suppose so."

"Then he shall see him. I've told Mr. Bland, and he's a-coming. I'm off again to the Hall."

Away went Jem on his new errand, and scarcely could he have got half way there when Mr. Bland arrived at the Morton Arms, and was led into the room by Susan, who had recovered from her fainting, and crept down-stairs again.

Mr. Bland approached the bed, and looked earnestly in the face of the wounded traveler. He took a small mirror from his pocket, and held it a moment before the lips.

"He is not dead," he said—"we may rally him yet. Get me some brandy."

The medical man bound the upper sheet carefully round the wound which the traveler had received, while Toggs left the room, after he had made a rapid investigation of it, and fully satisfied himself that nothing could really be done to save the life of the wounded man.

"He is a dead man within an hour," he said to himself. "The wound is mortal; but if the further effusion of blood can be prevented, he may live some hours yet, by the aid of stimulants."

At this moment Toggs returned, and handed a glass of the liquor to the surgeon. Mr. Bland poured a very small quantity of it between the lips of the traveler, and then, sliding his hand under his head, he partially supported him in the bed.

The wounded traveler now opened his eyes, and groaned; then in a low, feeble voice, expressive of much pain he said,—

"Dying—dying—dying!"

"Can you see?" said Mr. Bland.

"Who speaks to me—who speaks?"

"Who wounded you?" said the surgeon.

"I—I know not. Tall, dark——"

"Remember that, Toggs."

"Yes, sir."

"The knife—the dreadful knife! My life-blood followed it as he drew it forth from my heart."

"Was he dressed or undressed?"

"Dressed—dressed; tall and dark. He—he killed me—he killed me. and with me killed hopes which to-morrow might have realized. The saddle—the saddle. The papers—oh, the papers—where are they?"

"What does he mean, Toggs?"

"Why, Mr. Bland, he means——"

"Captain Morton is here," said Jem, popping his head into the room.

"Thank Heaven!" said the surgeon. "If he has anything of importance to communicate he may do it now."

Captain Morton had been aroused by Jem, and, with his habits of military precision, he had been able to get from home and down to the Morton Arms much sooner than might have been expected, considering the distance he had to come.

Jem had run on before, and had the door ready opened, so that there was no delay whatever in admitting the captain, who had proceeded straight to the chamber, conducted by Jem, who could tell him no more than that the wounded man had expressed an earnest desire to see him before he died. This, however, was quite enough to induce the captain to come at once; and now

when he entered the chamber he looked anxiously toward the bed, fully expecting to see in the person of the sufferer some one whom he should recognize as an acquaintance.

Mr. Bland understood the look, and he said at once,—

"Do you know him, Captain Morton?"

"I do not."

"That's odd. He wants to see you."

"I never, to my knowledge, saw him before."

Mr. Bland stooped over the stranger, and said, in a clear, distinct voice:

"You wished to see Captain Morton. He is now here in the room, ready to hear anything you have to say to him."

A greater degree of animation appeared for a moment to come over the dying man, and he said at once:

"Morton—Morton—yes; where is he?"

"Here," said Morton; "I am here."

"All yellow—all yellow."

"He is dying," whispered Mr. Bland. "His very moments are numbered."

"I am here," added Morton, "willing to do you any service in my power. I do not know you, though."

"You—you never saw me," faintly ejaculated the dying traveler; "you never saw me before. Your hand—your hand."

He waved his own hand to and fro, as if seeking for Captain Morton's, and the latter placed his hand in that of the unfortunate man as he said, in a voice of deep compassion:

"There is my hand. Speak, will you, and speak your wishes. God forbid that at such a time as this I should refuse to comply with anything you desire. Although I never saw you before, as you admit, you may know me."

The dying man grasped his hand as, in imploring accents, he said:

"Thank God! I have lived long enough——"

A strange gurgling sound in the dying man's throat was the only response, and he was evidently making a vain effort to speak. Mr. Bland shook his head.

"Gone?" said Captain Morton.

"Not quite, but nearly. He cannot tell you what he means now."

"How unfortunate! Speak, oh, speak if you can; Captain Morton—Morton whom you wished to see, implores you to speak again. Summon energy, and speak your wishes."

A gasping sob came from the dying man. A gush of blood issued from his mouth, and in a clear loud voice he cried,—

"MABEL!"

The limbs relaxed; the eyes became glazed and fixed; the head sunk on one side. Then came a faint puff of breath, which, for an instant, gave a roundness to the cheeks, and then they sunk forever. The stranger was dead!

CHAPTER XIII.

"HE is gone," said Mr. Bland.

"You are certain he is dead?" asked Captain Morton, with a perplexed air.

"Quite. And I fear your interview with him has been far from satisfactory, Captain Morton."

"By Heaven! I can gather nothing from it. He has mentioned the name of one of my family. But nothing but the name. God only knows what he intended to say. How unfortunate that he should die so sudden as this! What was his name?"

"That nobody knows."

"Not know his name?"

"No. Such has been the confusion here, and such the anxiety to hear what he wished to say himself, that nobody knows who or what he is. Possibly, though, among his papers—he talked of having papers—some clew may be found to his name and connections."

"He had some papers he was very careful of," said Jem, "in a private little pocket in the saddle of his horse. Here's the saddle. Hilloa! the leather is cut to pieces. My life on it, whoever did the murder has stolen his papers, and who knows but it may have been done just for them."

"More provoking still," said Captain Morton, "more provoking still. Those papers might have aided us in finding out who he was."

"If you please, sir, here is Master Spurgin," said Susan, suddenly appearing at the door of the chamber.

"The village constable," said Captain Morton. "Let him come in. It is his duty to take some cognizance of what has happened, although he may not bring the soundest judgment to bear upon the circumstances, or the most extended powers of research."

"Gentlemen," said the constable, walking in, "I'm your extreme dewoted, as we says; I heerd as there was a skirmage, and here I is. Where's the malefactor? I suspect this will be some case of manslaughter, and misdemeanor at *nisi prices,* as we used to say in Westminster Hall. Ha! what has happened, Master Toggs?"

"If you look at the bed you'll see," said Toggs.

"As you are the only man here in any authority," said Captain Morton, "you had better take what steps you think necessary. There has been a murder committed, there can be no doubt."

"Shall I take up Toggs, shall I take up Toggs? Didn't he confess as he did it?"

"I don't think he did exactly."

"Oh, yes," said Toggs, "take me up, take me up. No matter what becomes of me. Take me up."

"I must take somebody up," answered Spurgin: "and all I

can say is, Master Toggs, that if I can't find anybody else, I'll take you up. But who does anybody suspect?"

Mr. Spurgin laid his finger on the side of his nose as he said this, and when he was told that no one was strongly suspected at all, but that the whole affair was involved in profound mystery, all he could say upon the subject was, "Oh!"

"The proper way," said Captain Morton, "will be, as I have declined being in the commission of the peace, to send to some one who is, and I should suggest that a messenger be instantly dispatched to Mr. Ormonde, at Ormonde Lodge, asking him to come here as soon as possible."

Jem was again in request as the messenger, and, as Ormonde Lodge was nearer to the Morton Arms than was Morton Hall, he soon returned with Mr. Ormonde, its proprietor, who, after exchanging civilities with Captain Morton, heard with unfeigned surprise the particulars, as far as they were known, of what had occurred. Matters were now set in train to give the whole affair a most thorough investigation.

The chamber of the traveler was first thoroughly looked over, but nothing was there found having any further connection with the murder. Then the outer room underwent the same scrutiny, and the landlord at once said, in a tone of astonishment:

"Why, here's a kitchen candlestick here, such as is never brought up-stairs into these rooms."

"I can account for that," said Jem.

"You?"

"Yes, I brought it up."

"Oh, when the alarm was given?"

"No—yes—no—yes! How came it there?—let me think."

"What do you mean?" said Mr. Ormonde, fixing a keen glance on the countenance of Jem.

"I can tell you, sir. I fell asleep in the stable last night, without thinking of it, and I woke up cold and stiff through lying half on the stones. I went into the kitchen, and by the nearly dying embers of the fire, lit a kitchen candle, and came up-stairs with it. I was half asleep, and blundered up the wrong staircase, so I went into No. 6 and threw myself on the bed, and went to sleep there."

"But this is not No. 6."

"No, sir, this is No. 8."

"Then how came your candle here?"

"I cannot tell you."

"My friend, you must yourself feel at this moment that the circumstance is a suspicious one."

"It is, sir, But how it came there I cannot tell any more than you can. All I know I have told you just as it happened. I had no business to sleep in No. 6, but I thought no harm of it at the time. Indeed, I was too sleepy almost to think of it at all. I remember, though, putting the light on the table."

"We will now go at once to No. 6," said the magistrate, calmly. "Perhaps you will have no objection to accompany us?"

"I objection, sir? None in the least."

Jem followed the magistrate into the room he had certainly been foolish to obtrude into overnight. The first object almost that met the eyes of Mr. Ormonde upon walking in, was, lying close to the foot of the bed, a long knife covered with blood.

Mr. Ormonde turned to Jem, and showed it to him silently. The hostler looked at it, as any innocent man would at such an object, with a shudder.

"What do you say to that?" was the question of Mr. Ormonde, in a voice of calmness.

"What can I say?"

"But how came it here?"

"As God hears me, sir, I cannot tell you. It appears as if within the last five minutes circumstances were accumulating to fix the guilt of this dreadful murder upon me. I can only say that Heaven knows I am as innocent as you are of it, sir. May God's vengeance for crime and impiety both strike me dead upon this spot, if I did the deed, or had any knowledge of its doing."

There was a bold sincerity about the manner of Jem, which staggered all who heard him. Suddenly then Mr. Spurgin, the constable, cried out, as he held something in his hand,—"Here's a ring."

"Let me see it," said Toggs, faintly.

"Do you know it?" cried Mr. Ormonde.

"Yes, yes."

"Whose was it?"

"The murdered traveler's. Oh, Jem, Jem! Who'd have thought of this? I'd have trusted my life with you a dozen times over, if my pockets had had the *waley* o' the national debt in 'em."

"And so you might," said Jem. "God only knows how these things came here. I am innocent."

Mr. Ormonde shook his head.

"I grieve very much," he said, "that I cannot consistently with my duty, do otherwise than give you into custody."

"Were I you, sir," said Jem, and he turned very pale as he spoke; "and were you me, I should do as you are now doing. I am innocent, sir. God help me, for God knows I am innocent, and that is all I can say."

"Remember, no one asks you now to say anything, but all you do say will be sworn to by those who now hear you."

"An innocent man need be afraid of nothing. I am willing to answer any question. I cannot invent a lie about how that knife came here, but on my soul I never had it in my hand. I am willing now to lay my hand upon the heart of him who is cold and dead in the adjoining chamber but one, and call down upon my head Heaven's most exemplary vengeance, if I raised a hand against him."

As he spoke, he rushed past Spurgin, who, in the vain effort he made to catch him, fell flat on his face.

"This may be a plan of escape," cried Mr. Ormonde, and he

ran after Jem, closely followed by Captain Morton and Toggs, whose surprise at what was occurring knew no bounds.

Mr. Ormonde, however, found that he was wrong in his conjecture; for, in the excitement of the moment. Jem did betake himself to the chamber where lay the body, and placed his hand flat upon the breast of the corpse.

"Now," he cried, "pitying, as I do, from my soul, this gentleman's sad fate, and execrating his murderer, be he whom he may, I declare my own entire innocence of the deed, and call upon Heaven to defend truth by some signal act of its justice, if I am guilty."

Toggs looked aghast, and Captain Morton betrayed much interest in what was proceeding.

"Such a scene as this," said Mr. Ormonde, "can have no effect in inducing me to swerve from what I consider my strict line of duty; you will consider yourself to be in custody."

"Oh! Jem—Jem," cried Toggs, coming toward him, and holding out his hand. "upon my soul I don't believe you did it."

"Thank—thank you, Toggs," said Jem, as the tears rushed to his eyes, and he clasped his master's hand, "thank you: that's like you, now. God bless you for those words, Toggs; I'm a fool, but not a murderer."

"I know you ain't, Jem, and I'll sell the very pewter pots of the old Morton Arms to see you through it."

"There need be no such sacrifice made," said Captain Morton; "I will take care that no injustice is done him. These are circumstances of very grave suspicion; but he shall want for no advice or assistance that money can secure."

"God forbid," said Mr. Ormonde, "that any injustice should be done to the poorest, or the most friendless; no one would rejoice more than I should myself at these circumstances being all cleared up in a manner compatible with a perfect conviction of your innocence, Jem."

"Thank you all—thank you."

"But you, I am sure, would rather yourself that a full investigation took place, than that you should labor under a load of suspicion which otherwise might never be removed from your name."

"I'd rather die, sir, a hundred times over."

"Very well; then you have no objection to accompany Spurgin?"

"None in the least, sir; I'll go with him. Do with me what you will, but don't think me such a dastardly villain as to take a fellow-creature's life, as this poor gentleman's has been taken."

"It is the duty of all intrusted with the administration of justice," said Mr. Ormonde, "to consider every one innocent until proved to be guilty."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE rapidity with which the news of any strange and marvelous, or horrifying character travels, is truly wonderful. It

is no exaggeration to say, that for twenty or thirty miles around the Morton Arms, at which so sanguinary a scene had been enacted, there was scarcely a man, woman, or child who did not, before the day was two hours old, hear something of the murder. And that something, having for its nucleus the fact itself, was variously colored, according to the feelings and the habits of the parties who carried the tale from ear to ear.

But the day was now getting on, and it is our duty to conduct the reader to the magistrate's, where the examination of Jem, the hostler, who had been charged with the murder, was to take place. There were unhappily some corroborative circumstances connected with the suspicion that he had done the deed, which pressed fearfully upon the minds of his best friends.

The magistrate to whom it had been proposed to convey Jem for examination was a very old man, and when he was told of the nature of the charge, and that it involved the most serious considerations, he had the candor to say that he would rather the matter was taken to some younger and more active member of the county magistracy. In consequence of this, it was determined that a Sir Francis Knightley should be the magistrate before whom Jem should be taken; and as that gentleman's seat was nearly four miles from the Morton Arms, it became nearly twelve o'clock on the morning succeeding the murder at the inn before the parties were all assembled.

Sir Francis Knightley was a man who had traveled much, and had not traveled in vain. He had studied men and manners wherever he went, and when summoned home, on the sudden death of his elder brother, to assume the title, and with it the estates of the family, he returned vigorous in intellect and of a liberal and candid disposition. Such was the man, perfectly unbiased and unbigoted, before whom Jem had now to be taken.

The great hall of Sir Francis' mansion was thrown open to admit the throng of persons who came to witness the examination; for he was not one who thought that any of the proceedings of justice should be conducted in secret. The hall was capable of holding five hundred persons, so that there was ample room, and to spare, for any one who chose to come and take a place in it during the examination of the prisoner.

At about a quarter past twelve, Sir Francis himself came in, and bowing, in the most unostentatious manner to the assembled throng of his friends and neighbors, he said:

"I regret that I cannot accommodate you all with seats, but such facilities as I can offer to any one who wishes it, to become acquainted with what transpires, I shall gladly avail myself of. If, however, friends, during the course of this preliminary inquiry, anything should appear to be on the point of transpiring, the common knowledge of which would go toward the subversion of public justice, I trust that you will give me credit for keeping it a secret for that reason, and that reason alone."

A murmur of applause ran through the hall, for Sir Francis was generally esteemed; moreover, his mild, gentlemanly, and unaffected mode of speech was especially captivating.

When Jem was brought into the hall before the justice, all

eyes were upon him, and no wonder that a slight accession of color visited his cheeks for a moment, and then left them, to all appearance, paler than they were before.

Sir Francis Knightley's clerk busied himself in procuring silence, and then, after a few preliminaries, with which we need not trouble the reader, the landlord of the Morton Arms was first called.

He deposed to the stranger coming on horseback to his house; to his making inquiries about the neighborhood, and finally, his retiring to rest. Finally, Toggs concluded by saying,—

"And that's all I knows about it, only excepting as I feels quite clear Jim didn't do it: and as far as trusting him went, I'd sleep in the same room with him, if so be as my pillow was stuffed with gold-dust, and there was a diamond sticking in my throat."

Captain Morton was standing close to the magistrate, to whom he now said something, upon which Sir Francis Knightley nodded, and then addressing Toggs, he said:

"Had you any other visitor at the inn?"

"Yes, your worship."

"Who was he?"

"A beggar-man. He wanted to mind the gentleman's horse, but he would not let him till he had taken off the saddle, and that seemed to offend him, so off he went at once."

"Have you seen him since?"

"I have not."

"Should you know him again?"

"Oh, dear, yes."

"Describe him."

"A middle-sized man, dressed very much in rags, with a cloth cap, and very black hair."

Toggs was asked no more questions, and then the cook at the inn was examined, who deposed to the fact concerning the candle, with which the reader is already acquainted, and which, therefore, we need not repeat at all. She, too, had seen the mendicant, of whose personal appearance she gave a similar description to that which Toggs had given. No questions were asked either of these witnesses by Jem.

The flight of some man across the village, and into the churchyard, was now proved, and the man who had from his garden seen a stranger leap from one of the windows of the church, and who, it will be recollected, detailed that fact to Captain Morton, was examined. It was a most puzzling case, for while there was quite enough to warrant any magistrate in committing Jem for the murder, yet there were circumstances connected with the affair, which threw a great air of doubt and mystery over it.

"There will be an inquest upon the body of the murdered traveler," said Sir Francis, "and I feel strongly inclined to take no step beyond remanding the prisoner for a few days now. Have you anything to say, prisoner, in opposition to such a course, in explanation of anything which has been said against you? You have no occasion to make any statement

unless you like, and I must warn you that every word you do say will be taken down."

"I have little to say," said Jem, "but that I am entirely innocent of the deed. I was foolish enough to go and sleep in a bed where I had no business, and beyond that I know nothing of it."

"That is all you wish to say?"

"That is all, sir."

"Then I shall feel it, at all events, my duty to remand you till this day week, and during that period of time every attempt shall be made to capture this beggar man, who seems in some way connected with these most disastrous proceedings."

"It's of no use me accusing anybody, of course," said Jem; "but if he did not do the deed, I will consent to be hung."

"What is the matter?" said Sir Francis. "There has been nothing but tumult for the last five minutes at the lower part of the hall."

"Please your worship, he won't wake up," cried one.

"What is it?"

"Troubled Tom, your worship."

"I want to be quiet," said a voice. "They won't let me. Oh, what a trouble! What's it all about? How's the dog?"

"What does he mean?"

"What do you mean?" cried Toggs, who was near to Troubled Tom, and now effectually awakened him by a tweak of the nose.

"Sir," said Tom, "what a trouble. You won't have to get any more tripe for Pincher. I seed the fellow put a knife in him. Sir, what a trouble. It was that beggar fellow. Well, there's nothing but trouble."

"Do you mean my dog Pincher?" said Toggs.

"In course I does. The beggar fellow did his business. Oh, I seed it with my own eyes. It was a trouble, but I did see it."

"Come forward," cried Sir Francis Knightley. "What's that he says about a beggar? Bring that boy here!"

"Sir," said Tom, as he was brought forward, "there's going to be a trouble. Oh, dear, oh, dear!"

"Who are you? Tell me your name," said Sir Francis.

"Oh, dear—Tom Sharp."

"Do you know the nature of an oath?"

"Ah, all sorts o' natures. If you tells the blessed truth, you goes to Heaven without any trouble. If you don't, you goes to blazes."

"I am bound to consider that answer sufficient," said Sir Francis. "Therefore swear him."

Tom was sworn, and then Sir Francis said,—

"Now, what have you to say about a beggar man?"

"Oh, dear me! Well, well—what a trouble. I went to sleep in one of Toggs' barns, close by Pincher. He knows me, and only says a sort of 'How are you, Troubled Tom?' when I comes and lays down among the straw. Well, in course I forgets my troubles, and goes to sleep; but there's always a something to wake one up. Well, I heard a row, and it *waked* me, and then

I sees that very beggar fellow as ought to have been asleep, and troubling nobody, a-having such a row with Pincher as never was. At last it was all quiet, and I thought as they had made it up again. Leastways, there wasn't any more trouble, so I goes to sleep again."

"At what hour was it this happened?"

"I heard it a-striking one."

"And the dog, you say, was killed by the beggar man you had before seen at the inn?"

"I didn't know. There was more trouble. All on a sudden I was *waked* up agin, by somebody actually a-standing slap on my inside—the outside of my inside, I means—and when I looked up, natural in consequence o' that ere, I seed him agin. He was all over blood it looked like, and he looked as scared as if he had been doing a something as he oughtn't. Then there was such a noise, and I heard a rattle springing, as if somebody didn't mind the trouble a bit."

"And what did you do then?"

"I went to sleep agin."

"You are a very extraordinary fellow. And when did you find the dog was killed?"

"When I was hungry."

"When you were hungry?"

"Yes; I always wakes up when I'm hungry, and never afore—leastways, unless somebody treads on the outside of my inside; then I does wake up as a *reg'lar* thing, and so would you."

"And that is all you have to say?"

"Very happy to say it is," said Tom. "Somebody almost pulled me over here, or else I shouldn't have took the trouble."

"The evidence of this lad alters very much the aspect of the case," said Sir Francis Knightley. "The weight of probability is strongly in favor of the supposition that the mendicant, who has been so frequently mentioned, is the author of the frightful crime we are called upon to investigate. It will be readily perceived that, although he appeared to have left the Morton Arms, there is abundant evidence to the fact that he came back to it again, for he has been seen by numerous witnesses. The prisoner now before me was not intoxicated when he was taken, nor is there anything in his behavior to induce a belief that he is mad. None but a drunken man, or a madman, would have committed a murder and then gone to sleep so close to his victim, and left about, as if purposely, abundant evidence of his guilt. I am disposed to think that by the back of the house this mendicant made an entrance, and then committed the deed, and that, in order to throw suspicion from himself, he purposely cast into the other's room the property there found, and took out the candle."

These words of the justice brought conviction to the minds of all present, and Jem said aloud,—

"Do not release me, sir, if a shadow of suspicion is still upon me. I did not, as God knows, do the deed; but I could not walk about among those who know me if I am suspected."

"I do not suspect you," said Sir Francis, "and I shall discharge you, if you can procure moderate sureties for your appearance before me again if called upon."

"I'll be his security," said Toggs.

"And I," said Captain Morton.

Jem bad kept up his resolution well till now; but the severest trial he had endured was to find that the magistrate acquitted him, and that bis master and Captain Morton thought so well of him as to become sureties for bim. He strove in vain to hide the emotion that was visible in his countenance.

"Do your utmost," said Sir Francis Knightley, "to discover the real perpetrator of this offense. Spare no pains, and spare no expense. If money is wanted, come to me and I will supply you. You are free now; but you must feel how very gratifying a circumstance it would be to yourself and to all your friends that the real criminal should be found."

"He shall be found, sir." said Jem, "if he is above ground. I devote myself to the task. I will find him, let him be hidden where he may. He is a double villain who would do such a deed, and then seek to destroy an innocent man by making the guilt appear to be his. Let him beware of me, for never hound hunted its prey more keenly than I will hunt for him. I will have him, dead or alive—I will have him yet."

"Every one here, no doubt, as I do, wishes you success in your endeavors," said the magistrate. "Of course you will attend the inquest, as I shall do, and I make no doubt but that the verdict of the jury will again exonerate you from the suspicions that have been raised against you."

"I hope and trust it may, sir. But God's blessing on your head and heart, that have acted so nobly to me this day."

Wben the hall had been cleared of the motley assemblage tbat bad found their way into it, the magistrate sent for Jem into a private room, where only be, and his clerk, and Captain Morton were, and he said to him,—

"Both Captain Morton and myself are of the opinion that tbis mendicant, whom we believe to be the real author of the crime which you were cbarged with, is still in the neighborhood. We think so, not only on account of his having been seen recently; but because, if he has found out any hiding-place hereabouts, it is tbe safest thing he can do for a while. He would be easily traced if he were to leave the neighborhood. Some one must have seen him. He must get food by fair means or by foul, so that we should hear news of bim."

"I will leave no spot unsearcbed."

"And particularly about the church," said Morton. "There appears to be some mystery about bis disappearance there."

"It's impossible to say what biding-places may be thereabouts," said the justice. "It sometimes does bappen that in very old churches, such as the one in that village, there are strange hidden passages and hiding-places that are only found out by accident, or the most careful research."

"You give me new hopes, sir," said Jem.

"Captain Morton and I throw out these matters as hints to

you," said Sir Francis Knightley; "because, to tell the truth, we have more hopes in finding out this mendicant from your exertions than from those of the constables."

"I am, of course, deeply interested in the discovery."

"So we conceive you to be. Think over what plan you imagine will present you the best chances of success, and rely upon every facility being at once thrown in your way to carry it out."

"I cannot be too grateful."

"Never mind about that. We are quite convinced of your innocence; but you know, from your language and demeanor, quite enough of the world to be convinced that a man must not only be innocent, but if he would escape censure he must avoid even being suspected."

"I know well, gentlemen," said Jem, mournfully, "that unless the real murderer of the unfortunate gentleman who lost his life at the inn be found, I shall, in the minds of many, always be associated with the deed."

"That is a fact which to you it would be folly to deny. Go, now, and do your best to clear up the affair."

"I will; and with Heaven's help, I will clear it up, if it cost me my life to do so!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE sun had sunk upon the village, and the dim uncertain light of twilight was slowly fading away, when Jem sought a lonely-looking cottage, standing not far from the side of the old church, that was furthest from the cluster of houses composing the village. This cottage was that of Dame Strangeways, the sextoness; and Jem's errand to her was to endeavor to persuade her to lend him the key of the church for one night, in order that he might keep watch there, in case the mendicant should be hiding anywhere about the sacred pile.

Dame Strangeways was rather a singular character. She was very retired in her mode of life, and if any of the villagers sought to intrude upon her privacy, they generally got repulsed with bitterness.

It did not seem, therefore, the likeliest thing in the world that she would grant the request of Jem; but at all events, he determined to make it rather than effect any clandestine entry into the church, which he told himself he could still do in the event of her refusal.

He tapped at the cottage door, and was answered from within in the loud tones of the sextoness.

"What now—what now?" she screamed.

"I want to speak to you, Dame Strangeways," said Jem.

She opened the door immediately, and as he entered said, in a lower tone,—

"Well, and what do you want, murderer of poor travelers in their beds—what do you want, Judas?"

"It is the simple truth, that I am innocent. What right

have you to assume my guilt? I might as well accuse you of——"

"Of what?" she screamed. "Speak—of what do you accuse me?"

"Of murdering the traveler at the Morton Arms. Why, how dreadfully agitated you are!"

"Oh! That is all. That is what you meant to say. Oh—I agitated—pho—pho! I am never agitated now. What could make you think that I was agitated?"

"You suddenly looked as if you were a maniac, but that is no business of mine. Dame Strangeways, I have come to ask you a favor."

"Who ever asks a favor of me with a thought that it will ever be awarded?"

"It may be hopeless; but hear me, dame. I am innocent of the murder of the young traveler at the inn: but there were circumstances which made me seem guilty, and those circumstances were, of course, contrived by the real criminal in order to shift the burden of his crime from his own shoulders on to mine. It is believed that he is lurking somewhere in the neighborhood, and more particularly is it believed that he has found a hiding-place about the old church."

"About the church? There are no hiding-places about the church."

"None that you or I know of, I dare say; but he may have found one, and what I want of you is the key for to-night, in order that I may keep watch there till the morning in silence and in secrecy."

"You are innocent, or you could never wish for a moment to be the long night in a church alone. Do you not fear the dead?"

"Not believing," said Jem, "in superstitious fancies, I have no fears. Before I sank to what I now am, I was educated for better prospects in life. Villainy contrived to rob me of all but that knowledge which with no sparing hand had been given to me by one who loved me. It may be, that at times, ay, most commonly, I adopted the language, manners, and habits of the class to which I have fallen; but glances of what I was, will now and then break through what I am, and help me to despise those thoughts and feelings which are, and should ever be, the sole property of the ignorant."

The old woman was silent for some moments, and then said in a tone of inquiry—"It is said in the village that no one knows your real name; is it true?"

"It is true."

"You much surprise me. May not I know it?"

"I have determined to utter it to no one. You will, therefore, now excuse me, that I do not make you an exception merely because I come to ask a trifling favor of you."

"I should despise you were you to tell me for such a reason."

"I thank you for those words, and they give me some hope that you will lend me the key."

"You shall have it."

"Thanks, dame, thanks."

"Nay, it is not worth thanking me so earnestly for. You must return it to me early in the morning. You go armed?"

"I had not thought of it."

"I can supply you, then. But not a word of this to any one."

She unlocked an old oaken cupboard that was fastened against the wall, and took from it an ancient-looking pistol with two barrels. The weapon was heavily inlaid with silver, a mass of which material nearly formed the whole of the stock of it.

"I will take every care of it, you may depend, dame, and return it to you along with the key of the church."

"Ay, the key—the key," she said, as if suddenly recollecting that she had not given it to him.

She proceeded to the same cupboard from which she had taken the ancient pistol, and took from it the massive church key, which, with its curiously ornamented handle and complicated wards, most of which were far more for ornament than use, was quite in itself a curiosity.

"There!" she said, "now go away—now go away. You are satisfied. The pistol was loaded when put away."

"Indeed. I'm glad you told me, though I dare say that by this time the charge is useless."

"Go away—go away!"

"I am going. Thank you, dame—thank you."

Jem found that Dame Strangeways was getting into one of those desperate ill-humors for which she was so very celebrated all over the village, so he thought it better to go at once, than protract a conversation with her which, for all he knew, might end in her demanding from him again the key of the church.

He did not wish to go until it was quite dark, but that period was now very close at hand; indeed, when he left the cottage of the sextoness, he was surprised to see what a rapid stride the coming night had made during only the period of his very brief conference with her. He walked toward the low fence which skirted the old churchyard, and springing over it, was within the precincts of the consecrated ground.

Well acquainted as was the hostler with the localities of the churchyard, whether it was from the novelty of the circumstances in which he was placed, or the darkness of the night, certain it was he found great difficulty in making his way to the low, arched doorway of the church.

He took the old gothic-looking key from his pocket, but so intensely dark was the deep hollow of the doorway, that it was only by feeling carefully over the surface of the old indented oak, that he could find the keyhole into which he was to place the massive key. The lock was rather massive than artful in its construction, and soon it shot back with a sullen sound that produced a dreamy sort of echo within the ancient church, and then the low but heavy door creaked on its hinges as if questioning the right of him who opened it at an unhallowed hour to enter the sacred edifice. A rush of cold air came from the interior of the church, so cold indeed, in consequence of its contact

with the ancient stone walls and numerous marble slabs, that the hostler recoiled again with a shiver before he could cross the time-worn threshold.

Recovering himself then, he entered the silent precincts of the place, and he closed the large door behind him, and from the interior securely fastened it.

Depositing then the key securely in his pocket, he felt for the silver-mounted pistol which the sextoness had lent him, and then carrying that weapon in his hand, ready for immediate service, he crept slowly up the dark and solemn aisle.

Noiselessly he got into one of the pews, and sitting down upon the floor, with his back supported by one of its angles, he prepared himself to wait for whatever time or chance might bring before him; and the night wore slowly on.

And now the old church clock suddenly awoke, and the whole building became vocal with the sound it made. It struck eleven; he counted them stroke by stroke: the dull, sighing echoes of the strokes appeared to him endless, but at last they died away, and all was still and lonely as before.

Then, in such an hour and such a place, did the lonely man give more thought to some most sad circumstances of his early life, than ever before he should have thought it worth his while to do. The false accusation of murder seemed to have awakened in him a new nature, or, perhaps, more properly speaking, to have enabled him to have shaken off a number of acquired habits, which, like the rust upon the polished steel, dims its luster without taking much from its integrity. He was no longer the man we first presented him to the reader, and it was unlikely he would ever be again such an one: he felt himself that henceforward he was unfitted for those menial duties he had so long chosen to execute. Truly those hours of reflection in the old village church might be said to be the most important in his life.

And now an hour passed away, and nothing occurred to break the dull monotony of his lonely watch. By that time, however, the moon began to show indications of performing its beautiful office. A soft and beautiful light began to diffuse itself around; object after object became plainly visible, and there could be no difficulty in seeing any object which might move within the venerable pile.

Twice now the hostler thought he heard a strange scratching noise in the direction of one of the windows; but as it was followed by nothing more for some time, he began to think it but the effect of imagination, or possibly it might be some rats or mice that infested the place. Suddenly, however, when he had nearly made up his mind to this conclusion, the noise increased, and turning his eyes in the direction whence it came, he saw some strange, dark object moving either inside or outside one of the windows, he could not tell which. It provokingly happened that that window was in the greatest gloom of all, so that, although he felt certain there was something like a human form attempting to get out of the church by means of the window, or

to get in, he could not determine with any degree of certainty its size, or general appearance.

His first impulse was to rise and rush toward the spot, but he controlled that by a more prudent one, which was, to remain where he was and watch attentively what was about to ensue, for he felt almost certain, although he could not have sworn positively to the fact, that the figure was trying to effect an entrance into the church by means of the window, instead of trying to leave it. Such heing his impression, it was obviously his best course to allow the entrance to be effected, after which he would have a far better opportunity of making prisoner the man, whoever he was, who was making so nefarious an attempt upon the sacred huilding.

Jem's heart told him that this man must he the murderer, and he could scarcely keep his joy within anything like reasonable bounds at the prospect of so soon and so easily capturing one who had endeavored to do him so deadly an injury as to draw down upon his head the consequences of a crime of which he was so entirely guiltless.

The more he looked the more he felt that the figure was outside the window; and now a circumstance occurred that added the full force of truth to that supposition, for the fastening of the window was undone, and it was thrown open, evidently from the outside, because opening inward, as it did, the figure must have moved down from the sill instead of remaining where it was, had it been on the interior, instead of, as it was, on the exterior of the building.

Now that the old-fashioned glass-work was removed from before his eyes, Jem could see much better than before, and he at once discovered the party who was endeavoring to effect an entrance was a man of about the middle height, and apparently attired in very dark apparel.

"Let him hut get in—let him but get in," thought the hostler to himself, "and if he succeed then in eluding my vigilance, he will be a cleverer fellow than I take him to be."

But this was a step which the figure did not seem inclined to take in a very great hurry. Be he who or what he may, he was sufficiently cautious, and took a long and anxious survey of the church before he would trust himself within it. Jem's impatience increased each moment. He might easily have shot him where he stood, always provided Dame Strangeways' pistol would have gone off, which, after all, was, perhaps, a douhtful point, hut he never once thought of that. To fairly apprehend him, and have him convicted of the murder, was what he wished, and so to show him, ruffian as he was, that he had failed to fix the guilt of his own misdeeds on an innocent man. The window was not above four feet from the ground, hut the fellow stooped very low upon the sill before he would venture to leap in, and then he might be said rather to drop, than to leap into the aisle.

"I have him now," thought Jem, and he sprung over the side of the pew with the rapidity of thought.

It would have been better had he waited a few minutes longer,

for doubtless the fellow would then have been more advanced in the church. As it was, however, he seemed so confounded at Jem's sudden appearance, that for about one half instant he was unable to fly. He must inevitably have been caught, had it not been that Jem struck his foot against something in his progress, and nearly fell; at least he had to take one of those formidable springs forward which people do to save themselves from falling, and then, as always follows any sudden and violent action, there was a slight pause.

The man who had introduced himself into the church now took a run into the body of the building, as if he were intent upon attacking the hostler, instead of escaping from him, then suddenly turning with the rapidity of lightning he took a short run again toward the window. and sprung through it again as cleanly as an accomplished harlequin could have accomplished the feat.

The sudden dash at the open window by the intruder, was so unexpected and instantaneous that Jem was taken by surprise, and though he was very close upon the heels of the man, yet he was not close enough to seize him; and just as he reached the window-sill, which he did by stumbling against it with some force, for he had thrown himself forward in the hope of seizing his enemy by the legs as he drew himself up, he felt the heel of the boot strike against his fingers, but he had the pistol in his hand, and that prevented him making a grasp, and he saw the man reach the window, and just as he was about to disappear, he leveled old Dame Strangeways' pistol and pulled the triggers, when both barrels went off. The stillness of the night, and the bare walls of the ancient building, with all its windows save one closed, caused the report to be so stunning, that few would have believed it, and the hostler for a moment paused. In another moment he too had leaped up into the window-sill, and was in the old churchyard. He let his feet come in contact with the old flat tombstone that lay so short a distance from the wall beneath. So rapidly did all these events pass, that the man who had so narrowly escaped being captured, was scarcely half a dozen yards in advance. His form no sooner met the eye of the hostler, for in the hurry of getting out, and the smoke of the pistol, he had lost it, than he rushed forward to follow the midnight intruder upon a scene so sacred. The man seemed to be well acquainted with the place, for he never halted or hesitated.

Not one of the many mounds and grave-stones did he run against, but straight onward he ran, sometimes turning to the right, and now again to the left, to avoid what would otherwise have stayed him. Jem, too, avoided the same impediments, but he did it by instinctively following the man and avoiding what he avoided and turning when he saw him turn.

Thus it was—they kept pretty well at the same distance from each other, and it was evident that nothing but an accident could give either the advantage. They were both fleet and fast, sure-footed and deep breathed. The race was such an one as had never before been run in such a vicinity, and the living never saw such a scene among the tombs of the dead. The prize to

one was life, and the other justice. Each strained his utmost, and exerted every nerve and sinew to the extreme. The moonlight lit up the old churchyard, and the two dark human figures, rushing with the speed of wind among the old tombstones, gave the place an awful and mysterious appearance.

But the slightest accident oftentimes bars the best made and easiest executed schemes; and so it was now, for, had not Jem discharged the pistol, he would now have secured the man who fled before him. As they neared the wicket-gate, the man rushed through; but he was impeded for a moment, and this enabled Jem to reach him, and he could with another stride have seized him. But at that moment he himself met with the same impediment, and the man, having released himself, was again enabled to secure the same distance between them as before existed, for Jem had to pass through the same wicket.

"Murderer! villain! you shall not escape me; you shall answer with your life for the bloody deed you have committed."

The man answered not; he still fled onward, with the same rapidity, the same firm struggle for the mastery in speed—for the security of life, and the attainment of justice. On—on—on they went, with a bounding step: the sound of their feet was dull and heavy, but quick; the heavy beats sounded in startlingly rapid succession, and the wind almost whistled through their clothes. The man seemed inclined to make toward a wood that lay at no great distance: but Jem, seeming to anticipate that, contrived to keep on that side of him, so that, should he attempt to do so, he must make an angle, and then he would cross it and come close upon him. The moon threw a broad and bright light upon the earth—not a cloud was now to be seen in any part of the heavens—on the contrary, they were cloudless, and the earth was illuminated by her silvery light. Broad shadows reached the plain, and the trees at a short distance looked, by the strength of the shadows, as if they were double, and impenetrable; and, could the man have reached any of these, no doubt he would have attempted a deviation of course: but he seemed fearful of attempting such a maneuver with an enemy so close upon his heels, and when the loss of a single stride might cost him his life. Desperate, indeed, was the struggle of those two men, the one to escape, and the other to overtake, and yet neither could succeed. At one moment, indeed, there was almost the certainty of the chase being ended in a mortal struggle: for the stranger missed his way as he made for a gap in a hedge: he had to make a bend to get to it, and this gave the hostler the opportunity of reaching him on the bank. Just at that moment, as the man was about to spring, and Jem's hand was about to close upon his shoulder, he fell and rolled down on the other side of the ditch. This accident released him from Jem's intended grasp, who was also unlucky enough to stumble against a stake, which threw him into the gap, while the other scrambled out of the ditch. With a sudden spring Jem rose, and cleared the ditch.

Then again commenced the desperate chase, which for a moment only had been disturbed by this slight accident, which had,

indeed, been nearly fatal to the fugitive. On they went and were soon on the confines of the village. The houses were all quiet; not a light streamed from any of the windows—not a soul could be seen, not a sound heard, save such as proceeded from themselves. Into the village the stranger dashed, and he seemed determined to make a desperate effort to shake off his pursuer, and rushed over the hard road with increased speed. But here he was followed by a like struggle on the part of the hostler to overtake him; and this effort was, therefore, only so much increase of exertion as must materially diminish their mutual strength, without gaining any advantage. The hostler could hear his enemy's breathing—it was hard and rapid; and he could not, he thought, hold out much longer. But Jem became aware, too, that he was much distressed by his unwonted exertion; and, but for the excitement and the hope that drove him onward, he could scarce have held out so long in the desperate struggle as he had done.

To the left of the village was a wood, that ran some distance at the back of the village church; part lay in a hollow, and part lay by a hill-side. The stranger turned to the left, and made toward the wood. Here another struggle commenced, and Jem made his utmost speed to overtake the murderer, thinking that if he got into the covers he would have every probability of escape. Jem's fears were realized; the man did gain the wood, and rushed into it as though he felt himself somewhat secure. He bounded on through the dark walks, heedless of the briers that grew across the path, which came with force against the hostler, who came after him with a steady pace; and the rapid strides they both took were timed, and it seemed as though it were but one man, and one step that bounded through the wood. The wood was dark, and the boughs were so thick and tangled that the moon's rays could ill penetrate, and Jem could only see the dark, moving body of the man who yet remained but a few paces in advance.

The cover and shelter the woods afforded seemed but ill-calculated to be seized upon by the fugitive, for his pursuer was so close on his track, that any spot or brake he could have rushed into would have been no hiding-place, for the hostler was close behind him, and what gave way to one could be entered by the other. He could not stop—he could not turn; to rush in among the tall trees at full speed might be successful, but it might also be unsuccessful, and there was the chance. To turn unsuccessfully was to give up; and if he turned, at the speed he was running, among the trees, he knew not how soon he might run against one of the huge trunks, and thus prostrate himself. These considerations no doubt, actuated the man to keep the open cleared paths, that gave no obstruction to his flight. Whatever stopped his pursuer, he well knew would stop him first, save some slight fall, or slip of the foot, and such accidents were not to be reckoned upon as means of escape.

They now emerged from the deepest and most gloomy part of the wood to a part where the moon's rays penetrated, and the

diffused light that reigned served to show the hostler of the Morton Arms that his enemy had maintained his distance.

The two men who thus acted the parts of pursuer and pursued in so desperate a chase, had now nearly exhausted themselves and could not now maintain their former pace; they both slackened—nature could not support for an unlimited period such tremendous efforts of strength and endurance. They slackened slightly their pace, hut this did not alter the relative position of either; they still remained as they were, the one to fly, and the other to chase.

They neared the confines of the wood and in another moment they hoth emerged into the open moonlight.

"Murderer! villain!" shouted the hostler, "you are a doomed man!"

No answer was returned, hut crossing a small field, the man swept up this, skirting a hedge, and again made for the church-yard whence he had started.

Jem now thought he should at least chase him to his lair: he followed stoutly on, determined that while he could follow on—while life remained, he would never lose sight of him. At a bound the man cleared the wicket; Jem followed through the gate, which gave him a moment's advantage, and away he sped for the very window he had jumped out of. The hostler followed through the yard and among the tombstones as nimbly as the fugitive: hut the latter tripped and fell. and Jem would have seized him, but he overshot his prey, and had to turn back, which he could not do for several paces.

Again had his foe eluded his grasp, hurrying through the churchyard in a contrary direction, and again did the hostler, with almost unahated vigor, and unimpaired determination, rush after him. Now, however, he was rather more in advance, and the manner he rushed among the tombstones gave him a slight advantage.

At one moment he turned a large monument, and Jem rushed round the other side, intending to have caught him sideways; hut here he was foiled, for the fellow made straight onward toward a tree, which he turned, and then again made for the open window.

There could be no mistaking his intention, and Jem thought he was quite sure of his victim. The moon shone on the other side of the church, and this side was in gloom. save the diffused light of the moon that was shed around. He rushed to the windows, and then disappeared; in another moment Jem was under the open window. He paused a second, and became convinced the man was not hidden in the ohscurity of the shadows cast by the church. It was a blank wall heneath—a narrow strip of earth lay between it and the tomb on which he stood, and he became convinced the murderer was in the church, and in another moment he stood again in the sacred edifice.

Convinced that the man who had taken refuge in the church could not escape—for all the doors were locked, and he himself had the key,—he paused a moment or two to gain breath. Jem's

heart at violently, and the sweat stood in large globules on his forehead and ran in streams from various parts of his body; he was bathed in moisture. He could feel the pulsation of his heart beat with tremendous violence, and his breast heaved quickly, while the blood flowed at such an increased rate through his whole body that he felt dizzy and sick.

For a minute he reeled, and could scarcely stand; but it was only for a minute, and then he turned to the work of examination for the man whom he made no doubt was secreted somewhere in the church, among the pews or seats, and he determined he would have him out.

To secure the window was the work of a moment; and though it could offer little or no impediment to the escape of the supposed murderer, if he were again to make for that place, yet it would be a hinderance for a second or two, and that would give him the opportunity of overtaking him before he could get clear off. Then going up to the communion-table, he looked carefully around the place—he looked down both aisles, and could see nothing. He then walked carefully down on one side—that which was the darkest, for the moon's rays fell upon one side, and down the darkest side Jem walked, examining every little nook and corner, and looking into every pew, which were not many, and every shadow that was thrown across the aisles; and then he looked round on every side, so that no movement could take place in the body of the church without his being perfectly cognizant of it, so still and quiet was the place.

Jem scarcely breathed; his footsteps were slow and stealthy, because he would not disturb the wrapt stillness of the scene; he had eyes and he had ears, and both faculties did he make use of. The hostler had examined one side, and he crossed at the end of the aisle to that on the other side, and then commenced as careful an examination on that side as he had made on the other. This, however, was fruitless, also; and the hostler began to fear that, after all, he had been defeated, and the supposed murderer had contrived to elude his search, and had securely concealed himself. It was then, as the conviction that the supposed murderer had escaped stole over him, that he felt an almost overpowering sense of fatigue, from the toil he had gone through for the first time steal over him.

He staggered, but he would not sit down; he would not even give his enemy a chance, if he were there, of suddenly overcoming him, and thus securing impunity for himself; he determined to walk up into the pulpit, and there watch the body of the church, and listen to the smallest sound that might reach his ears. He walked up and sat down; he leaned his head on his hands, and gazed wistfully up and down the body of the church, listening intently the while. The church was nearly enveloped in gloom now, and nothing but the dark outlines of the pews and the monuments were seen or distinguished—the moon was fast waning, and the morning was approaching. He sat there and trembled; he felt he had done much—he had strained every sinew, and yet scarcely recovered his breath: he yet panted,

and the disagreeable effects were, even now, felt incident to the race.

"He is gone, he is gone," he muttered; "Heaven's own will be done, but he's gone."

* * * * * * *

The gray dawn of morning was fast breaking in the east, when the hostler taking once more a careful survey of the church, approached the door which he opened cautiously and carefully. Once again he stood in the open air; he felt refreshed and the drowsiness that had overtaken him seemed to vanish before the pure air of Heaven.

He looked round the old graveyard, he walked round, and looked at the spot where he had last seen the supposed murderer, and yet still he could not believe he could have escaped any other way; he must have seen it. There was nothing that could have hidden him from his view for one moment.

"It is strange," he muttered, "very strange. Here I saw him, and I believe I could swear I saw him enter; indeed, I can see no means of escape; I can see nothing that would have hidden him for a second, and yet he was not inside, that is equally true.. It is strange, very strange," he muttered, and he turned his hack upon the church, and passing through the churchyard, he made for the cottage of old Dame Strangeways. "I will, however, make this all known," he muttered, "and he shall have no safe abode there. What could induce him to hide in this neighborhood? has he not finished his work here? Are there more to fall beneath his knife, and others suffer in reputation for the deed?"

Ahsorhed in these thoughts, he arrived at the cottage of the dame, and tapped at the door.

"Who is there?" inquired a voice from within, which he knew to be the dame's; he said:

"'Tis I, Jem, the hostler."

No answer was made; his voice was well known, and she straight undid the door.

"Come in," she said.

The hostler walked in, and taking out the key of the church door which she had lent him, he threw it on the tahle, and the pistol also with an air of a man sorely vexed and fatigued. He threw himself into a chair, and sat gazing upon them both with an air of distraction, when the dame said:

"Well, Jem, did I speak aright? You have got heartily tired of your watch?"

"Look at the pistol," said the hostler, sententiously; "look at the pistol, and then tell me what it says."

The old woman took the pistol in her hand, and seeing the pan open and the hammer down, said, "Ah, you have used it. What news? Tell me what has happened."

Jem now related the details of the night's adventures.

"And what do you intend to do next?" inquired Dame Strangeways, when he had concluded.

"Why, give information concerning the man, and relate what I have told you to the justice, and see if he cannot be secured,"

"And who will believe your strange relation?"

"I care not. I know it to be the truth, and it will go far toward proving my innocence."

"What no one will believe will prove nothing that you wish to prove, hut may engender suspicion. Take my advice; say nothing of what has happened to anyhody."

"Ay, hut I shall; and hy their means this man may be secured."

"It is useless. But, Jem—if Jem is your name—you must have another: surely you have no motive in concealing it from me."

"I will conceal it. I shall never be known by any other, and do not intend to reveal to any one what I deem fitting to conceal."

"Are you ashamed of it?"

"I may rather be ashamed of my present condition; hut I have said all I shall say ahout that subject; do not, therefore, ask me questions."

"Ask no questions!" said the dame, in an irritahle manner. "Go where none will be asked of you; since you cannot even trust me with your name, nor be guided by my advice, seek some other place; my cottage is no place for you."

As she spoke, she threw the pistol and the key into a cupboard, which she locked in great anger, and the hostler, without any apparent emotion, rose and quitted the cottage.

Dame Strangeways paused a moment or two, and muttering some incoherent expressions, evidently in anger, she walked to another cupboard, which she unlocked, and took therefrom a bundle of papers carefully tied up. Then arranging her chair, she sat down in the most convenient position to catch the light and sit at ease. She was soon immersed in the papers before her, and heeded nor thought of aught else. It was strange to see the eagerness and avidity with which she perused the papers she held in her hands. The sharp features of the old woman were concentrated upon one point, and she felt hut one sensation. She sat in her chair as though she had been a piece of curious carved work, so still and motionless was she.

After some moments spent thus, Dame Strangeways arose from her chair. Her passion had cooled, and she seemed actuated hy other feelings, of as strong a character, hut of a different aspect; they were of grief and melancholy, so long and so often indulged in, that they appeared to become nearer allied to insanity than the expression of grief and woe of a sorrow-stricken woman, fully informed of all she most feared or most desired should not be true. The papers were flung upon the tahle, and she huried her face in her hands, as if in an agony of douht and grief.

"No, no, no!" at length she said, with convulsive energy —"no, no—it cannot be—I cannot see it—I cannot!"

Another pause, and then she traversed the floor of her cottage. All was silent; not a sound came upon her ear, save that of her own feet, as she traversed the low, sanded floor of the room.

Yes," she muttered; "I will once more look upon those sad last remains. Oh, how dreadful! and yet I cannot refrain. I am fascinated—and yet, why? But—ah, no! I cannot part with them—I will not."

She went to the cupboard, and taking out a long turnscrew she slowly walked toward a portion of the flooring, in a chink of which she put the tool, and with but a slight effort, she lifted up a portion of boarding evidently made to do so. Beneath the boards was the coffin of a child. The woman paused as she gazed upon it. It was the coffin of a tolerably-sized child. She carefully laid the boards on one side, and, after examining the lid carefully, she paused before it some moments.

The coffin was worn; there was dust and dirt upon it, though there was an attempt made to keep it otherwise. There had been some years elapsed since the time that coffin was made, and that in which the old woman gazed at it. She took off the lid, and displayed the form and decaying body of a child; but it had long since ceased to be offensive. Indeed, there was but little more than the mere bones and the tougher integuments that held them together; what did remain was like skin or parchment drawn over the bones.

It was a ghastly and horrifying spectacle. The grave-clothes were yet entire, the cap was still on the head, and its whiteness was a strong contrast to the deep, brown-like hue which the body had taken. The contrast was strong, and the sunken, eyeless sockets, the noseless face, altogether presented a truly terrifying spectacle. And yet Dame Strangeways felt, or seemed to feel, no repugnance to gaze and even to touch the moldering body. Indeed, to her it seemed no new sight, but such as she had been accustomed to.

Her head shook several times as she looked at the body, and then slowly replacing the lid of the coffin, and then the boards of the flooring, and then replacing the turnscrew, she once more paced the cottage flooring. She shook her head and heaved a deep sigh, and again sought the papers and began to read. She however, once or twice removed her eyes to the flooring, and not being satisfied that all was right, she walked on the spot were the coffin lay, and trod down the boards surely. Then returning to her chair, she again took up the papers, and began to peruse them silently; shaking her head, when she had done, and murmuring:

"Ah! wretch, wretch that I am! Could I but find the boy—the rightful heir—oh, could I but find him!"

With a heavy heart Jem made his way from the cottage of Dame Strangeways to the Morton Arms. The words of the old woman repeatedly occurred to him, namely, that no one would believe the account he gave of what he had seen in the church, because he was considered by far too interested a party in the proceedings to be trusted in the evidence he might give concerning them.

"Oh, dear me!" said a voice, as if coming from some person a few paces behind him, "what a trouble everything is, to be sure;

it's a trouble to live, and I wouldn't mind dying but for the trouble of that."

There could be no doubt in the world from whom these words proceeded. Troubled Tom, of course, gave utterance to them, and as Jem now paused he was soon by his side.

"Why, Tom," said Jem. "it's an odd thing to see you up and stirring at such an hour as this."

"Oh, you may say that; it's a dreadful trouble and no mistake; but somehow or another nobody would let anybody rest anywhere. I tried to go to sleep last night in Toggs's pigstye, and just as I got comfortably off, somebody come and treads slap on my stomach. There's a trouble."

"Oh," said Jem, "and a very good thing they did, too, for it put suspicion into the right channel, and cleared me of the false charge of murdering the gentleman at the inn."

"Oh, did it? It's a very great trouble for all that, though. Well, to-day, Jem, you know, I turns the matter over in my own mind, and, after a good deal of trouble, I recollected the churchyard was called the place of rest, and was sacred to ever so many people's repose, and so there I went, and down I lay, as comfortable as possible, atween Mrs. Meggs and Squire Muttons's family graves. 'She sleeps in peace,' was on one blessed tombstone, and 'Lightly tread the hallowed ground,' was on the other. I just got comfortably off when whack somebody comes, and blessed if I don't think I was smashed, and away they goes again like a bum-shell; but, in course, I was waked up—there's the trouble. But there's no peace anywhere, not even in the blessed churchyard, where I thought nobody would have interfered with me."

"Certainly one would have imagined you were safe there, Tom."

"Ah, to be sure."

"But I am glad you were not, because it convinces me that he whom I have seen was no creature of the imagination, but a being of flesh and blood like ourselves."

"Yes; and bones too," groaned Tom.

"Bones?"

"Ah, to be sure. Flesh and blood only could never have gived me that dig in the stomach as I had. There was lots o' bones, too, you may depend, or else I shouldn't have had it. I feels it now. Lots o' trouble. Dollops o' inconwenience."

Despite his mind being so seriously full of those events which had placed him in so strange and anomalous a position, Jem could not forbear laughing.

"Well, Tom," he said, "by some strange chance you seem to be always at hand to confirm something that I want confirmed. It has been jeeringly said to me that what I have to tell of my adventures in the church to-night would not be believed because my own word only could be given in support of the narration."

"Lor! adventures in a church?"

"Yes. Strange ones, too."

"Much trouble?"

"I did not think of that."

Ah, well; that shows the difference there is between people; I think o' nothing else. Howsomdever, don't tell me. for I'm dreadful tired, and don't want the trouble of listening at all to nothink."

"I have no wish to tell you. All I want of you is that you will tell me where to find you when I want you to confirm by your evidence the statement which I shall fully make."

"Where shall I be? Oh, let me see, I shall be in Farmer Lake's pea-field fast asleep, I hope. You'll find me there."

"But a pea-field is rather an awkward place to find you in, Tom."

"Well, then, I'll get down by old Jacob Green's three new hay-stacks. You'll find me somewhere thereabout and no mistake."

"Very good."

"Oh, dear me! Oh, for that blessed wheelbarrow as I mentioned, and some fellow as didn't mind trouble now to wheel me about continually wherever I wanted all for to go to."

Tom left Jim with a lounging pace, which the latter looked after with some such feelings of curiosity as a man would look at some curious specimen of natural history with which he was tolerably familiar, but yet which could never cease to interest him.

"Well," he said, "I wonder that fellow don't find it a deal too much trouble to live. Eating and drinking must be quite a toil to him. I suppose, some day or other he will lay himself down and starve because it will be too much trouble to get up again. Well, well; we are not all made alike, and Troubled Tom, I dare say, thinks people who take a deal of trouble are very great fools indeed for their pains."

Upon the whole, though, Jem was well enough pleased with his night's adventure, although it had come to no practical result. It, however, proved several things: first, it unquestionably proved to his own mind that the individual who had behaved with so much audacity was the murderer of the young traveler. Secondly, it went far to prove that that unprincipled scoundrel lingered in the neighborhood for some object or another which was concealed in mystery; but by so doing he, of course, afforded a much better chance of his capture.

Thus did Jem strive to hearten himself up to a continual prosecution of that inquiry which was to be in its results of so much importance to him, and every new fact concerning which was sure to place his innocence in a still stronger light than before.

Being innocent, anything that came forward in the shape of truthful evidence was certain to tell for him, and hence the undertaking he had commenced promised to become eventually gratifying in its results.

The morning was now beginning to show itself in all its beauty, and a glorious one it was—a morning which seemed as if it came on purpose to cheer the heart of that wrongfully suspected man, and to convince him that there was a Heaven of

light, and beauty, and goodness above, that would yet make his guiltlessness apparent to all beholders.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE reader will probably recollect that, at a time when Captain Morton and his lady were in the midst of their great anxiety for fear some claimant was about to arise for the possession of Mabel, the mendicant, upon whose shoulders popular opinion was correctly enough fastening the odium of the dreadful crime of murder which had been committed at the inn, had had the insolence to come to the Hall and demand to see Captain Morton.

When Captain Morton entered the apartment in which the mendicant was, he found him standing near to the door of an inner room, and apparently in as free an attitude as he could, as if he knew not how quickly he might be called upon for some vigorous action in the shape of self-defense.

"This is," said Captain Morton, who spoke first, "a piece of the most unparalleled audacity."

"Indeed!" was the reply, in tones half-subdued and half-insolent. "Indeed! and yet you come at my demand to see you, because you do not know but I may have power to touch you nearly."

"It is useless to disguise from you," said Morton, "that I consider you a scoundrel, capable of inventing any tale to the prejudice of anybody. I presume your errand here is for money?"

"Indeed, Captain Morton," said the medicant, "you have a ready wit. A young girl, named Mabel, resides under your roof."

"Well."

"It is well, so far as it has gone, I have no doubt; but it remains to be seen if it continues well. She is not your child."

"Not my child?"

"Come, come, this is useless prevarication. It can do no good between us whatever. We shall come to an agreement, or we shall not; but concerning the facts there can and need be no dispute. You remember the battle of Waterloo?"

"All who look back on that great struggle cannot forget it."

"True. You and I were both there, and when the fight was done, or nearly so, you lay wounded on the field."

"Well, well."

"Don't be too hasty, captain. By the bye, you were only lieutenant then. I am coming to the point. A wounded officer placed the child in your care, whom you now call Mabel, and would fain pass off as your own. It is of no use your denying these facts. I was an eye-witness. Let that suffice."

"Be you whom you may, I have neither desire nor skill to deny what is true; but what then?"

"That is your only remark. When then? I will tell you. A claimant may come for the child."

"Well?"

"Oh, you think that well, do you? but I can see through the

disguise of calmness. You are troubled, Captain Morton. You shrink and tremble. You have wound your affections round the girl. You dread to have her taken from you. You dread even that she should know she has no right to call you by the name of father. Now, you see, from what I have told you, that I can, if it so pleases me, blazon this story over the whole of England; ay, over the whole of Europe. You cannot prevent me, and then what situation will you find yourself in, if some worthy claimant should come and say, 'That child is mine?'"

"If this is all you have to say," said Captain Morton, "you might have spared yourself the trouble, as well as the risk of this interview."

"Risk? but no matter. Let that pass. What if some one was to step forward at once and claim her, who was so poor, so criminal, so despicable, that it would break her heart, and yours, too, to find that she had such a father? Ha! that touches you; and why may it not happen? Such a fellow as would terrify her to look at; and who shall say I may not find such a one for her, Captain Morton?"

"Come to your errand," said Morton. "You have still something to say, about which you hesitate, and to which this is merely an exordium. Come to your errand at once. I do not wish to disguise from you that your presence here is anything but welcome."

"No," said the fellow, with a bitter laugh. "I am aware of that. I come with unwelcome truths in my mouth."

"You speak as if you were one who came here armed with some accusation against me. What could even a parent of the girl you mention say, but that I had doue almost more than a parent's duty by her?"

"Nobody disputes that. I don't come here to find fault about your conduct to the girl, my business is of another nature. I want money."

"Now, indeed, you have come to the point."

"Well, it's the point we all come to, from the king to the beggar. How much a year will you give me to let this matter rest, and leave you in undisturbed possession of Mabel?"

"How much a year?"

"Yes, to be sure. I'd rather have a handsome annuity than a large sum down at once. I know my own failings, and one of them consists of a facility in getting through money; so I have considered the matter, and think it better to have it by degrees, and consequently I prefer an annuity to anything else?"

This was said with so much *sang froid*, that for a moment or two Captain Morton was silent from astonishment at the insolence of the fellow. This silence the individual either mistook, or affected to do so, for some sort of acquiescence in his demand, and he said,

"Well, as we have got thus far comfortably, and without any disputing, suppose, now, we go to the more important consideration of settling what the actual amount shall be."

"Hold!" said the captain, "we have not got so far without dispute. You say, or rather, you insinuate, that you know the

parents of Mabel—I do not, but if you really do, and will impart to me that information I will give you a reward of twenty pounds."

"Twenty what?"

"Twenty pounds."

"D—n your assurance! Twenty pounds! Why, how long do you suppose twenty pounds would last a man like me? I tell you what it is, Captain Morton—you either do, or you do not, wish to keep Miss Mabel all to yourself. If you do, I am the only man in existence who can enable you to do so, and I will be well paid. If you do not, say so at once, and leave me to adopt my own course."

"Candidly I do," said Morton; "but if the parents of Mabel are in a rank of life such as would enable her to associate pleasurably with them, God forbid that I should step between a parent and a child, however much my heart would be grieved at her loss. Besides, under such circumstances, it would not be a loss, for such people would consult her happiness by leaving her with those who had so long stood to her in the place of natural protectors."

"Ah, that's all very well, captain, if such were the case. Under those circumstances you would have seen nothing of me; but it is because the friends of Mabel, who can claim her, are not such as she or you would much admire, that I think you will consider it worth your while to come down handsomely to me for the sake of keeping them separate."

"This you must prove to me."

"Prove! D—n it, I'll swear it."

"I would not take your oath. If you can give me such particulars and such references as shall convince me beyond the shadow of a doubt that this child of the battle-field—whom I swore to protect, and whom, Heaven knows, I have done my duty by—has parents, or a parent, who may be in such a position in life, not through poverty, for that can be amended, but through cha acter, that her heart would be shocked to own them, I will pay you for keeping her from them, or rather, them from her, till she is of age, and can act for herself, legally as well as precisely."

"Well," said the fellow, with rather a look of discomfiture, "you take tolerably high ground in this affair."

"Why should I not?"

"Please yourself; please yourself."

"Be assured that I mean to do so."

"Good; but that is a game which two can play at. Now, I tell you, Captain Morton, that you must, if you deal with me at all, take my word for what I state; and then you must deal tolerable handsomely."

"Your word?—the word of a ruffian such as you are?"

"Yes. Ain't my word as good as another's, because my coat is not?"

"I premise that our conference is not likely to lead to any satisfactory result, and therefore I shall apprehend you at once and have you lodged in jail."

As he spoke, Morton darted forward with tbe hope of seizing tbe fellow; hut it would appear as if he had had a remote suspicion tbat such might be tbe termination of the conference, for he eluded the captain, and made bis way into the inner room in an instant, closing the door of communication so quickly and so adroitly, that be struck Morton on the face with it, and caused him to recoil a step or two.

It was only for a moment, however, that Morton was thus foiled, and darting forward again, he quickly bad the door open; but when be entered the room, he saw by the wide open window that such must have been the way by which the fellow had escaped, and to conclude which way he had gone was a matter of impossibility.

Tbe first thought of the captain was to alarm the servants, and endeavor to find the fellow before he left tbe grounds; but, upon second consideration, he made up bis mind to let bim go, considering it probable, that now he was disappointed, he sbould hear of bim no more.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE county magistrates, after being convinced of the innocence of Jem tbe hostler, and having discharged him, in consequence of feeling very dissatisfied with the state of the case, and the useless efforts of their own rural police in tracing the murderer, bad resolved upon sending a report of the case to the bead police-office, London, with a request that they would send down some instruction as to how they had better proceed, and also for some one who was well qualified to act under such emergencies. This application was answered promptly by the chief magistrate sending down an officer on whom they could rely, and whose reputation for sagacity was great, with orders to act as he should see occasion in the affair.

Mr. Samuel Lewis. more familiarly as he was wont to be called at the office, Sam Lewis, was an artful card in his way. Sagacity or cunning sat beneath his hat when he had it on, and no raven looking into a gutter, could look with greater gravity and silence tban Mr. Samuel Lewis. He was very stout—he had been a strong-made man, about the middle beight, but now he bad grown fat, and his scarlet waistcoat served as a sort of shelter beneath which his broad ribbed smalls took refuge, and were seldom seen by their owner, save when he had occasion to dust his top-boots.

Mr. Sam Lewis was a cunning and a clever one in bis opinion. He could scarce say or do more than other people, and by way of attaining a character for cunning sagacity, which be had discernment enough to see that he could never earn, be said less, and did less tban other people. Tbis was one way of obtaining a character, and few could have succeeded in it; but Sam Lewis looked grave, screwed up his moutb, cocked his eye, and looked so earnest, that it made a deep impression upon everybody.

Good fortune often attends tbose who may certainly be deserving it, yet who would never have achieved anything by their

own sagacity; and it did attend upon Sam Lewis, and on one or two occasions he disappointed men, business men, who declared he was a fool, and would fail, for he did succeed in doing one or two clever and acceptable things to the magistracy. Any blunder he might make would pass now as an instance of unavoidable failure, when if he failed, nobody else could succeed, and therefore he could not be blamed. In truth, he was one whom some of the more steady and elderly magistrates pronounced to be the model of an officer.

However, down came Mr. Samuel Lewis, and he introduced himself to the chief magistrate, that is to say, he who had taken the greatest interest, and had busied himself in the affair the most. He presented a letter of introduction, which the learned magistrate read, and then turning his gaze upon Mr. Lewis, he said:

"You are an officer of some experience in your business, I believe?"

"I have been an officer for some years, and have had some difficult jobs, and I have succeeded in a good many."

"In others failed?"

"In the same way a man would fall through a bridge when it broke under him."

"Because it wasn't strong enough to bear him?"

"No," said the cunning Mr. Lewis, slowly; "because my information was too rotten to bear me forward."

"Well, well," said the magistrate, looking hard at the officer, and scarce knowing what to make of the man, though he thought he would not have been posted from London if he had not been capable, and he proceeded,—"You have heard of the particulars of this affair, I dare say?"

"I have."

"Then you know all I can tell you!"

The officer paused, and, after shaking his hat to and fro upon his head for some time, at length he said,—

"The man was pursued—was he not?"

"Yes."

"And lost?"

"He was, else you had not been sent for."

"I can understand," said Mr. Lewis; "we don't do things in so great a hurry in London. Have the goodness to give me all the information I want, and in the order I ask it. Where was he missed?"

"Somewhere in the churchyard."

"That is the last that has been heard or seen of the supposed culprit?"

"Yes, it is."

"Very well. The scent is cold, and I have the greater disadvantages to struggle with; but I must take it up where it was last lost, and try back. You see?"

"Yes."

"I may pick up a trace that may enable me to carry out my views of the subject, and probably secure the gentleman."

"Indeed"

"I am not sure. I can't tell. Time alone shows these things; they ain't as easy to do as signing peace-warrants."

"Well, do as you will," said the magistrate. "You see how the case stands, and how we are at a loss to find the man who is supposed to have committed the murder."

"There has been one man taken up upon suspicion—has there not?"

"There has, hut been discharged, as being quite innocent."

"Of that you are satisfled?"

"I am satisfied of that."

"Then I shall not trouble my mind about the affair," said the officer.

"Exactly."

"Then I shall bid you good-afternoon, and set about my plans at once."

"The sooner the better."

"I wish I had been here on the occasion; that would have the best hy far."

"It would so; but we have now to make the best of a bad job, and in doing so you will exert the skill and sagacity for which you are known."

They parted. Mr. Samuel Lewis walked from the abode of justice, and putting his hand into the pocket of his great coat, in which he felt the favorite of his walks—his staff—he twined his fingers around it, and muttered, as he came in sight of the churchyard,—

"They should have kept watch there for some time; these old places have plenty of hiding holes about. I'll show them what one of the London officers can do when they are done up."

With these self-congratulatory thoughts, Mr. Sam Lewis entered the churchyard. As he entered, the sun's rays were glaring across the churchyard, and shone upon the windows with strength and intensity. The windows seemed all on fire, and reflected back the setting rays.

"Ah," said Lewis, as he looked round the yard, "there ain't much here, hut there's no knowing what may or what may not be; I'll occupy a post that will at least give me time for reflection, and conceal myself from the observation of any one who may come."

Having looked about for some time for the hest place to screen himself, he found two graves that were raised tolerably high with others at either end, so as to effectually screen him, and yet he could be perfectly cognizant of all that occurred in the churchyard.

"Here's room for meditation," said Sam, as he sat down between the gravestones, carefully doubling the tails of his great-coat to save himself from the effects of the damp.

He sat down, and began to watch, hut whether it was that he had partaken of anything calculated to keep up the circulation under difficulties, or not, it would be difficult to say, but the vigilant officer fell asleep.

Just at that moment, a man entered the churchyard. With a rapid, but cautious glance, he looked around, and made a hasty

stride or two, and suddenly stopped as his eye lighted on the sleeping officer. Lashing a coil of cord which he had around him, he made a running noose which he carefully slipped over the officer's head, and then going to a distance, and drawing the cord over the chink of a stone so as to serve as a pulley, he gave it a sudden jerk to awaken the officer.

"Hilloa! hilloa!" said the officer: "I'll take (a jerk)—you into (a jerk)—custody (jerk). I'm (jerk)—a—(jerk)—officer (jerk)! I'm choking (jerk)!—Mer—(jerk) cy!"

"Be still, and lie quiet," said a voice.

"You rascal, I'll take you into (jerk)——"

The officer flourished his staff of office, but found himself unable to speak, and was choking in earnest; he accordingly gave in.

The mendicant came up and secured him, saying, that if he moved or stirred, he was a dead man, and then he began to strip, and dress himself in the officer's clothes.

"When they send you from London again," said the mendicant, when he had put on every article of dress the officer had, save his breeches, stockings, and shirt, "they should send an easy-chair and a nurse."

The officer boiled with anger, but he couldn't help himself. There was he, who had been sent from London as a specimen of superior intelligence and vigilance, at the mercy of the man he was intent upon taking. He was to be an example to them, and a pretty example he was, too.

When the mendicant had finished his toilet, he took the staff, and, flourishing it, he said:

"Now I'll take you into custody."

At the same time he turned the officer over, and seized his hands, and then dragged him to the tombstone beneath the window of the church, where Jem, the hostler, had suddenly missed him. Here he thrust some loose rubbish on one side, and put him in head first.

"For the love of Heaven, don't put me here, I shall starve to death among dead men's bones."

The mendicant made no reply, but, dealing him a blow on the only part within reach, he covered the place over again, and left the officer to his fate, and immediately quitted the church-yard.

Suddenly there came the cry of "Stop him! stop him!" and, on looking, he saw several men who were pursuing another, more out of wantonness than aught else. He drew his staff, and ran toward the man, but when they met, the recognition was mutual.

"What, is it you?" was the cry of both.

"For God's sake, save me!"

"This way," said the mendicant, jumping a ditch that was out of the sight of the people behind, and in another moment they were safe in the wildness of a wood.

"Have you turned Bow street?"

"Ha, ha! have you a mind to help me? I was going to London for a pal."

"I'll do anything for drink and money."

"Then come this way."

They both walked further into the wood, and after earnestly conversing for about an hour, the confederates shook hands, saying:

"It is an agreement, then?"

"Yes, I promise"

CHAPTER XVIII.

THESE two very questionable characters now having settled in their own minds some diabolical plan, no doubt inimical to the peace of persons who were, compared to them, as angels to devils, began to look cautiously from the covert they had chosen, for the purpose of ascertaining if it would be safe to emerge therefrom.

"All's right," said he whom we have called the mendicant, but who was named by his companion Solme, and therefore, whom we may as well call by that name, whether it be or not his correct one—"all's right. Ned; there's no one near now, and if there were, this costume that I am in would be amply sufficient disguise to protect me and enable me to protect you."

"Well, mind you stick by me, Solme. I don't want, if I can help it, to get into the hands of these infernal rustics. When once they catch a fellow, they father upon him all the horse-stealing, and hen-roost robbing, and burglaries that have happened for the last twelve months."

"And perhaps they would be right enough in your case, Ned," said Solme.

"No, d—n me, no. London got too hot, you see, to hold me, that was the fact, and I came down here to rusticate a little, that was all, and more for the benefit of the change of air than anything else, I can assure you."

"Why could you not keep yourself quiet, then?"

"Oh, you know what's bred in the bone will come out of the flesh. Keep myself quiet, indeed!—stuff! I only took from a farmer's wife the proceeds of her poultry and eggs as she was coming from market, then the old dame set up such a yelping, as if she were not sensible of the honor of being robbed by me, Dashing Ned of Newington."

"Do you still, then, retain your old name?"

"I do."

"And I dare say deserve it. Now, go to the village, and just on the outskirts of it, on this side, you will see a little huckster's shop, where they sell everything; get there a sheet of paper, a bottle of ink and a pen."

"Do you think I shall be safe?"

"Quite. The pursuit has gone the other way altogether, and died off in the distance, as you are aware."

"But you haven't told me why you can't go yourself."

"There is a special reason. An accident has happened in the village, and they seem inclined to blame me for it."

"Whew! A bad accident?"

"The worst."

"Oh, I understand. Well, these things will happen. It isn't the first throat you have cut by a good many, if you did it in that way. Ah, this puts me now in mind of old times and scenes. Don't you remember——"

"Silence! What the devil is there in my past career that I want to be reminded of by you?"

"Not much, I dare say. A shilling?"

"What?"

"A shilling to get the learned utensils for writing. Do you think I walk about with money jingling in my pocket to go of everybody's errands, and pay besides?"

"Pshaw! You are the same reckless man you ever were. You will joke when you come to the gallows."

"Which you won't live to see, old friend; for the hangman will be cheated if you don't go first. I always give way to my betters. I wouldn't be hung before you, no, not on any account, I wouldn't."

With a half swaggering, half crouching gait, the fellow now walked toward the village on the errand which the other had specified to him.

It was quite dark when he returned, and at the mendicant's order, Dashing Ned, who never traveled without a pocket tinder-box, took out his flint and steel, and a light was soon procured, and with some difficulty Solme succeeded in writing the following epistle:—

"To her who is commonly named Mabel Morton:

"Mabel, you are not the child of him who would fain, because he has done much injury to your parents, make you believe. You, of course, wish to know to whom you owe your being. You shall know so from the only person who now will tell you, or who really feels a disinterested interest in your welfare. If to-morrow evening at dusk you will be on the margin of the lake, at a spot where a cluster of trees comes so near to the water, that one, a fir, has loosened itself from the bank, and seems ready each moment to fall into the lake, you shall know all. If you doubt that there be any truth in this ask Rafferty Brolickbones, the servant to Captain Morton, who knows well that you are not a child of Morton's, although he knows not who you really are."

Having written this note as carefully as he could, under existing circumstances, he folded it, and turning to his companion, he said:

"Now, Ned, you see yon house, many of the windows of which are lit up from within?"

"Yes."

"I want you to take this note there, and endeavor to bribe one of the servants to place it in the hands of her to whom it is addressed."

"Bribe one of them? What am I to give him?"

"Anything. Here is gold."

"The deuce there is! You are mighty generous all of a sudden."

"The stake I play for now is a heavy one, and I will not risk the losing it for the sake of petty expenses. I dare say one of the gold pieces will suffice, but if one will not you must try two."

"You won't spend three?"

"Yes, or three."

"Very good. You are the man for my money. That's the way to do business. I'm off. Never fear but your letter will find its way to its place of destination. You have supplied me with golden argument to use to John the footman or Sally the maid. It will be all right, you may depend."

Ned, or Dashing Ned of Newington, as he appeared to be pleased to call himself, at once started on his errand, and made up his mind that none of the gold which he had received from Solme should find its way back into that very enterprising individual's pocket again.

On reaching the house of Captain Morton, he found that the captain was from home, by an inquiry which he made of a stupid servant who answered him.

"Oh, then," said Ned, "here's a note that the captain wants Miss Mabel to have at once, that's all. Can you give it to her?"

"To be sure I can. What's to hinder me?"

"Very good; I can see that you are a clever fellow."

Away went Ned quite satisfied that he had done his errand, and the note was duly taken to Mabel, who, as may well be supposed, was both surprised and affected at its contents.

And now she committed the greatest error of judgment she could, under the existing circumstances, at all commit. Instead of waiting patiently until Captain Morton came home, and showing him the note she had received, and leaving the matter in his hands, she at once caught at the suggestion it contained, and, in her anxiety and impatience to ascertain the truth, she sought out Rafferty Brolickbones. This individual was in a room which contained various fire-arms, and a unique collection of weapons of the chase, which it had been a hobby of Captain Morton for some time to collect, and which were all placed under the care of Rafferty, who derived much pleasure from keeping them in order.

He was now solacing himself with a song and a jug of ale, while he was freeing from the accumulated rust that hung about it some ancient weapon, which had been probably in active use in those days when man made war with the brute inhabitants of the forest and the wilderness for his daily bread.

"Troth, Miss Mabel," he said, "and is that you? It's good for bad eyes is the sight of you."

"Rafferty, I have come to ask you a question. Oh, tell me, and tell me truly, am I the child of Captain Morton, or am I not? Tell me at once, and truly. To doubt on such a point is too terrible."

Rafferty looked up to the ceiling, and then down to the floor, in great perplexity. Indeed, to any one but Mabel his hesitation

would have been a sufficient answer; but poor Mabel had not the art to read any one's countenance, and she only waited with clasped hands and a most anxious expression of face, for what reply Rafferty would make to her.

"Who said you wasn't, Miss Mabel?"

"Read this."

Rafferty Brolickbones was rather a slow reader of writing, but he contrived to make out the general purport of what was said in the note to Mabel, and when he had done so, he gave it back to her, saying:

"Sorrow be to the hand that wrote that, and sorrow will be to the top of his head, Miss Mabel, if he comes across me."

"Is it true?"

"True? Oh, you want to know is it true? Oh, that's it—is it true, you want to know? Of course, it's mighty natural that you want to know."

"Rafferty, are you determined upon driving me distracted? If so, pursue the course you are now adopting, and you will succeed. I ever considered you as a friend, and one to whom I would never appeal in vain, but now I see my error."

"Error, Miss Mabel? Ha, bedad, and the holy poker, and all the holy fire-irons, you are wrong there. Just show me the mighty illigant fire, and the great sheet of water I wouldn't go through any day of the week, Miss Mabel, to do you a service."

"Then why refuse me the simple request I now make? Surely nothing can be more simple than telling me if I am, to your knowledge, the child of Captain Morton or not?"

"By the holy, hasn't he done a father's duty by you?"

"He has; but yet my heart yearns to know the truth."

"Miss Mabel, will you give a poor fellow half an hour to gather his wits about him, and think a little before he gives an answer?"

"Yes, yes."

"Then come to me, Miss Mabel, at the end of that time, and in the meantime I'll think."

"I will come to you, Rafferty, and let me implore you to keep this affair a profound secret from every one."

"You needn't be after telling me that," said Rafferty. "I wouldn't tell it to the Pope himself. Oh, murder!" he continued, when he found himself alone. "Oh, murder and turf, here's a pretty piece of business. Miss Mabel will be after finding out that she isn't Miss Mabel, at all, at all."

Poor Rafferty was so cut up with the prospect of what might occur, that probably he had a more serious face upon the occasion than he had ever had since the memorable morning on the field of Waterloo, when he had that, as he called it, "mighty illigant" cut on the head that disabled him from action.

"What's to be done? That's the question, as the fellow with the mully-grubs in the play says."

Accustomed, however, to prompt action as was Rafferty, from his early military habits, he was not likely to remain long lamenting without endeavoring, at all events, to adopt some means

of overcoming the difficulties which presented themselves, so now he set to work enumerating them.

"Let's see," he said; "first and foremost, if I don't do anything in this affair, she'll be going to the captain, and then he will have the vexation of having to tell her all about it, which will be the death of him; and then she won't be satisfied till she sees the fellow who wrote the note to her. If she don't go and meet him, he'll he bothering her again, and who knows but he's the same thief of the world who has given us all some trouble before now? Rafferty, my boy, you must take him prisoner—and, by the holy, so I will—so I will."

When once this idea got fair possession of Rafferty's mind, it grew, each moment, into stronger plausibility, and at length he said:

"She shall go, just to decoy the fellow to the place, and I'll take good care to be there, and be down upon him mighty convenient—that'll do. She may as well hear what he's got to say, and so may I; she'll be satisfied, I can tell the captain, and we can send the thief of the world to prison. Murder! Here she comes."

The impatience of Mabel had induced her to make a very short half-hour of it, and now, with anxiety depicted on every feature of her countenance, she again sought Rafferty to learn what determination he had come to on a subject which, to her, was of such importance.

"Well, Rafferty," she said, "what have you to tell me?"

"Why, Miss Mabel, say nothing to nobody, but keep the appointment named in the letter, and depend upon it, Miss Mabel, I won't be far off."

"You will accompany me?"

"Not exactly that, darling; but I'll be near enough, and woe be to him who gives a cross look to you, or endeavors to hurt a hair of your head. Trust me for that, Miss Mabel."

"I know well that I may, Rafferty; I am glad that such is your determination, and I will act in accordance with it."

The time had come, and Mabel, with timid steps, sought the spot where she was to meet the individual who had written her the mysterious letter. Her agitation did not arise from personal fear, for she relied upon the promises of protection that Brolickbones had made her—that he would be at hand to secure her against any violence. She had an internal fear of the consequences of the interview, that she would hear something that would disturb her peace of mind. And yet she felt herself urged on to meet the mysterious unknown, and learn what, perhaps, she would not otherwise know.

She came within sight of the place; there was the clump of trees all plain and palpable—the lake beyond them, against which they stood in strong relief. And there, too, stood, or rather leaned over the waters, the old fir-tree, whose domain had been encroached upon by the waters; its roots were loosened, and it hung bending over the destroying element, as if even resiting with all its force the irresistible power that was drawing it downward, and which would ere long swallow it

up. She approached the tree; it was a large one, and must have stood there many years—and the wonder was, how it had contrived to resist the inclination to fall into the lake, for its weight must have been enormous, and the loosened fibers and roots must have lost much of their hold and strength in the earth. But there was the tree, and there it hung.

Mabel looked around carefully, but she could not see any one near—she felt uneasy, and again looked around with much anxiety.

"Oh, if he should not come," she muttered to herself, "and I have been brought here to endure all this misery and anxiety—but see! what is this moving? it must be him!"

She stooped low, so as to catch the figure against the water, to enable her to distinguish whether it were human or not. After a careful examination she could make out the figure of a man, who was creeping low by the bank, and coming cautiously toward her, at a slow pace. She trembled excessively, and looked around, as if to ascertain where her promised protection could come from, and clasped her hands.

"Heaven and my innocence protect and guard me!" she uttered aloud.

"Don't yer be alarmed, Miss Mabel, dear—it's only I—Brolickbones—you know. Here am I—oh, it's a nice little place that I have got here—bedad, it was made to fit me, I think."

"You. Brolickbones! where are you?" exclaimed Mabel, looking up, for the sounds seemed to come from the air above rather than anywhere else.

"Yes, Miss Mabel, dear, here I am in the tree, sure. Bedad, where would you find such a place as this to hide in, eh?"

"In the tree? Oh, you are near, then!"

"Yes, I am, dear Miss Mabel. Don't yer be frightened at the ugly brute, but hear what he has to say. I thought I'd conceal myself here, and hear all about it myself, and then I'd be down upon the wagabone like a hawk upon a wagtail."

As he spoke, Brolickbones drew himself out of the hollow of the tree, and looked out upon Mabel, who, now aware of her protector's place of concealment, felt reassured.

"I am glad you are there," she said. "The place is lonely, and I know not who comes."

"Whist, darling; do you hear anything?"

"Nothing; but I can see a man coming this way, very cautiously; he's creeping yonder by the bank. Take care he don't hear you."

"He can't do that, dear; he is a thief of the world, but he can't hear all that way; and if he should ax ye, all ye have to say is, that you thought it a good time to say yer prayers. Is he coming?"

"Yes; but very slow. He is looking and peering about in every direction, as if he were suspicious; and now he is listening and kneeling down. Perhaps he contemplates doing some deed of wickedness."

"Bedad, and if he does, he'll have an old Waterloo man a top of him in no time at all, at all. I haven't lost my old tricks of

fence yet, Miss Mabel: and I'll warrant he'll be a good man an' be once escape from me, anyhow, at all."

"Hush; he is here," said Mabel.

"Good! I'll keep an eye upon him," said Rafferty, drawing himself back into his hiding-place.

He had scarcely assumed that position when Mabel saw the man approaching toward her; she rose up, and in another moment the man made a rush and stood up before her. There was a strange emotion playing around the heart of Mabel when she saw that mysterious man standing erect before her. Her power of speech was gone, and though she was anxious to ascertain the secret of her birth, yet she found the courage that buoyed her up now fled, and a feeling of terror and even despair sat at her heart.

Mabel trembled despite the assurance she had of Rafferty's protection, as the stranger gazed upon her, and she recognized in him the same man who had before alarmed her so much in the wilderness when the faithful dog had probably been the means of saving her from his violence. But the alarm she now felt was only of a momentary character. She had made up her mind that she would give the man this meeting. It was upon a subject of by far too anxious a character for her to shrink from. She only wished that in whatever revelation he made to her, he would be quick, in order that she might the sooner free herself from the terror of his presence.

"You are punctual," he said, in a low voice.

"I want no compliments," she said. "I want no words whatever with you, but upon the subject mentioned in your note to me, for I presume it came from you. You invite me to this spot under promise of making to me a certain statement. Make it, and let me go. I begin to fear I was wrong in coming here."

"If you had not come, you would have had cause to regret it the longest day you live. Do you fancy, now, that I have taken some trouble, and more danger, to meet you here and tell you something, unless I expected something in return for the information?"

"I did not think of this," said Mabel, despairingly, "or I would not have come. I have no reward to give you."

"Do you mean to say that you are kept so close by the captain, that you have no money at all? Come, come, girl, don't tell me. You can lay your hands on some pounds, I dare say. Go back to the house, and get me what money you can. When you return, I undertake to receive it, let its amount be what it may, as a payment for the secret I—and I alone—can disclose to you."

"No," said Mabel, "no; that is a course which I cannot adopt. It is sufficient for me that you want money, and that I have none to give you. I repent already leaving my home to meet one who has nothing to tell me. If you will not commence the narrative you promised, I will return again, and forget the delusive promise which lured me here."

The man now seemed to be quite convinced that as yet there

was no chance whatever of getting her into anything like a familiar conversation, so he gave up the attempt at once, saying, in an off-hand manner, as if, after all, it mattered not to him—

"Well, well—be it so. I will now proceed to tell you the circumstances connected with your coming into the possession of Captain Morton."

By the reflected light from the surface of the lake, he could just see sufficient of the beautiful features of Mabel to be well aware that her interest was painfully excited, even if her attitude had not convinced him of that fact. In a voice to which he now evidently tried to impart solemnity and importance, he said—

"Captain Morton was lying wounded on the field of Waterloo. The fight was over, and he had no prospect but to die a lingering death on that plain of carnage, when one, who to all appearance was worse hurt than he, contrived to crawl close to him, and in agonized accents to speak."

Poor Mabel breathed thickly, and a faintness came over her, as she strove to say, without being able,

"And—that was my father."

The sound she uttered was too inarticulate to be understood, and Solme continued his story, the truth from the falsehood of which the reader, from his pre-knowledge of the circumstances, will be easily able to detect.

"This wounded man had in his arms a young child, in fact, a mere infant, and believing himself, in consequence of the severe nature of his wounds, to be at the point of death, he sought to place that infant in the first apparently kind and friendly hands he could find. He spoke to Captain Morton. He implored him by every tie of humanity, human and divine, to save the child from death upon that blood-stained field. The wounded Captain Morton accepted the trust."

"Yes, yes; and he who gave it him?"

"Dropped insensible upon the field of carnage, satisfied that he had done what he could under the circumstances for that child, who was his only care. Captain Morton was taken up by the British forces and carefully attended to at Brussels. He brought the child to England with him, and from that time forthwith he has, by all means in his power, sought to prevent those who had a right to know from hearing if she were alive or dead. I need not say, Mabel, that you are the child."

"But tell me—Did he who gave the charge to Captain Morton live to know how nobly Morton had fulfilled his trust? Tell me that, and I will thank you from my soul."

"He was your father."

"My heart told me so. Oh, tell me, lives he now? Tell me that. Having told me so much, it would be fiendlike to tell me no more. Yet stay, why do I implore so much of you? Captain Morton, finding what I know, will now tell me all. Yes, he, my second parent—he who has so nobly filled the place of father in my heart, he will now tell me all."

"Hold! There is one difficulty in the way of Captain Morton

telling you more than I have now told you. He does not know more, although he dreads more. I am the only living soul in the world who can give you the information you require. I am the only human being who can bring forward proofs that what I assert is no fable. I tell you, Mabel, that from my lips you must hear all, or never hear it."

"Can you," she said, "withhold such information from a daughter who longs to know if her father lives? Oh, if you have a heart susceptible of feeling, think what must be the anxiety I am now enduring! I have for many years been anxious to learn the fate of my father—that father whom I have not known or seen since I was able to distinguish form or feature. Tell me, I implore—I entreat of you, tell me, does he yet live?"

The man seemed moved; at least a sigh escaped him, and he seemed to feel the appeal. Mabel seized the favorable impression, and proceeded—

"Oh, do not let your heart be hardened; let it feel some of those tender sympathies which it must at one time, at least, have felt, and which it will again. Tell me, oh, tell me, does my father yet live?"

There was a pause, and the man, who had listened to her with a downcast look, suddenly raised his eyes to her face, and, in low accents, he said:

"He does live."

"He does live!" exclaimed Mabel, clasping her hands; a flash of joy for the moment illumined her countenance. "Tell me, I again implore you; do not leave me in this state of suspense. Complete the information you have given—tell me who my father is—tell me where he is, and I shall forever bless and pray for you."

"Ah!" said the man, "you know not what you ask; you know not the consequences of such knowledge."

"I care not; all I wish is for my father; my own, my dear father."

"I say again, you know not what you ask; the knowledge may bring with it pain and sorrow. Your father, though still living, may be poor—he may be too proud to work—he may be —in short, he may be sought by hungry creditors, who seek him with the avidity of a wolf seeking its prey."

"I would stand between him and them. They should not touch my father. I would love and revere him, despite all the world."

"But suppose he should be stained with crime. Suppose——"

"Hold! he could not be, I am sure. I feel a moral presentiment come over me that such a man is not my father."

"Then you know your father?"

"I know his heart. It must be good—it must be honorable."

"And would you really know all this, in despite all I have said—all the warnings I have uttered on this subject?"

"For what came I hear but to learn all this—to know what he is—to find, indeed, to find my parent?"

"Well, then Mabel, you shall know it; you shall learn this

secret, though I would have spared you the knowledge. Look up, Mabel, look up; behold me—I am your father!"

"You!" screamed Mabel, tottering back a few paces; "you my father!"

"Yes, I am he. I told you you might be sorry to find him—am I right? I told you the consequences of this knowledge might be unexpected—they are. You must now come with me; you are my child, and, now you know your parent, you must not, shall not, be separated from me."

"Oh! no, no; I cannot—cannot leave Mr. Morton thus. I must go and inform him. He must know all, too."

"You must come now," and he seized her arm. Mabel fell to the earth.

"Thunder and smoke!" bawled Brolickbones from the tree; "be aisy, and be after laving Miss Mabel alone, or I'll be among you in no time at all."

The mendicant started, and looked up in the tree. He immediately guessed the cause, for he saw the Irishman struggling to free himself, and had nearly done so, swearing all the while, to keep Mabel in heart. Quick as thought the mendicant placed his foot on the trunk of the tree, and then giving it a jerk with his whole might, the already tottering trunk came with a loud splash into the water, with Brolickbones and all. Then turning to the wood, he called aloud to some one, saying:

"Ho, there, Ned! now is the time. Come, be quick, there is no one near, all is right."

In another moment a man came forward toward him, and both stood by the form of Mabel as she sat near where the tree so lately stood.

The sudden immersion of Rafferty Brolickbones in the water was an event that had not entered into the calculations of that individual.

However, such was the fact—there was the tree and there was the water, and a strong arm had plunged both him and the tree into the stream, and it so happened that the stream which flowed through the piece of ornamental water or lake, came away close to that side, and beneath where the grass grew it was very deep and the stream was very strong, and hence it had worn away the bank.

When Brolickbones felt himself suddenly plunged by the force of the fall into the water, he came up with a great "Ah!" and much spluttering, and it was some moments before he could ascertain where he was.

During this time the mendicant, as we have already described, had sufficient time to effect his purpose—that of carrying off Mabel, by the aid of his companion, Newington Ned.

It was some time before Brolickbones could so far free his head from the branches of the tree and the water as to look around him, or before he could recognize the spot where he had been thrown, for the tree which had so strongly marked the spot was gone, and he scarce knew how to recognize it; but when he did, he saw that no one was near it.

"Ochone!" he exclaimed, in tones of regret and lamentation;

"och, murder! I'll be kilt entirely; and poor Miss Mabel, the ugly thief of a mendicant has stolen her away. Oh, by Jasus, but I'm a pretty defender and protector, sure enough; and how did I then come to let myself be circumvented in this manner? Sure, the French never came over me in this manner; sure enough the battle had gone wrong, anyhow, if that had been the case."

Rafferty Brolickbones struggled against difficulties of more than one character; the fact was, he had not entirely got clear of the trunk of the tree, and it was only with great difficulty that he got his head free from the mass, and kept it above the water.

"Och, murder!" he exclaimed. more than once, "and am I caught in this manner, to be drowned like a rat in a trap? Was it for this, faith, I came here to take care of Miss Mabel? It was a mistake altogether; I'll never be caught in the like trap again. Where's Miss Mabel?—oh, the ugly thief that upset the tree and me in it!—sure he's no manners. I wonder where they have got to?"

By dint of much thrusting he at length got free from the tree, and after many vain attempts, succeeded in reaching the shore.

"Murder! murder!" he exclaimed; "the black devil has carried off Mabel, after all. Oh, murder—murder! what'll I do now?"

CHAPTER XIX.

Troubled Tom, always in difficulties, always disturbed, and invariably troubled to the last degree, slowly wended his way toward the village churchyard, there to seek the repose that so many were laid there to enjoy without any trouble. He entered the churchyard, and began to look about for a convenient and out-of-the-way place, where he could lie without any disturbance whatever; and just as he got what he thought was a nice place, he thought he heard a groan. Tom listened, but not hearing it repeated, he said,

"Oh, 'tis just the way with them! I dare say I shall be disturbed, no doubt of it. Well, here goes; I'll lie down by this tomb. The old lady was dumb, and she, therefore, made no noise; and the infant under the other is said to slumber sweetly. Let me see if in such company I can sleep awhile without any more disturbance. Once in a night is enough to be disturbed; but that's less than my share. Oh, dear, what a place of trouble this world is surely—it's a trouble to come in, a trouble to go out, and a trouble, a long trouble, to stay in. Well, for my part, I can't see the use of being born, if it's only to be troubled in this manner; but they know most about it, and it's too much trouble to think any more. I shall lie down once more, and sleep if I can."

Troubled Tom had scarce laid down before he heard the same hollow groan which he heard before, and which was this time much louder than before.

"I thought as much," thought Tom. "No peace even in the

grave; there's somebody moaning and groaning. Well, what's to come to us if we can't even sleep here in quiet? Why, even the grave-stones tell lies."

Another groan came full upon his ear, and Troubled Tom rose up and listened, when it was repeated several times.

"Oh," said Tom, "somebody else is in trouble. I dare say nobody's without their troubles. Well, let's see what it is, for I can't sleep here with that groaning in my ears."

He rose, and going to the spot where he thought the sounds came from, he came to the rubbish that had been hastily kicked before the secret entrance to the vault by the mendicant before he left the churchyard in the officer's apparel.

The groans came fast, and there were some other noises, too, below, indicative that there was a living human being down there.

"Oh," thought Troubled Tom, "I never knew of this place before. Here's where the gentleman is lodged, eh? Won't Jem be glad?—he'll be pleased enough. This is the gentleman that gave him so much trouble, and who nearly smashed my stomach. Oh, oh! very well,—for poor Jem's sake I must take some trouble in this affair, which will not end for months. I would I could only give a guess when it will be all over. Oh, it's a terrible trouble to do anybody a good turn."

Tom now left the churchyard, by the wicket gate, and slowly wended his way to the Morton Arms, where he found Jem, the hostler, to whom he had related all that he had seen and heard.

Jem, to whom this information was of the highest importance, instantly set about getting together a few stout hands, and then some cords; the constable was sent for, and the sexton, in all making a company of nine or ten men. They were all ready, and set out at once for the churchyard, which they soon reached, and the party became silent and grave; there was a kind of awe creeping over them, and Jem and Tom were the first to enter the churchyard, and then the rest followed. They had scarcely gone a dozen steps when their ears were saluted by a loud groan; they started, and some of them looked pale.

"That's him," said Tom, "this way—here, beneath this window."

"Why, that's the very spot," muttered Jem to himself, "that I saw him disappear, and couldn't tell what had become of him."

"And here's the hole," said Tom, pointing to the ill-concealed aperture, down which Sam Lewis, the cunning Bow street officer, had been thrust with such unceremoniousness.

They immediately set about clearing the aperture, and then it was seen a man could dash down with ease and safety.

"This, then," thought Jem, "is the secret of the sudden disappearance: but now we shall have the man himself."

"Who's to go down first?" said Tom.

"You," said the constable.

"Oh, dear, no," said Tom; "I ain't a-going to give myself so much trouble."

"It's the sexton's place," said the constable.

"I know my place better," growled the sexton, "than to turn thief-catcher. Come, come, master constable, you who have the strong arm of the law to help you, you go down and take your man."

"I'm afraid there's no respect to person, or the strong arm of the law."

"Give me a torch," said Jem. He took one. "Now, follow me." And in another moment he stood in the vault beneath.

However, in going down, he jumped on the prostrate form of a man, who uttered a wild shout with the breath that was suddenly forced out of his body.

"Murder! help!" shouted the officer; "help! help! murder!"

"What's the matter?" shouted the constable without.

"Come down," said Jem.

Some one who stood behind him gave him a push, and in another moment he too had put his weight on the body of the Bow street officer.

Tom followed and the others too, and when they stood in the vault, Jem seized hold of the officer, and turned him over and over, and then said:

"Why, who have we here? This fat man isn't the man. How came you here?"

"Who are you?" inquired the officer.

"Come, come, my fine fellow," said the constable, "we'll hang you on the old elm tree outside here if you resist or are insolent."

"I am not going to resist. For God's sake, tell me who you all are."

"That would be a long catalogue; but I am constable, and intend to secure you."

"Constable?"

"Yes."

"Well—there, there—I'm a Bow-street officer, and I command you, in the king's name, to aid and assist me."

"Well, I'm darned!" said the constable, bursting out into a loud roar, in which he was joined by all present, "if this ain't the clever man that's come all the way from London to find out a hole in the churchyard; well, I'm darned! But cheer up, old cock, it's well there's other people in the world besides yourself, or you'd have been left to starve on old bones."

"How came you here?" said Jem.

"I'm hanged if I know; but I didn't come here of myself, you may depend upon it."

"Somebody got the better on you," said the rural constable. "And then, to secure you, put you down here?"

"Yes; and took all my clothes—save such as you see—and my staff."

"Well, that's the effect of catching a tartar—eh? But, come, let's undo him, lads; he's been long enough here, poor devil. A —a—officer must have his eyes open to take care of himself here, much less to make a prisoner."

The officer made no reply; he was conscious he looked very ridiculous, and merely availed himself of the rough but honest courtesy of the rustics. Thus they all left the yard together,

amid much wonder and merriment, and made their way toward the Morton Arms, promising the discomfited officer a glass of something so hot and strong that he would forget all his troubles in drinking it.

CHAPTER XX.

WHEN the mendicant, aided by dashing Ned of Newington, had placed Mabel on horseback, they soon served themselves with the like means of flight, which they had taken care to provide themselves with, and in waiting but a short distance from the spot where the meeting was to take place.

It was not long before they quitted the spot; indeed they were soon huried amongst the trees, for the mendicant led them through a path that was just practicable for them, though not without difficulty and disagreeahleness; but then it had this advantage, it led immediately from the spot through a covered and hidden track to a cross-road—one that would lead them clear of the neighborhood, without any risk of meeting with anybody.

For some time Mabel was in a state'of stupefaction and insensibility. Her feelings had received a severe shock, and she was almost stunned: in fact, she was not cognizant of what was going on around her. Without being perfectly in a trance or fainting fit, she was perfectly passive, and seemed incapable of thought or action.

It took her some time to recover from the stunning shock she had received, and before she had completely done so she had been carried some five miles from the place where the scene took place near the lake. In the meanwhile, the mendicant and his companion rode by her side, and urged their horses over every obstacle that came in their way, and exchanging every now and then a few sentences whenever their position required it, or there seemed leisure to indulge in conversation.

"Well," said Ned, "you have done it, at all events; this will be a good haul for you. I wish I had been in your shoes when you came to think of this job."

"I dare say; but, you know—and we are not all alike—if I have my lucky moment now, you have had yours, and if not, you may have. I have had more than ordinary risk in this affair, and it ought to pay well."

"Where will you stop to-night?"

"Upon the common."

"I see—a very good place; it's one of the right sort of cribs, that."

They now came to a bank, down which they descended with much care and caution; they succeeded in getting through a ditch also, and then they were all three on the hard, firm roadway—a cross-road, to be sure, but then in half an hour's riding, at the most, they would enter the main road.

The night was perfectly fine, but there was but little moon, and that had not made its appearance. There was a white mist that hung low on the ground—heavy and wet, and made everything look gloomy and dark. Now and then, as they came to

a little rising ground, they would rise above the mist, and could then see across the ocean of white vapor that lay on the earth. The tree-tops could be seen plainly, while their lower halves were completely and entirely lost to the eye; even the road itself could not be well distinguished.

"This is a pleasant night," said Ned, "and has but one drawback."

"And what is that?"

"Why, the fog is so thick you can cut it with a knife."

They had come very near the high road, and Mabel, who had hitherto been passive and silent, now somewhat recovered the shock her nerves and mind had received. Thought once more was active, and her brain seemed to recover from a pressure that had been depriving her of the power of reflection, and of receiving any impressions from objects around her. By degrees, however, she began to reflect upon her situation. The speed, mysterious manner, and everything else connected with the journey, made her shudder, and more than once caused her to put the question to herself of:

"Am I right in thus obeying a man who tells me he is my father, and hurries me off against my will?"

She considered awhile; she began to reflect on the possible change that would take place in her home. What could such a man as that desire of her than to make some use of her—to serve some bad purpose and to gain some evil object?

All these things made a strange and strong impression on her mind; the idea, too, of being forced away from those whom she supposed, with good reason, to regard her with kindness and affection; and she could not help saying to herself:

"Such a man can never be my father; and yet he seems to be so—he is able to tell me many things that I could not otherwise know. I have no witnesses to say he is not my father, and yet his having the means of knowing what Captain Morton knows, seems to argue that more knowledge is possessed by him. But no; I will not believe it; and yet if it were, what love or affection can he feel when he tears me away from such friends as Captain Morton? No, no: I will not submit—I will resist. I may fail, but I shall have the satisfaction of knowing I have given no consent to this proceeding."

They entered the main road and put their horses to a good canter, and as the night was yet dark and misty they could see nothing; but suddenly they were startled by the sound of the horn of the guard of a coach that was evidently coming toward them.

"D——n them!" muttered the mendicant. "Keep close, Ned," he added.

"I'm here; keep on the right side, and ride on, else we may get a scrape with the coach wheels."

The horn again sounded, and the coach wheels now could be heard close at hand, and the lamps gave out a dim light.

"Now," thought Mabel, "this may be my only chance; they cannot disregard my cries, and these men will not attempt to

keep me by force. Help! help! for mercy's sake help! and save me from these men."

"D——n!" said Ned, of Newington, "who would have thought of this? Be quiet, will you, or I'll stun you with my stick."

"Help! help! in mercy, help!"

"Hilloa!" said the coachman, in a gruff voice; "stop them. What's the matter?"

"Go on, my fire-fly with red wings, you are a pretty fellow to stop when you have his majesty's mails ahout you."

"Save me—save me from these men, who are dragging me I know not whither."

"Come, come, there!" said the guard; "if you don't halt and give me less of your gammon, I'll put a hullet through you!"

"Hold hard, Ned," said the mendicant; "let the man in red get down; I can satisfy him."

"Help! Do not leave me here with these men, who have seized me against my will, and are taking me away from my friends."

"What are they doing with you?" inquired an outside passenger.

"They have torn me from my friends hy main force, and are now carrying me away, I cannot tell where. Save me, in pity's sake; Captain Morton will reward you well, I am sure."

"Come, just give up the young lady, you rascals, or I must make you," said the guard, getting down, with a pistol in one hand and a lantern in the other.

"I have had too much trouhle to catch her to think of it."

"What do you mean?"

"That she's an escaped lunatic—very dangerous indeed at times, and never safe with any implement she can do mischief with; she has killed two children hy putting pins in their eyes."

"Good God!" exclaimed the guard; "hut where's your authority? You seem in a queer plight; you look like a beggar on horseback."

"And so would you if you had been as roughly handled as I have been; and as for my authority, why, here it is."

As he spoke he pulled out the staff he had taken from the cunning officer, and thrust it into the guard's mouth.

"Well," exclaimed the irritated guard, "you needn't cram it down my throat. I didn't ask you for anything to eat."

"Well, hut here's my authority."

"You be d——d and your authority. I don't wonder at the poor thing being sorry to go back, if this is the kind of usage she gets."

"I assure you," said Mahel, who had been completely thrown off her guard hy the cool and ready assurance of these ruffians, for she felt convinced that she had but to make such an appeal as this, and they would fly. "I can assure you," said Mahel, "that all they have said is utterly false. These men are two criminals, and have seized me, and are bearing me away against my will. Save me, for pity's sake! As you are men, lodge

me in any place of safety till the morning, and let inquiries be made."

"Our time won't allow us to do that," said the guard.

"Of course," said Ned, "she's got her tale, but we are responsible for her safe custody until we deliver her up into proper hands."

"What has she done, young man?" said a female voice inside the coach.

"She's a dangerous lunatic, ma'am," said Ned. "She has got a horrid propensity for pushing out children's and babies' eyes with the handles of tea-spoons, and putting in bulls' eyes instead, and then telling 'em not to cry."

"Oh, poor things, poor things, poor things!" said the guard, in a tone of mock condolence. "Push along, George—all right. We can't do any good."

And again went the horn with its sonorous sounds.

"Chip, chip," said the coachman, and smack went the whip, and they started off in the same direction as before. The wheels grated over the hard road, and the whole machine was out of sight in a very few minutes.

Mabel's heart sunk within her when she saw the entire failure of her attempt to escape from the presence of those men. She heard the sounds of the wheels, and the tramp of the horses' feet, and the sound of the horn, all decreasing with a melancholy and dejected air. She could not but look upon this as the most complete and entire proof of the power these men held over her.

"There," said Dashing Ned, "you see it's no use your kicking and squealing like an eel that's going to be skinned, and would much rather not."

"What motive can you have for tearing me away from those who have been friends—my parents to me, and are, indeed, the only ones that I know of?"

"But I can tell you more than you already know, if I choose, but I have my reasons for doing what I do, and am not inclined to argue the matter with you. That will do for the present. You are my child, and I have power over you, and will exert that power. Rest satisfied, for nothing more will I now say to you. Another time and place, and I may argue this question with you, but not now. Ned, push on."

"With all my heart," said Ned; "for to tell you the truth, I am very tired of sitting here, and my whiskers all dripping wet; and, moreover, it isn't the pleasantest prospect, you know."

They put their horses into a round canter, and rode for some distance without meeting with any obstacle to impede them in their progress, or give them any uneasiness. Dashing Ned, of Newington, rode close by the side of Mabel, or a little behind, and the mendicant rode close by her, with her bridle in his hand, so that her horse was entirely under his control, and she could make no effort to escape.

"We shall not be very long," he said to the mendicant, "before we get to the Moonrakers and a good job, too."

"Yes, in about another mile and a half we shall come to the road that leads across the common, and then we are safe,"

When Mabel saw the coach pass on, she gave a look full of despair and grief as she said:

"Alas! will no one befriend me? Am I, indeed, so far in that man's power that no one will stand between me and misery?"

"None, Mabel, none," whispered the mendicant, as he turned his horse's head, and again placed himself beside her.

Mabel had no power; she felt there was a mystery hanging about her and her destiny, and she thought there was no help; she could not escape. Dejected and dispirited, she sat on the horse, held on one side by the mendicant, and on the other side by his companion, Dashing Ned.

"Now," said Ned, "we ought to gag her."

"No," said the mendicant, "we have no need; this little staff, with the brass handle at the top, is a perfect treasure, a complete talisman. There is no need of gagging her, this will gag anybody."

"It's a rare piece of gag altogether," said Ned.

"So it is. They may as well have it, they are so fond of it."

"To be sure; when shall we be at the Moonrakers? I'm hanged if I can tell where we are."

"Not far from the road that leads to the right on to the open common."

"And a pretty state of fog and mist that will be in, I'll warrant."

"It may."

"It will, you mean."

"Never mind. Push on, we needn't trouble ourselves about that; we must go through with it, and I have seen nothing to cause us to shrink, and, by Heaven, I will not."

"Bravo! You always were an out-an'-outer; you'll prosper."

"Well, time will show, Ned. I have seen a few things, and we musn't expect too long a lease. 'There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft to keep watch.'"

"Oh, yes, Newgate and eight o'clock, Monday morning—how pleasant! That will do; you have become jolly all of a sudden—jolly disagreeable, I mean: but is this the place?"

"Yes, turn up here, Ned," said the mendicant, with a glance of hatred at his companion; "here we are at the Moonrakers."

"All right," answered Ned, not noticing his look.

The moon now rose and cast a gentle light upon the scene; the deep-blue vault of heaven was studded with stars; the whole firmament was spangled with these transparant and sparkling luminaries. All was quiet and still. Not a sound disturbed the scene, and the chill night air now and then disturbed the calmness of the evening.

The Moonrakers' public-house was a strange old house, of a rambling and indiscriminate kind of architecture; indeed, it occupied a vast extent of ground for such a building—it was extremely rambling, apparently composed of three or four old houses, differing in height, size and make, so that it was sometimes difficult to tell which was the one end from the other. Some of it was brick, and some old flintstone, of which there

was plenty in the immediate vicinity. Some parts were tiled, while others were thatched, and then some parts were larger than others, more spread out, and some much higher; so, at a distance, it seemed like so many houses built together for security sake. The house was surrounded by a large quantity of out-houses, pig-styes, stables, and sheds, and then a large yard, pound, and fencings. The house was admirably well adapted to its use, and that was but very little known or understood, save among the initiated.

"Hilloa—hilloa—hilloa!" cried Dashing Ned of Newington.

"How's the moon?" cried a deep, gruff voice, as the door opened, and a big burly-looking man came out.

"She's not in a well," was the reply.

"Some of the brothers——"

"That's the time of night. How are the lads of the moon?"

"Out-an'-outer's—quite men in the moon."

"That's your sort: there never was a time when I felt more pleased to see your door open. Is there always a white fog kept on hand in this part of the country?"

"It's pretty stiff to-night; but, never mind, Ned, you can make it all right by the fire, and your whiskers will curl again."

"D——d if I think they will. However, bear a hand, and see after the nags; we have somebody to take care of, and shall want your assistance to keep all right and tight till we can move on again; and nobody must see nobody; do you understand, man in the moon?"

"Yes, I comprehend. Come in, or the patrol will be by soon, and he will be asking questions."

"Very good—as quick as you like."

They all dismounted and stood in the yard. The landlord took the horses by their bridles and led them to a small and private stable, which they were turned into, a wisp of straw was rubbed over them, and then securing them for the night, he gave them some good hard food and left the stable to return to the house.

"Now," said the mendicant, as he took Mabel and forcibly led her toward the house, "from this place it is very unlikely you can escape; however, I will sit and talk a little with you, and I have much to say, but not at this moment. In the meantime, of course there's no harm intended you."

"Alas! I know not what to think," said Mabel. "Why do you wish to take me away from my friends? I would be with them, and nowhere else—this is truly distressing."

Mabel ceased to speak; and Ned, turning to the mendicant, said,—

"You are not going to stay outside, are you? besides, I hear the sounds of horses' feet at a distance. We are better inside, a great deal. Come, come in."

The mendicant compelled Mabel to follow Dashing Ned in, while he himself followed Mabel, not leaving her for a moment.

The house into which they now entered could not have been understood by any one under something like a twelvemonths'

residence to qualify him to understand its various ins and outs, and in this consisted its great utility to the owners.

They entered a passage, and walked but a few yards down, when Dashing Ned of Newington opened a door and entered a sitting-room, a kind of kitchen, in which was a large fireplace and a fire that shed a genial warmth over the apartment, while they could hear the huge logs crackle on the hearth, and the roar of the flames as they rushed up the large chimney. Ned closed the door, while the mendicant wondered where he was till the landlord came with a light, and then he said:

"Now, then, let me have a safe crib to stow my prize in, who is a little refractory, and safe keeping is an object."

"You shall be accommodated," said the landlord, in a deep, gruff voice, "come along."

They followed him further back into the house, and then they came to a curiously-fitted door, which, in fact, seemed but an artificial opening, that would have escaped the most careful scrutiny, so carefully was it done, and so well favored by the peculiar position of the place as regarded light.

"Go in," said the landlord.

"Come, Mabel, 'tis useless to question the landlord; he will tell you he cannot interfere in matters that don't concern him."

"Yes," said the landlord; "I never interfere in another person's business, so tumble in. The place is snug enough, and only wants a contented mind to make any one perfectly happy and at home in it."

"God help me," sighed Mabel, "for man will not—I am helpless."

She accordingly walked through the opening, for she could not resist; she would have suffered violence, and they would have carried her through, and she could not bear the idea of even being touched by these men. The tears trickled down her cheeks, as she walked up the stairs, followed closely by the landlord and that mysterious and fearful man, the mendicant.

She went up two pair of stairs, and at the landing of either was a strong door that was painted over the same as the wall, to prevent the ascent of any one they did not wish to enter. Besides, the second door on each landing was so much like the wall, that it would be difficult to distinguish it. This prevented either the ascent or descent of sounds; so, if a refractory person were hidden there, and the officers were below searching, they would be deceived, and believe they were on a wrong scent. After the second landing, he went along a little passage, and then opening the door, he entered the apartment, saying:

"You must make yourself easy here for a time; you shall have a fire, and that will give you light and warmth."

She entered a small apartment, at one end of which was a stone fireplace, and in it placed sufficient fuel, to which the landlord set a light, and in a few moments it began to roar up the chimney.

"Here," said the mendicant. "you must remain; and let me tell you, you had better take things kindly, because if not you

will only compel me to act harshly, when I would not do so but for the necessity."

He left the room as the landlord entered with some few refreshments, which he spread upon a small table, saying:

"Eat, drink and be merry, my pretty bird; it will do you good, and thou art not overburdened with too many good things."

"Tell me, in mercy's sake, who that strange, mysterious man is."

"What, the gentleman who just went out, my dear, as I came in?" laying emphasis on the word gentleman.

"Yes, the man who brought me here."

"I know nothing of the person you speak of; I never had occasion to ask him his name; we give no trust here, and therefore he may have a name as long as an endless chain, and I should know nothing about it."

Mabel sank into a chair when the landlord said this, and burst into a flood of tears. She was unable to control them, and they flowed plenteously.

The landlord exhorted her to partake of the food he had brought and placed before her; but she made him no reply, and he quitted the room, leaving her to herself.

The landlord and the mendicant then returned the way they came, and entered the room in which were assembled a large concourse of guests, much greater than would have been generally supposed at all likely to have come together in such an out-of-the-way place.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE discovery of the disappearance of Mabel created, as may be easily imagined, the greatest consternation and distress at Morton Hall. Captain Morton, besides sustaining his own grief, had also the double task of speaking hope and comfort to his wife, whose agony was of a most alarming character, and of consoling Henry, who was in a state bordering almost upon insanity.

Messengers were dispatched in every direction, in search of her; but they returned, one after another, with looks and gestures indicative of the most profound sorrow at their want of success.

At length one of the grooms, who had been of the searching party, sent up word on his return, that he had something to communicate to his master, and was at once admitted into the parlor.

"Well, Robert," said Captain Morton, "have you made any discovery?"

"I don't know, sir, whether to call it a discovery or not. I was searching along the banks of the lake, where the old fir tree used to stand that has been for the last two or three years tumbling into the water, and found it had gone at last."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, sir, and about that spot there were evident marks of

footsteps. Upon searching more narrowly, I found this glove."

"It is Mabel's," cried Mrs. Morton.

"Yes—yes," said Henry, as he eagerly snatched from the man's hand this sad memorial of her he loved. "Yes, it is Mabel's. Now, God help her, what has been her fate?"

"Hush! Henry, hush!" said Captain Morton; "let us hear what more Robert has to say to us."

"Of course, sir," added Robert. "I was not then content until I had examined all about the spot so thoroughly as to be convinced that nothing there had escaped my observation. And I did not search in vain. Some few paces further on, I found this paper. It was trampled upon, and seemed as if some one had in the hurry of the scuffle dropped it unknowingly."

Robert handed a folded paper to Captain Morton, who, before he opened it, said to the groom:

"Have you any more to say?"

"No, sir."

"Very good, Robert; you can go."

When they were alone again, Captain Morton opened the paper with trembling hands, while Henry and Mrs. Morton waited eagerly to know what were its contents, for it seemed to be written nearly all over on its inner side.

"What says it?" inquired Henry, eagerly,—"what says it?"

"Hush! be calm," said his brother; "be assured that I will read to you every word of it."

He glanced his eye down the page, and then he said, "This is not a letter. It seems to be a paper of instructions given to some one. It is written evidently by some person of education, and——"

"It concerns Mabel?" said Henry.

"It does—it does. The mystery of this transaction thickens indeed. We cannot reconcile this with anything that has occurred. Listen."

Captain Morton read from the paper as follows:

"There can be no manner of doubt that it was an English officer to whom the child was committed on the battle-field; but whether he died of his wounds, and so was compelled reluctantly, no doubt, to abandon the sacred trust that was reposed in him, or recovered to fulfill it, of course I have no means of knowing. His name was Morton, or Meriton, or Moreton, or some name extremely similar. What his rank in the English army was we do not know. You will, however, upon repairing to England, most probably find sources of information open to you, of which we are here ignorant; and what appears now so troublesome an affair may be made easy enough. And now let me implore you, and yet I feel that to such as you I need not do so, to proceed with the greatest delicacy and caution. Our object is the happiness of that child of destiny, and not to overwhelm her with any misery. God forbid that we should dream of harshly tearing her from the arms of those who may have been to her all that the tenderest parents could be.

"But it is in vain for mortals to calculate upon all the chances

of fortune. There are several considerations which make this pilgrimage upon which you are going a most holy one.

"In the first place, with all the will to do so, this English officer may not have had the power to be to that child all that he might wish. In the second place, he may, from the very nature of his profession, have been compelled to depute to others the duty, which having himself undertaken, he otherwise would gladly and honorably himself have superintended. And in the third place, as a very remote supposition indeed, he may possibly have tired of his charge.

"I say this is a very remote possibility; for the man who, under such sad and distressful circumstances as he was in upon that sanguinary field of battle would, in the manner he did, make the generous promise he did, is not a likely man to tire in its performance.

"Therefore, you will understand, my dear F., why it is that I regard this as a very remote supposition indeed, and do not allow it for one moment to vex me, or cause me a pang of uneasiness.

"There is one other state of things which may have ensued, and which, of course, would be an answer to all inquiries—she may be dead! The lives of young creatures such as she was are precarious; and how long she had to remain on the field of battle in charge of that wounded man, who could not help himself, I know not; or what accidents she may have been exposed to.

"When these thoughts press upon me, I feel all the sadness of my situation. Then it is that I feel that depression of the heart which you have so often noticed in me, and retire to shed those tears in secret, the traces of which you tell me you have frequently seen upon my cheeks.

"And now, dear F., understand me. It is not death that appalls me; it is not the fear that she may be dead that strikes such a chill to my heart. Oh, no! it is the uncertainty whether she be so or not. It is the agony of suspense which unmans me. If I knew the worst, I should be calm.

"And now, dear F., I think you know nearly all that I can tell you, to guide you in your search. When she was given into the charge of that generous Englishman, she had a small pelisse trimmed with white fur on her, and around her neck was the little locket you have so often heard me describe to you. I think she will have her dear mother's eyes. I have pleased myself with the hope that she will, dear F.

"And now Heaven prosper you on this pilgrimage you have, for my sake, undertaken. My prayers will always be with you, and if you find her very happy, leave her so, and come and tell me. I will then visit her, and hold her to my heart and bless her; but she shall not find my affection selfish. I will not tear her from those she loves to those whom she knows not, let them love her ever so tenderly. Heaven bless all who have been kind to her.

"Remember, the name I think is Morton. May the blessing of Heaven always attend you, and that you may return to me

with the joyous tidings that she whom my heart has so long yearned for is happy, is my prayer. Now go, my dear F., my heart is with you."

* * * * * * *

Not the least sound was uttered by either Mrs. Morton or Henry while Captain Morton was reading. The simple and affecting language in which this code of instructions which the paper contained was couched, irresistibly claimed their attention to it; and, when the captain ceased reading, and with a deep sigh laid down the paper, they felt a pang of disappointment that there was no more in the same strain.

"That is all," said the captain.

There was a dead silence for several moments. Mrs. Morton was visibly affected, and Henry, as well as his brother, was so bewildered in the mental attempt to reconcile the sentiments in this paper with the abduction of Mabel, that they knew not what to say. It was Henry now who first spoke, and he cried:

"Good Heavens, what are we to think? The writer of this paper, and the agent to whom be has written it, are not the hands into which our poor Mabel has fallen."

"No," said Mrs. Morton, "nor can it be possible that that mendicant can be known to have any connection with such people."

"I fear not, indeed," said Captain Morton. "The tone of this writing is such that not one of us would have regretted to see its author come to us and claim Mabel as his own child. There is sound judgment in it—correct feeling; in every line there breathe the sentiments of a man of good feeling and profound philanthropy. Oh, if such an one as he who wrote these words had come to bless Mabel with the news that she had a father living, no one would have hailed his presence with more delight than I should."

"Nor I—nor I," said Henry. "Who is this F.?"

"Heaven knows."

"What are we to think? There is a mystery in all this which defies all conjecture. The person to whom this letter is addressed cannot be that man who has filled the neighborhood with terror in consequence of the frightful crime he has committed, and who visited you here?"

Mrs. Morton suddenly clasped her hands, and uttered an exclamation of grief which alarmed both her husband and Henry.

They at once flew to her, and begged her to say what sudden thought distressed her. All she did for some moments was to wring her hands and exclaim, in frantic accents:

"Oh, my poor Mabel—my poor Mabel!"

"Tell us—oh, tell us," said her husband, "what sudden thought or conviction has given rise to this fearful agony of apprehension."

Mrs. Morton's tears fell fast as she sobbed:

"The worst thought of all—oh, the worst of all! Does it not strike you—does it not occur to you, with all the force of truth

that this young traveler, who was murdered so cruelly at the inn, is he who in that paper is named F.? Oh, does it not come across your minds with all the force of a horrible conviction that such is the case? The mendicant has murdered him, and, from among the stolen papers he took from the chamber of his victim, he has acquired the information concerning Mabel which has enabled him probably to impose upon her judgment. Oh, Heaven, have mercy upon our poor Mabel! She is now in the blood-stained hands of a murderer! She is lost—lost to us forever!"

Such was the agony of grief into which this cruel, but extremely probable, conviction had thrown Mrs. Morton, that after uttering these words, she fainted away, and every other consideration was forced, for the moment, to be put aside, in the anxiety of Captain Morton to see her conveyed in safety to her own chamber.

Henry remained in the parlor, with his head resting upon his hands, and in such a bewildered agony of thought as regarded the situation of her whom he loved to such an extent of devotion beyond his power of expression, that, once or twice, he almost thought he should go distracted. He had the greatest difficulty to keep himself from rushing out of the house like a lunatic, shouting the name of Mabel, and calling upon all mankind to assist him in finding out her hiding-place. But he did, for a wonder, succeed in restraining himself from so heedless an act, and in waiting till his brother, the captain, after seeing Mrs. Morton partially restored, came into the parlor again, looking so pale, and agitated, and ill, that scarcely any one who had only seen him in the glow of robust health the day before, would have recognized him as the same individual.

Henry sprung to his feet the moment he saw Captain Morton enter the room, and in a voice which proclaimed the state of agony he was in mentally, he cried:

'Brother, we are now convinced that Mabel is in the hands of a ruffian, the suggestion of your aunt cannot be gainsaid. It has about it too terrible a probability—it must be true. Each moment's reflection adds a world of confirmation to it. Let me now go at once, I pray you, on my pilgrimage in search of her whom I will find, and rescue from the thralldom which now surrounds her, or myself perish in the attempt."

"I will not delay you now," said Captain Morton, "all I ask of you is to be careful to communicate often with me, for some information may turn up in this neighborhood that may guide you. You shall go by the first dawn of daylight, Henry, and you shall go with ample means."

"Thank you, brother, thank you. I—I cannot say all I would; my heart is too full."

"I deserve no thanks, Henry. Do you go and snatch some repose now, while you can, and leave all the preparations for your departure to me. You will have need of all the physical energy you can bring to bear upon the matter: and always remember that by acting systematically, you will go through much more fatigue, than by destroying your natural rest, and suffer-

ing yourself to be too much led away by your feelings of intense anxiety."

"Do not doubt me for one moment. The stake I have at issue in this matter will teach me prudence. Do not doubt me, brother."

"You shall start at daybreak, be assured; and now let me have the intervening time to myself, and with it, likewise, the assurance that you are making, at least, the attempt to procure some necessary repose before starting on your expedition."

"The first part of your request, brother, I can easily comply with, and I will leave you; as for the second, I fear anxiety of mind will now place it quite out of my power, unless when the bodily energies shall happen to be completely exhausted by fatigue."

Captain Morton felt fully the truth of what Henry said, but he made no reply to it; and Henry left the room to proceed to his own chamber, without the slightest idea of being able to sleep.

He busied himself in making a few simple preparations for leaving the Hall, and, with a heavy heart, he told himself that it might be a long and weary time before he again looked upon that home which to him had been one possessing so many charms while Mabel was an inmate of it, but which now, alas! with her absence, seemed to have lost all its charms.

"My beautiful Mabel," he exclaimed, as, after having completed the few preparations he intended to make, he cast himself upon a chair, with a long-drawn sigh—"my beautiful Mabel, I dread to think of what may be your fate, and yet imagination will be busy on that fearful subject. Oh, if but one ruffian hand be raised in unkindness against you, let him who aims it rue the day and hour he so raised it. I will exact a terrible retribution. Surely, with such perseverance and indomitable energy as I shall bring to the task, I shall be able to discover where she is concealed."

In the meantime, the captain went to the chamber of his wife, whose indisposition had now become a new source of painful anxiety to him.

He was much relieved to find that she was greatly recovered, and to be assured by her that nothing now remained of the sudden faintness which had been induced by the mental shock she had received from the by far too probable supposition that poor Mabel was in the hands of the murderer of the young traveler at the inn.

"I am well in health, Morton," she said, "quite well, except so far as the mind sympathizes with the body; but I still cannot help feeling, with all the force of conviction, and clinging to it, that poor Mabel is in the power of that dreadful man."

"I cannot," said Captain Morton, "although I fain would, deny that such is my own impression. We now know the worst, and we have but to arm ourselves with resolution to meet it, as well as take what steps we may to avert any of its

fatal consequences—for fatal, as regards our happiness, will they be, unless Mabel is restored to our arms again.

"The love of Henry for Mabel is evidently no boyish passion. I can well perceive that it is more firmly fixed than we ever imagined, and young as he is, and inexperienced in the world's ways, I do not anticipate anything but the best results from the journey in search of Mabel, which I shall provide him amply with the means of at once effectually undertaking."

In conversation like this Mrs. Morton and her husband passed some time, until the captain, feeling quite assured, now that she was sufficiently recovered from the mental shock she had received, at all events, to dread no recurrence of it, left her to see to the arrangements for Henry's departure.

He repaired to the parlor again, where lights were still burning, and as he entered that apartment somewhat abruptly, he started to perceive a human form between him and the table. Captain Morton could not at the moment see who it was, because the figure stood between him and the lights; but it was only for an instant he recoiled, and then advancing quickly, he cried,—

"Who's there?"

"A fool, your honor," said a voice, which the captain knew well as that of Rafferty Brolickbones.

"Rafferty!" he exclaimed, "is that you?"

"It was me, sir; but I ain't me now."

"What do you mean?"

"Ah, sir, I'm mean enough. I have done it, sir. You can call a court-martial, sir; I wish you would, and have me shot as soon as you like."

"Shot!"

"Yes, sir. Welcome now will be the bullet that finds its way to Rafferty's heart. I wish I had never lived, sir, to see this day."

Captain Morton turned back and closed the door, then advancing to Rafferty, he said:

"I cannot fail to understand. You know something of the disappearance of our poor dear Mabel?"

Rafferty replied, in half-choked accents—

"That's just what I do know, sir, more sorrow to me. Oh, captain, why don't you kill me? I won't accuse you of it afterward, as I'm a Christian."

Rafferty, thus urged, told the whole truth, coloring nothing, and concealing nothing, with a view to render himself less blamable, and he concluded by saying:

"And now, you see, sir, that there's no fool like an old fool, and it's high time I was invalided. I've only come here to tell your honor what I've done, and now I'm going. Good-bye to you, and God's blessing, sir, on you and yours, whatever becomes of me."

"Going where?" said Morton.

"Never mind, sir, where I go; it ain't worth an inquiry. To think of staying now, after to-night's business, is out of the question. I can't do it. Don't say an unkind word to me, sir,

about it. I can say, and have said, quite enough such to myself. There is no accuser stronger than my own heart."

"Hold! hold! It is now useless to waste time in idle regrets, Rafferty. You certainly took the very worst course you could take. Your plain and straightforward duty was, as soon as Mabel made you acquainted with the contents of that letter, to have reported the circumstance to me."

"I know it, sir; I know it. Good-bye, your honor."

"You must not go. You must remain as usual in my service, Rafferty, and, notwithstanding this most grievous mistake, I have no doubt but that you will be a great assistance in repairing it, and assisting to discover Mabel."

"Sir," said the old sergeant in a voice that showed he was deeply affected, "if you must have the truth, I don't mean to leave a square foot of this country unsearched for her."

"Nay, Rafferty, Henry is going on such an expedition."

"Let me go with him, sir. No—no—why do I ask? The boy will hate the sight of me. No—no; I it was that led her, poor thing, into the snare. No—no; I do not ask to go with him."

"You had better remain here. Something may occur even in this neighborhood to give a clew to where she is."

Rafferty shook his head sadly, as he replied:

"I can't remain here, sir. Every tree, every flower, every blade of grass, sir, about here would remind me of her. It would seem as if I had given her away to somebody, and was trying to enjoy the old place without her. I couldn't do it, sir; I really couldn't do it. My heart's almost broke already, and to stay here would soon be a finisher to it outright."

There was much pathos in what the old soldier said. Captain Morton knew well by the strange, wiry tone in which he spoke, that the effort he was compelled to make to sustain some sudden and violent outbreak of agonized feeling must be a good one.

He, therefore, having got from Rafferty all the particulars it was in the old sergeant's power to tell, determined upon putting an end to the interview, and saying no more to him upon the painful and harassing subject until morning.

"Rafferty," he said, "I will speak to you to-morrow. What you have related concerning our poor Mabel is but a confirmation of what we suspected before we saw you to-night. Discussion between us can do but little good. Retire to rest, and to-morrow morning I will talk to you again about what is to be done in this sad emergency."

Rafferty moved toward the door, and then he paused, as he said, with evident difficulty:

"And Master Henry is going, sir?"

"By daybreak."

The old soldier left the room, and Captain Morton paced the apartment for some time in deep thought upon the occurrences of the night.

CHAPTER XXII.

AT daybreak Captain Morton went to the chamber of his brother, whom he found already up and ready to start on his proposed expedition in quest of Mabel and her abductor; and he related to Henry, in all its details, the information he had received from Rafferty.

There was not a moment to be lost, and in a few minutes the young man had taken leave of his relatives, and the other members of the household, and mounted his horse. He then emerged from the grounds belonging to the hall, and entered a green lane which led by a short cut to the village.

As he had reached about half the length of the green lane, he suddenly saw a horseman in the very center of the lane, and the next moment he heard a well-known voice say aloud to him:

"Halt, Mr. Henry, halt. Hear what the old man has to say, and then ride over him if you like."

"Rafferty!" exclaimed Henry.

"Yes, sir; I was Rafferty."

Henry was silent, and after a very short pause, Rafferty added, —

"You don't speak, Mr. Henry; but it's all the same. You might as well say it as think it, sir. I know what's passing in your mind. 'Here's the ould thief of the world,' says you, 'as let the vagabonds go off with Miss Mabel. That's what you are thinking of."

"No, no, Rafferty, no. Once and for all, let me tell you that, of course, I cannot help considering you were very indiscreet; but as both my brother and myself are well convinced of your affection for Mabel, and the excellence of your motives, we do not wish to utter one word of reproach to you."

"There's no occasion," said the old soldier, as he struck his chest with his clinched fist; "there's no occasion, sir. I've quite reproach enough to last me all my life, let me use it every hour of the day, here."

"Well, well; that I cannot help, Rafferty. But you have something to tell me, have you not?"

"I have, sir. I have been to every house in the village, sir, and spoken to every man, woman, and child, and I've found out that the villains took the high road, sir, toward Burking."

"You are sure of that?" said Henry, eagerly.

"Quite, sir."

"Then you have saved me the loss of time of making the same kind of inquiry, Rafferty. I thank you; let me now pass on."

"Mr. Henry," exclaimed Rafferty, in so strange a tone that Henry started, for he could hardly believe it came from his lips.

"What would you say, Rafferty?" he asked.

"Sir, I can't know, of course, if you will listen as I wish you to what I'm going to say; but, to begin with it, I can tell you, sir,

until Miss Mabel's foot crosses the threshold, I have taken my leave of the Hall."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Yes, sir. And I wish, if you have no objection, Mr. Henry, to go with you in search of *her*. My heart will burst if you refuse me, sir."

Henry reflected a few moments and then said: "'Tis well. You shall accompany me, if you so earnestly desire it."

A cry of joy came from Rafferty's lips, and Henry saw the sudden gush of tears which came to his eyes in spite of him.

"God—bless you—Mr. Henry," said he; "I'll follow you all the world over and anywhere else."

"I am sure you would, Rafferty."

"And never fear, sir, but we will find her—the sweet jewel of all our hearts. We'll find her, sir, between us; and won't that be a happy hour, anyway? bless her sweet eyes! We must find her, and we will."

"I am glad to find you in such a frame of mind, Rafferty; as soon as we reach the next market town, where there is a post-office, I will write to my brother and inform him of your determination. And now let us spur on; we have not a moment to lose."

They put the horses to a good canter, and rapidly neared the little market town of Beechey, toward which Rafferty had been informed that parties answering the description of the fugitives had been seen to go.

On reaching the market town, they breakfasted, and then, while Henry dispatched a note relative to his traveling companion to his brother, Rafferty went out to pick up such information as he could obtain in regard to the fugitives. He was so far successful as to learn that a party, consisting of two men and a young female had been seen on horseback, galloping at full speed on the common, in the direction of the hostel known far and wide by the cognomen of the Moonrakers.

"We are on their track, then," observed Henry, as Rafferty communicated this intelligence, "and there is not a moment to lose. To horse, Rafferty,—to horse!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

When the mendicant returned to the kitchen where the guests were, he exchanged significant looks with the landlord, who said, in a low tone,—

"Well, have you taken care to secure your bird?"

"Yes; the cage is safe. But I must be off early in the morning, and when I go I should like to go quietly."

"You shall, my boy, you shall."

"Mind, only give me the signal that all is ready, and then we can give Ned the wink; he talks so much, that I'm afraid he'll let out more than he need."

"I see; Ned is a flashy talkative cove, and when he's a little on——"

"He's no use whatever."

"And, on a pinch——"

"He'll split, and run away like a deer."

"You are right—that everybody knows. It's a pity he has two great faults."

"What are they?"

"Cowardice and talkativeness; Lord bless you, he'd talk a mermaid blind."

"By and by I'll get him out by himself, and talk a little to him."

"Very good."

The conversation now become general, and every one took a share in it.

The night wore on toward morn, in the midst of drinking, singing, jesting, and in narratives of exploits peculiar to the characters assembled in the kitchen, and when the mendicant, who had carefully refrained from over-indulgence at the bottle, was satisfied that everything wore an aspect suitable to his purpose, he whispered to Dashing Ned.

"Well, what now?" inquired Ned.

"I want to speak to you out in the yard privately."

"Can't you say it now? It's infernally cold out there, now I've been sitting in the warmth of the fire."

"You must come, Ned. I have some suspicion; don't let anybody notice your going out, Ned—be careful."

"Suspicion of what?"

"That you're a fool; come and don't ask any questions here."

Ned was not over pleased; but he knew the man he had to deal with, and watched with a sullen expression the eyes of the guests; and when he saw he was not noticed he slipped out of the kitchen. In a few moments more, he had groped his way out into the yard, where the mendicant had stationed himself.

"Where are you?" he muttered, as he walked about; "I can hardly see."

"Here I am," said the mendicant, as he stepped out from behind a cart; "here I am."

"Well, what is it you want now? the room was comfortable and quiet enough."

"I know that, Ned, but this affair is mine, you know."

"I do, but you——"

"I promised you fairly, and I'll keep my word; but you haven't completed the affair yet, so, until you have, you must do what is necessary."

"Well, but haven't I done so? what more do you want than what I have done? I did all that I could do."

"I don't complain; but it's no use your stopping there with the ale-mug before you. I know how it will be before long."

"I'm right enough."

"Well, but you may not be; now, come this way, and I'll talk to you."

"Why not here, as well as there?"

"Because it's cold, and we may as well walk about; it's better, and we can't be listened to, and that you know is an object."

"Well, well, do as you like—do as you like, but be quick."

"I will—I will."

They now came to a deep well that was uncovered, save that there was a board or two on the side; but for all else it was open.

When Dashing Ned came near this he started, and moved one side to avoid going too close; whereupon the other struck him a tremendous blow on the ear. Ned fell very close to the well, but not in it. He was stunned, but not senseless, and made an ineffectual attempt to rise.

The mendicant gave him a kick on the head, and then seizing him by the legs, thrust him into the well. For a moment or two he listened to hear the fall of the body, and then, after the lapse of a second or two, the dead fall of the unhappy man was heard; it was a dull, heavy splash, and then all was still. There was no second attempt to rise, or scream, or call for aid. He was stunned, and at once sunk beneath the surface, and all was quiet again.

"And now for the horses," muttered the mendicant, as he turned from the place. "It will not be well to stay long here now."

Before he re-entered the house, he listened long and carefully to assure himself that he was not seen by any one whatever; he then carefully opened the door, and unnoticed took his seat near the landlord, who had not stirred.

"When does day break?" inquired one of the guests, who had just awakened up from a nap he had been indulging in.

"In about another hour."

"That's lucky," said the mendicant to the landlord. "Will you get our nags ready? we are for an instant start."

"So soon?"

"Yes; the sooner the better. I wish to be on the road before day-break. I have a particular reason, the horses are refreshed, and that is the main thing."

"They shall be ready in a few minutes. I'll go myself and get them ready. You'll have a lonely ride this morning, but you will have no objection to that."

"I shall have all the company I care for," replied the mendicant, "and that is saying no great deal, and exerting but little self-denial; however, bustle about the horses, and let me know when you are ready."

"I'll give you the office."

So saying, the landlord left the kitchen, and proceeded to saddle and bridle the horses for the resumption of the journey, leaving the mendicant, who sat somewhat apart from the guests, who were enjoying themselves with their conversation and liquors.

In a few moments the landlord re-entered the room, and leaning toward the mendicant, he said, "All is ready for you."

Giving the landlord the reckoning, he went out into the yard, where the horses were standing ready for them.

"Where is Dashing Ned of Newington?" inquired the mendi-

cant. "Confound him, where can he be loitering about, I wonder?"

"Don't kuow," said the landlord; "ain't he in the kitchen?"

"No, he was not when I was there," replied the mendicant; "and I want him."

"Well, I'll go and look after him," said the landlord, after a pause.

"Oh, no, no, if he don't choose to be in the way when he's wanted, I can't help it; he must take his own chance; however, if you see him, tell him I shall go on in the road I told him, unless I see any occasion to alter my intention."

"Very good."

"Good-morning," said the mendicant, who had brought Mabel down-stairs; and, seating her on the horse, mounted, and then soon got clear of the old inn.

They now rode along the high road at a tolerably brisk pace, and the morning air felt refreshing: the road was hard, and the sound of their horses' hoofs was sharp and strong, and they proceeded along favorably. One or two incidents did occur on the road, but they led to no result, save as showing the precaution of the mendicant.

It was just after daybreak when he saw two horsemen crossing a hill on the left, but coming toward them. As soon as they were parted by the intervening trees, he dashed into a plantation, and there remained until the sounds of voices and horses were distinctly heard, and then died away again in the distance.

"Now," muttered the mendicant, "we may safely proceed, not that I apprehend any pursuit now—they would scarcely proceed so far as this, but I can't be too sure, or too safe."

Again he emerged into the high road, and pursued his route onward at a sound pace, that would carry him over a great deal of ground, and yet not hurt the horses.

Thus they proceeded for some distance in perfect safety to the mendicant.

The morning broke and the sun peeped over the eastern horizon, and then the misty vapor that hung over the plain was more distinctly visible than before.

The clouds began to clear off, and the morning sun appeared, the edges of the night clouds were tinted with a brilliant red, and then the sunlight shot upward, and illumined the whole expanse of the sky.

In a few hours, they neared a solitary roadside public house, and the landlord, at the sight of the strangers, came out to speak to them. He looked at the horses and then at the riders. He was a fat old man, not very bright, but uncommonly jolly and polite in his way.

"Nice nags, them, master; you've a good eye for a horse, anyhow."

"Yours is not a bad one, or you wouldn't have found that out."

The landlord was pleased at this, and rubbed his hands. "Fine morning this, sir."

"Yes, very. Can I have a word with you for a moment?"

"Yes, certainly, sir, with the greatest pleasure, sir," said the landlord.

"Well, this way then," said the mendicant.

The two stood a few yards apart from Mabel, when the mendicant said:

"The young female I have here is of unsound mind, landlord."

"Oh, I see! what a pity—she's a pretty gal—touched in the head I suppose—well, well; we must live and die, as the Bible says—eh, sir?"

"That's very true, landlord; now I have had a great deal of trouble and difficulty to catch her and bring her this far."

"Indeed, sir—well now, live and be jolly."

"But she is so cunning and so artful—eh?"

"D——n my sign-board! if she ain't off."

The mendicant turned, for the sound of a horse's hoof sstruck upon his ear. The fact was, Mabel, who had not been dismounted, finding herself alone, thought it an excellent opportunity to attempt an escape; and as quick as thought, she turned her horse's head in the direction of the road and began to gallop. The mendicant was at no loss what to do, but jumping into the saddle with a quickness and dexterity that was amazing, he spurred his own beast at a rapid rate after her. The spur was a more certain means of urging the mendicant's horse on, than the voice only of Mabel, and the former soon overtook the latter, though there was a sharp contest over nearly a mile of ground.

"So you are at your games, are you? You must see that I am as quick as you—it is useless to attempt to escape me."

"I have failed," said Mabel.

"You have, and so you will."

"We shall see."

"In the meantime we will have breakfast; for I should imagine you wanted some refreshment. I do, at all events."

Mabel made no reply, but suffered herself to be led back to the inn, at the door of which stood the landlord, who had been laughing till he was hoarse.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the landlord—"well—ho, ho, ho!—ha, ha, ha, ha!—I never saw anybody do a thing neater in all my life. Well, blow my apron, if she didn't deserve to get off, it was so well done; and he ought to catch her, for I never saw a man leap into a saddle like that—he is a rum 'un; 'tis a pity such a young girl as that should be so bad; she'd make a wise young gal; it's a shame the best are always overcome. I say," he added, to the mendicant, as he returned, "she'd nearly got the better of you this time."

"Very nearly," said the mendicant, "but then I am usually lucky enough to prevent any harm taking place by the attempt. Just let us have a private apartment, will you, landlord, and a good breakfast."

"Very good," said the landlord. "I'll serve you in a twinkling. Let's live and be jolly—grief is a folly I don't indulge in when I can help it. I haven't grieved this many a long year. Grief and I are strangers, and I don't want any introduction to

the stranger. Here's the room, sir. I'll send in the gal to light the fire."

"This, then, is the room," said the mendicant, surveying it; "the fact is, you see, this young lady has been well brought up, and her friends won't like that she should disgrace herself by forming all sorts of low connections; and Heaven knows what mischief she may do to herself and other people, especially to children."

"Is she vicious?"

"Why, you can hardly call it vicious; but mischievous and dangerous she certainly is, and very cunning—very cunning, indeed."

"Oh, indeed, I can vouch for that, for I never saw a better instance," said the landlord.

The landlord now left the room, and the girl soon entered, and in a very short time a good fire was blazing in the room, and the mendicant threw himself into a chair, and such a train of thoughts seemed to come over him, that for some time he was barely sensible of anything that happened near him. However, that matters not—his senses were easily recalled at the slightest sound that could be made; he much resembled some cat that was dozing, but that was always prepared at a moment's warning to jump up and spring upon its prey.

He had, too, taken the precaution to lock the door, and hence no attempt could be made at an escape, had she been prepared to make one; but as it was, she was much dejected at the failure of the attempt she had so successfully begun, and she now thought that there could be no use in making another, as nothing but stratagem would have any chance of success; if she could do anything like that, then indeed she might, but the mendicant kept too good a lookout to offer her a chance.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HENRY MORTON, followed by Rafferty Brolickbones, rode on for some miles without any intermission, without even exchanging a single word. The day, as we have said, began to break at the time he left the old poacher, and now it was broad daylight, and they could see over many miles of country.

At the top of a hill, the road ran over the hill itself; Henry Morton drew up and breathed his horse, while he gazed around him in every direction. Rafferty Brolickbones, too, ascended the hill, and drew up by the side of Henry.

The sun had some time risen, and all the country around was now easily distinguishable, and any moving being was detected with certainty within the range of vision. The mists had now in a great measure cleared off, the green fields and shady foliage could be seen, that fell, too, in great luxuriance, beauty and variety of color. The hedge-rows divided the country around in different shapes and sizes, giving a beautiful diversified appearance to the surface.

They both looked long and carefully over the landscape in

silence, and at length Henry Morton beheld a something which arrested his attention.

"What's that, Rafferty?" he said.

"That yonder, ahead of us—in yonder cross-road somebody riding fast. I can only see the head now and then rising above the hedge in the openings."

"Where is it?"

"I can't see it now, but it was yonder by the stump of the willow tree."

"I see the spot, but not the rider."

"Look a little to the left as they keep moving, and at some of the openings we may catch a sight of them."

"True, true."

Henry Morton looked long and fixedly toward the spot where the rider had been seen, but could see nothing; however, he and Brolickbones continued to gaze in the direction for some minutes, when they distinctly saw more than one person pass a gap in the hedge at a very rapid rate, and then disappear.

"Can you make them out, Rafferty?"

"There were two of them, I think, sir, and one was, if I am not mistaken, a female; but I am not sure."

"Come on, Rafferty," exclaimed Henry, "we must overtake them soon."

"Sure enough we shall," thought Brolickbones, "if we don't break our necks in the meantime. I must say that if I could find Miss Mabel I wouldn't mind breaking my neck."

Rafferty's reflections were cut short; for Henry Morton increased his pace to a gallop, and Rafferty was compelled to pay all his attention to his horse and his seat.

They rode several miles until they had long passed the point where they saw the persons after whom they were riding; but now they saw nothing of them, although they could not have gone on much ahead of them, as they had come so fast, and by a shorter path.

"Well, Rafferty, they must have gone on ahead for some distance."

"They must have suspected something, sir, and that's what made them get on; perhaps they've had a gallop, too."

"I dare say—I dare say."

"Yes, yes—follow on, follow on."

They now rode at a round trot, on the back road, for some miles, until they came to a turnpike-gate, where they drew up to make some inquiries.

"Well, my friend," said Henry Morton to the gatekeeper—"you are up early."

"Yes, sir."

"Have you many people through of a morning?" he continued.

"Yes, a few."

"Have you seen any person through this morning, accompanying a lady?"

"Was he in the dress of a policeman?"

"By my sowl, you've struck it," said Rafferty.

"He passed here about two hours ago," said the man. "He was making for London."

"Only two hours? Then we will have him yet. Thank you, my friend, thank you. Spur up, Rafferty—spur up."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE mendicant left his first resting-place as soon as he well could, for he foresaw that it might not be every one who might be as credulous as the landlord. Besides, it might happen that some of those who undoubtedly were in search of Mabel would arrive there, and make inquiries; and were he found there, he would be seized. and Mabel would soon be free.

It was, therefore, not without reason that he again put himself in motion, determining to make his way to some sequestered spot, where he could rest more at leisure, and where there could be less danger to be encountered.

Choosing a favorable opportunity, he sallied out, and scoured along the road for about three-quarters of a mile, until he came to a cross-road, into which he immediately turned his horses' heads, determining that at the first favorable spot he would remain all day till the night should again reign; and then by daylight, if the steeds held out, would be able to hide himself in the labyrinths of the metropolis, where all traces of himself and Mabel would, he well knew, be lost.

"Once in London," he thought, "and I am safe, for there I may live for years unseen and unknown; there I shall find shelter and safety. But the confines of London may prove dangerous to me, if my charge proves very refractory—otherwise, I fear nothing, be there what cause there may. I will not shrink from it."

They rode down this cross-road for about a mile or two; apparently it had no particular direction, for its course wound from right to left, and left to right, so repeatedly, that it was difficult to tell whither they were going. However, after an hour's riding, it took a definite course off to the right; and when they had arrived at the summit of a hill, he could see in the hollow below, at a distance of about two miles, a small market-town.

To go there was not his intention; he only wished to get to some little place, where visitors were few and far between, as at such a place he would deem himself safest, and to discover some such place as that he now applied himself.

After gazing some time in every direction earnestly, he found that he had passed such a place as that he most desired; it was so hidden that he had not seen it in passing by it.

It was but a hundred yards or so to go back; that he thought would be but little trouble, and he did that the more willingly as it gave him an assurance that he was the safer for it.

This he did, and a few moments more, he and Mabel rode up a short lane and paused before the most curious old tumble-down, moss-grown place he ever beheld.

"If one place more than another promises an original, this does; for I never beheld its equal; it is just the thing."

As he spoke he dismounted and led his horse toward a shed which lay on one side of the farm, but the entrance to which was concealed behind the trees.

"Upon my soul, this is a very well contrived place, and would do well for many purposes I could speak of. Hilloa, friend, is there any living human being about this place?"

"Yes—I be here," said a sleepy-looking fellow, half boy and half man: "and as for the beans, you can have them, if so be as you want them, and master's agreeable."

"Can you take charge of the horses? sort them down and feed them."

"Yes, I should think so. I's sort a horse down wi' anybody in the country—I don't care who he be."

"Very well, then, sort them down well, and if you do, you and I'll reckon for it. Is there anybody in the house?"

"Yes, there was, when I was in there," returned the fellow, scratching his head.

"Indeed! when was that?"

"About three hours since."

Seeing nothing was to be made of this specimen of the population of the district he entered the house, keeping Mabel constantly by his side.

"I would," he said, "have given you more liberty, but it would be dangerous to trust you; you avowed every intention to make your escape from me."

"And should I not do so? is there any justice or right that I infringe by so doing? On the contrary, I am now suffering violence and injustice, to a degree undreamed of by almost any human being, and for which you would suffer, if your falsehoods had not prevailed."

"And will prevail," said the mendicant. "You may depend upon it, when I say that I will leave no means unused to retain you in my power. I have set my life upon a chance, and I will stand to it—but no more of this now—come on."

He entered the passage, and seeing several doors, he opened one which happened to lead into a large kitchen, around which were placed a number of barrels, resting on trestles, with a variety of cellar utensils.

There was a large fireplace; the fire was evidently on the wane, and on either side sat an elderly couple, male and female. They were fast asleep, and tolerably fat. The man sat in an easy-chair, in his shirt-sleeves; he was the landlord of the place—that was plain: he wore an apron before him, and no one else would have presumed to sleep at that time of the day.

"Hilloa! what ho! here—what ho! is there any one alive in this dull house, here? What ho!"

These words were uttered by the mendicant with such startling energy that the sleepers started in affright.

"What ho! hilloa!—anybody alive here?"

"I don't know," said the landlord, who had just recovered the

use of his speech. "I don't know—I bave nearly been killed with fright; but. before that, I was alive."

"Then look alive."

"I can't," said the landlord, "until I have recovered from the noise."

"I am sorry for disturbing you, my good dame; but if you keep an open house for travelers, you mustn't complain if they walk in at a seasonable hour."

"There's for you," said tbe landlady, "as if I was to be disturbed for such people."

"Which is your travelers' room—eh?"

"That one afore you; but what are you pulling the woman about for? you are dragging her about after you as if you were afraid of her running away."

Mabel was irresolute, and for some moments spoke not; but at length she determined to speak to them, and said:

"Help to rescue me from this terrible man; he is taking me from my friends against my will, and compelling me to hide from those who are in search of me; he is a vile man."

"Poor thing!" ejaculated the landlady. "I'll see if he shall touch her," and tben she seized a gigantic shovel.

"Oh," said the landlord; "he shall know what it is to come into my house."

And forthwith he seized upon the shovel and flourisbed it above his head in an attitude of offense.

During this time the mendicant, who kept a tight hold of the unfortunate Mabel, drew out the constable's staff, whicb he held within an inch or two of tbe landlord's nose.

"Thou stupid! do you know wbat it is? Do you?"

"Oh, my eye and the bung, why, it's an officer's staff, as sure as hens' eggs are not kidney beans."

"Well? I am an officer."

"In course you is. I see it all now;—the poor young lady's had a runaway match, and you are taking her back."

"I wish it was no worse," said tbe mendicant, shaking his head.

"Worse!" exclaimed the landlord, dropping the poker on the stones.

"Worse!" said the landlady, looking tbe picture of mystified horror and curiosity. "She hasn't had a baby, and killed it, has she? Oh, the wretch!"

"No, worse."

"Goodness gracious! say what it is, for I don't know what is worse."

"Well, then, she's mad."

"Poor creature! mad, eh?" said the landlady, going near to her, and looking at her with intense curiosity and pity.

"Don't go near her; she's very artful, and very dangerous."

"Goodness!"

"My good people," said Mabel, "I want nothing unreasonable. He says I am mad. Why not let my friends convey me to my place of destination? Why should I be dragged through by-ways, instead of having a proper means of conveyance? I

only want my friends to see me, instead of being hurried on in this shameful manner; besides, this man tells me he is my father, and——"

"There," interrupted the mendicant, "you have heard enough to convince you of her madness, and I beg of you not to go near; if you do I will not be answerable for any mischief she may do; she escaped once, and that is how it happens I haven't got a carriage for her; she bolted once, and I had a desperate job to get her back. Oh, she's dreadful artful. Have you a strong room?"

"Yes," said the landlord, "I have; there's one next the parlor, and when once in there she can't get out again. Oh, the young puss! to be such a tigress."

"Dear me! what can have made such a young creature mad?"

"Don't name the cause," said the mendicant, "or she'll go off furious. I'll tell you more of that by and by: let me place her safe—let her have what she wants, then I will see to my own wants, and talk to you more at leisure."

"Very well," said the landlord; "that seems to be fair enough, wife; show him the room, and then he can see if it be safe enough to his liking, and then I will see about getting the dinner ready."

"Come this way—come this way," said the fat landlady, as she waddled along the kitchen, and her slippers going up and down with a slap every step she took; bestowing a look of commiseration upon Mabel as she passed her, she said with a sigh, "Oh, poor thing! if it wasn't madness I should have interfered, but that is a thing that cannot be interfered with. Poor thing; so young and so pretty. Well, well; it's no use grieving for her. She's not sensible, in a manner of speaking, as we should be of the calamity attending such a state."

"Is this the room?" inquired the mendicant, as the landlady stopped before a large door and turned the key.

"Yes, this is it," answered the landlady; "this is the place; it will answer the purpose here very well. She cannot escape, I'll warrant; and there is a bed in it, so she can sleep or do what she pleases."

And as she spoke she opened the door, displaying to their view one of those large wainscoted apartments so often seen in old houses.

"This," she said, "is safe in every point; the windows are barred, and the chimney, too."

"This will do. Let her have what refreshments you have; and when you wish to send them in, I will come too—for until we leave, I will retain the key."

They were about to quit the apartment, when Mabel determined to make one last appeal to the landlady.

"Stay," she said to her, "oh, stay for one moment and hear me!"

The landlady paused.

"Are you a woman?" she said: "and can you leave me to such a fate?—a fate a thousand times worse than that of the mad-house—to be made the instrument of that mean, wicked,

and iniquitous schemer. There's no act of villainy that he will not commit, and cause others to partake in it."

"You hear her wild incoherency of speech," said the mendicant. "Can anything be more palpable?"

The landlady looked puzzled, and knew not what to say, but she shook her head, saying, as she did so:

"I am truly sorry to see you so, and will do what I can for you; but you had hetter be quiet, and you will not he hurt, I am sure."

"No," said the mendicant, "it is useless to attend to her; hut come along. I'll tell you what, just to please her I have had her before three justices already, and they have been so angry at me that I should not like to try a fourth. Poor thing, if I thought she was at all to be blamed, I don't know what I should not do."

"Oh, we have all our parts to play," said the landlady, as she left the room; "and some's more unpleasant than others."

"And mine's one of them, I assure you," said the mendicant, as he locked the door carefully, and put the key into his pocket.

They both descended the stairs, the mendicant entering the travelers' room, and the landlady taking the route to the kitchen.

In an hour or two the repast was ready, and the mendicant was summoned to enjoy it in company with the landlord and his wife. Mabel's share was carried to her room, and she partook of it in silence and in tears.

The landlord having eaten himself into a state of repletion, though he assured his guest that it was a very abstemious meal indeed, he fell into a lethargic slumber, from which he only awoke a little before the time appointed for the departure of his guest.

It seemed almost a miracle to see him wake to animation, as if he were some piece of clock-work, and had been wound up for such a time, and when that was out, he suddenly awoke from his sleep.

The landlady had contrived to get some tea ready for the sake of the poor mad young woman, as she called her, and of that Mabel seemed most grateful.

"I don't hlame you," said Mabel to her, as she was about leaving the place. "I cannot blame you for your want of any feeling of humanity toward your own sex; but I lament that circumstances should appear in such a light to you, that you should credit what he says, in preference to myself. Did you know how I have been dragged away from friends and home, you would pity me! Heaven above knows where I am heing carried, and that by one, too, who pretends to be my own father."

"Ah!" said the mendicant to the landlady, "it is a sad sight."

"Poor thing, poor thing!" said the landlady, with a tear in her eye; "be as gentle with her as you can."

"I will—good-evening."

"Good-bye," said the landlord. "If you come this way again, give a call."

"I will, you may depend," replied the mendicant; who, immediately he had secured Mabel in the saddle, mounted himself, and was by her side in an instant, and rode gently down the

lane, into the cross-road, and cleared the small market town that he had before seen lay ahead of them.

"You may endanger my life," said the mendicant, "hut you cannot alter my purpose, or shake my resolution. I am determined that you shall not escape from me; and let the reflection sink deep into your heart, that, though you have, through the force of circumstances, been separated from me, yet I am still your father—a father that, had circumstances proved better, would have been a kinder one; but they have not, and I know but one course to pursue."

"If you are in need of money, let me return, and I promise you, you shall be amply rewarded for your trouble."

"It is a delusion, and cannot he done; but it is hootless to talk upon the subject. You know what I have said; you can perhaps take my life, and in return for such an act of filial tenderness, be assured I have that which I can and will disclose, that shall make you wish for death, to hide your shame and confusion. It is a secret that would even hring down the ahhorrence of your best friends; and though they might endeavor to repress it before you, you would be looked upon as something loathsome and disgusting."

"God of Heaven!" exclaimed Mabel, "can there be any human heart so depraved, so hardened against all kindness and feeling, as to be capable of doing such a deed as that you speak of? Oh, I have, indeed, fallen into very different hands to those I have been used to."

"Can you be so dead to all feeling yourself, Mabel, as to wish to sacrifice the life of your father?"

"But are you so?"

"I swear it!" vehemently replied the mendicant; "I swear it by all you hold most dear and sacred."

"Heaven looks down upon and can best tell if you be perjured or not; you have not been a father to me, and others have; to whom am I most indehted?"

"To the author of your being," said the mendicant, sternly.

"To my God!"

The mendicant made no reply; the answer seemed to him one that he could not reply to, or he chose not to do so, and they rode side by side at a moderate pace, until they came near the town, and then spurring their horses forward, they went through at a sharp pace, and when they had got a mile or better through, the pace was again slackened to a good round trot.

The evening sun was setting behind them, and threw their shadows on in advance for some distance. The air was mild and serene, and a more beautiful hour or spot could not be well chosen. The two travelers still rode side by side, the mendicant keeping hold of Mabel's hridle so that she could not escape.

After about four hours' riding, they arrived in the outskirts of London, and then the scene changed.

Hitherto they had seen nothing hut the hedgerows, where there were any, by the road-side, or they passed over barren tracts of heath or common land; but now the road-side was lined with houses and villas, and, in some places, as the coun-

tryman once said, when he saw London for the first time, "the road was hedged with houses."

In three-quarters of an hour they were in the heart of London, and, stopping before a large public house, the mendicant dismounted, and helped Mabel to dismount also; then he took her by the arm and hurried her into the house, and along a narrow, winding passage, before she could recover her breath, and thrust her into a small room. A light was brought, and then the mendicant said to her:

"Here you will remain for a few hours, and then you will go to your final destination; you can have what you desire here, and can rest at your leisure, for unless you desire the attendance of any one you will not be intruded on."

Mabel made no reply.

"Do you want anything?" he said, after he had paused for some time.

"Since you will not permit me to see my friends," said Mabel, "will you let me write to them? they are anxious—most anxious for my safety. I know they are my real friends and benefactors. Let me write to them and tell them where I am."

"That will be madness, and I tell you it cannot be done—not in any one particular. I now reiterate what I have said often and often to you. You are my child—I am your father."

"And yet you have not any of the affection that they have, to whom I do not belong; but whose kindness and tenderness have been of such vast importance and benefit to me, and to whom I cannot be too grateful."

"Be that as it may, I am a fugitive—my life is in danger at every step I take. We have been strangers to each other until this moment: and last, not least, you are unmindful of our relationship, and act in direct opposition to all my wishes."

"But I know you not; you say you are my father; but you are a desperate criminal also, and may not speak the truth."

"Act upon this impression," said the mendicant, "and you are a parricide."

He then rose and left the apartment, locking it after him; but the key was hung up on the outside.

The mendicant himself, after a whispered consultation with some man in the house, threw himself upon a bed, and fell into a slumber, from which he arose and partook of some breakfast that had been prepared for him. After that, it being late, he went out to visit a house in the vicinity of Hoxton.

He was employed in and about the old house for some hours. He went to different brokers in the neighborhood, and procured different articles of furniture, of a mean and wretched appearance; enough only to accommodate two persons in the meanest possible manner; and having placed them in the house, he returned to the public house in which he had left Mabel.

"I now come," he said, "to convey you away from this place, where you are liable to all the inconveniences of a public house, to one where you will not be so annoyed."

"It matters little to me," said Mabel, "where I am taken to, since, wherever it may be, my presence is compelled."

"Well, well," said the mendicant; "we can converse more about that at our leisure, where we are going. I have a coach at the door, and we shall have but a short distance to walk before we are safe."

He then led Mabel through the same narrow passage, and then into a coach, the steps of which were rapidly put up after them, and in less time than she could seat herself the door was slammed to and the horses put in motion, and then they rolled along over the stones at a decent rate. They arrived at a lonely spot, the coach stopped, and out they got; the same celerity of motion was observed, and the coach was out of sight in a minute.

"Now," said the mendicant, "walk quickly, and we shall be at home in another minute or so."

They hurried along, and in a few moments came to a desolate, dismal-looking house, and up the steps of which the mendicant hurried her. The key was placed in the lock, and it at once opened; they entered, and the door was immediately closed and secured by her conductor, who led her to an inner room.

It was almost with a kind of stupefaction of intellect that poor Mabel looked around her, when she found herself fairly within that desolate and cheerless-looking abode to which she had been brought by that man, who certainly by his consanguinity to her, near or remote, was her evil genius.

The rapidity with which incident had succeeded incident, since her departure from that happy home, which she never fully appreciated until now that she was torn from it, had made her feel as if years had elapsed since last she heard the tones of those well-known voices, she feared that she should never hear again, and looked upon those much-loved forms which never again might meet her longing eyes. She spoke not, and when she was rudely thrust into this room, she looked around her and shuddered at what she saw.

It was meanly and barely furnished; it contained only what was absolutely necessary for her exigencies; but what was there, was of the commonest character. The light only came in at the top of the shutters, a short space being left unopened, or rather a portion of the woodwork had been sawed off, so as to present a shutter to the height of about two-thirds of the window upward.

Above this space appeared some iron bars, and thus the window was completely secured; she noticed this almost from the first, because her eyes glanced to where the light came from, and this precaution struck her with terror and dismay.

"Have pity on me," she said, "and do not confine me in such a place as this; it will be terrible; it is but a degree better than a dungeon."

"It may be so," was the mendicant's reply; "but it must be your home for some time."

"My home! God of mercy!"

"Yes; you must remain here, if you will call it so, a prisoner, until circumstances change, and you become of a more amiable disposition."

"Wherefore do you do this? Why am I to be thus imprisoned? What can it benefit you that I should suffer?"

"You know not."

"Alas! I do not; but let me write to my friends, and tell them that I am yet alive."

"No, no; that would but excite in them vain hopes of finding you out; it will not do, you must remain alone for some little time."

As he spoke he shut the door upon her and quitted the house. The sound of the door, as it shut with a heavy bang, fell with a sense of loneliness on her heart. The sound fell upon her mind with a sensation she had never yet felt; it seemed as though she were now shut out from the world.

Tears came apace, and, perhaps, it was as well they did, for this abandonment to grief, which came upon her, was so intense that it destroyed thought, and when she, in some measure, recovered from it, she found the oppression of mind not so complete and appalling as before.

"I will not think," she exclaimed, "or I shall go mad; this misfortune is too great. I will yet do all I can to preserve my reason. I may yet be released, and if I can but live on, time may, in its round, find me in a happier situation."

CHAPTER XXVI.

MR. HENRY MORTON and Rafferty Brolickbones, when once they had arrived in London, and came to their journey's end, began to be painfully conscious that, without a clew of some sort to guide them to the hiding-place of Mabel and her persecutors, they might as well search through the deserts of Africa, or the woods of America, with about equal chances of success.

Rafferty looked at the people passing; they both walked about the streets from one end of the town to the other; but what availed it them? they saw and were seen, but this did not say much for success in their search.

They were both dispirited, and yet neither of them would for some time communicate his fears to the other, for in London, the chance of meeting with any one who was daily about the streets was the merest probability in the world.

After a long ramble through the leading thoroughfares one day, Rafferty Brolickbones had been very much disappointed, and they were both fatigued; and Rafferty, looking up in Henry Morton's face, said:

"I'm sure, sir, there's people enough to fill all the world over and over again, but I am thinking we ought to double ourselves over and over again, I can't tell how many times."

"Double ourselves a number of times, Rafferty!" said Mr. Morton; "and what would be the result of that?"

"Why, sir, sure couldn't we, then, walk up and down all the streets at once? and even then we may not meet with her."

"Well, well," said Mr. Morton, "this is very sad work, Rafferty; I would we could find some trace, or some clew by which

we could exert ourselves, if it led through danger—anything—anywhere, I would not care a jot."

"Nor I, as your honor says; danger, or anything else, would be an agreeable variation—something to enliven this dull sentry work we have to perform here; we might as well be the stone statties a-looking down on the people who are passing, without being able to see 'em at all, at all."

At this moment there was a cry and noise in the street. Rafferty and Mr. Morton turned to see whence it came, and saw a coach coming along, and at that moment an elderly gentleman was crossing and knocked down.

In a moment Rafferty and Mr. Morton were at his side, the horses were stopped, and they drew him out from beneath the horses.

No particular injury had been done, so they believed, but the gentleman was perfectly senseless, and between them they carried him into a chemist's shop, followed by a crowd of idle people. These were soon left on the outside, and then the chemist set about administering restoratives to the unfortunate gentleman.

He was an aged and prepossessing man; his hair was perfectly white. In a little time he breathed and showed other signs of life.

"He has received no great injury," said the chemist, "at least not in the bones; it arises from the shock, no doubt."

In a little while the gentleman opened his eyes, and then he gradually recovered his consciousness.

"I—I—believe something has happened; yes, yes, I needn't ask that question," said the stranger, who spoke in a foreign accent; "is there anything serious?"

"I believe not," said the chemist; "I think you are whole, sir; at least I have been unable to detect any mischief, beyond a bruise."

"But where are my preservers? show them to me, that I may thank them for their service."

"This gentleman was one, and this another," said the chemist, as he pointed to Mr. Morton and to Rafferty Brolickbones, the latter of whom stood a little way behind the former.

"To you," said the stranger, turning to Morton, "I am indebted for life and limb, for more—for freedom, probably from a long time of torture; how shall I be able to thank you?"

"Nay," interposed Henry Morton, "I am to have all you might have had happen to you, and what you have escaped, to be ascribed to our efforts; it was much less to us to do them, than it was to you."

"And that's why I have to thank you the more heartily," said the gentleman; "and you, my good friend," he added, as he turned to Brolickbones, "to you, also, I am deeply indebted for this service."

"Oh, yer honor is very welcome as far as I am consarned."

"Ah!" said the stranger, "you must come, Mr. Morton, and you, too, and drink a bottle of wine at my hotel."

"Sir," said Morton, "I appreciate your generosity, but I cannot accept it."

"And why not?"

"Because your condition at the present moment will not, I think, permit you to do so; but we will, if you will permit us, see you safe to your hotel, and then we will take our leave of you."

"You are willing to add to the benefits I am to receive at your hand, but you will hardly accept of thanks, much less of aught else. My name is Rouselli; I am a native of France; but I am well enough now to leave when I have discharged my debt here."

Then turning to the chemist, he purchased a few articles, and having paid for them and thanked him for his attention, they all then left the shop, Rafferty Brolickbones and Henry Morton walking on either side of him, and giving him the support of their arms to enable him to walk more easily.

"Would you prefer a coach?" inquired Morton—"it can be had."

"No; I would prefer going as I am, if I distress you not."

In a little time they came to a hotel, where Mr. Rouselli stopped, and said:

"This is my hotel. At least come up-stairs with me."

"I cannot refuse you," replied Morton; and all three went up to the room which he occupied.

"You have not been long here, sir?"

"I have not."

"Do you intend remaining here?"

A shade of melancholy and sadness came over the face of Mr. Rouselli, as he, after a pause, answered,—

"That depends on so many events, that I cannot tell myself truly; but yet I have every desire to return to my own country to die."

"Oh! I don't wonder at that, sir," said Rafferty; "for I used often to wish that I might be buried in ould Ireland, and yet a soldier has no right to wish that; he ought to be satisfied if he is buried where he falls."

"They usually do—they usually do," said the Frenchman, who appeared unusually sad. "But come to-morrow with me and I will talk with you. I have lost a son in battle; but more of this when next I see you."

They both took their leave of Mr. Rouselli, and, after many kind words on both sides, they left the hotel.

They walked some distance without speaking to each other; and each was intent upon his own thoughts.

"Rather a pleasant old gentleman, that, Rafferty!" observed Henry Morton, at length.

"Yis, sir. I hope nothing unpleasant will follow the accident which came so near sending him to glory."

"I hope so, Rafferty."

At this moment a man came by, dressed in shabby garments, which had seen some rough usage, when Rafferty Brolickbones started and stared, and the blood came into his face, and fire

flashed from his eye; the man returned his gaze, but he could not avoid the recognition.

It was the mendicant.

"Blur an' ouns!" exclaimed Rafferty, "here he is; seize the murdering thief!"

As he spoke, he made a rush at the man, who, by a skillful maneuver round a cart, evaded the seizure.

"Stop the murdering thief; stop him, Master Henry, dear; he's the varmint, I know him; ah, my jewel! bad luck to you, you blackguard!"

This was uttered by Brolickbones; as the mendicant saw that Mr. Henry Morton was close upon him, and dodging round a cart, when chased by two, was a losing game, he dashed past Rafferty, who seized him by the coat, but alas! for the article—it was insufficient to hold him by, and away he went, leaving a fair handful of material in his hand.

"After him, Rafferty!" said Henry Morton; "after him; keep him in sight. Stop thief! stop thief! stop thief!"

This was the cry which Morton uttered from time to time, and echoed by Rafferty, as they dashed along some few yards behind him. The cry was uttered from time to time by others who saw the chase, and more than one man stepped out to secure the fugitive, but that was not to be effected, for each, as he opposed him, was leveled by the mendicant as if he had been a child; and on he went with undiminished haste.

At length they came helter-skelter to places that had no thoroughfare, and then they hoped, indeed, they had a chance of securing their man.

Through these streets little or no effort was made by any one to stay the progress of the fugitive, who seemed to be under no apprehension, but continued his flight among dogs and children, and fowls, that seemed to congregate about for the express purpose of impeding the pursuers; and on more than one occasion they had nearly got stopped; and on every occasion there seemed more intention to aid and abet the flight than to stop the runaway.

"Now we have him," said Rafferty. "Now we have him."

But Brolickbones was mistaken. Both parties had diminshed to less than half the speed with which they had started, and breath was at a premium, and enough could scarcely be had to carry them along with safety. Suddenly the mendicant paused, and balanced himself, and then dashed in at an open doorway.

Mr. Morton had at that moment reached him, thinking he was about to return and retrace his steps, and was not prepared for his sudden disappearance in that manner, but was compelled to overshoot his mark, and pass the door.

This Rafferty endeavored to avoid by laying hold of the door to stop himself, but only did so in a slight degree, and then came with some force against Mr. Morton, who had just recovered, and was about to return and enter the house in pursuit.

"Do not lose sight of him, Rafferty. He went in here. He must not be lost: he must be run down."

They both entered the house, and could distinctly hear the rapid tread of the mendicant up-stairs. This was enough, and away they went after him. They were much distressed, but they were too much interested in the object they had in view to stop their pursuit, at a momeet, too, when they believed they had achieved their object. No, they might sink from exhaustion, but while they had the power to walk they would not give in.

Up-stairs they went, and heard a great deal of screaming and talking.

"We shall have him here," said Mr. Morton; "we have him, Rafferty. Come on!"

"I'm coming," said Rafferty; "I'll go in first, your honor. I'm an ould soldier, and they won't make my phisog worse than it is, in case they should damage it a little; but it is different——"

"Come on," said Henry Morton, as he flung himself against the door, which flew wide open.

There was no need to say "Come on," to Rafferty Brolickbones, as he entered the room after, or almost with, Henry Morton. They glanced round the room. There were several squalid, dirty-looking-children, and a woman with blear eyes, looking all terror and amazement.

In one corner of the room was a shop-board, and beneath it was a bundle of rags, that seemed to have life.

"Where is he? where is the man who was here but now?" demanded Henry Morton.

They said nothing, but pointed to a step-ladder leading to the roof, the scuttle of which was open.

"This way, Rafferty—follow me!" cried Morton, springing up the ladder. The next moment both parties were on the roof.

They gazed around on every side, but they saw nothing. At length Rafferty's eyes fell on a bruised hat.

"Ain't that the very identical hat he wore, sir?"

"By heavens! he has gone this way. Come on, Rafferty."

"I'm wid your honor."

As Henry Morton spoke, he scrambled across the roof of the house and on to the next one, in a manner that was truly alarming, and Rafferty followed him as quick as he was able.

"Take care, Mr. Henry—for the love of life, take care. The least slip in the world would smash you to atoms. Holy Virgin! take care. You had like to have had at least a sixty-feet fall, and that's much more than any Christian can bear. Be careful for everybody's sake, or you'll be kilt, and what will Miss Mabel do?"

"I see him ahead, Rafferty. I can see the villain."

"Hurrah!" said Rafferty, forgetting in the excitement of the moment, the caution he had been giving Morton.

"He went in here, Rafferty. We shall have him at last."

"Hurrah, Mr. Henry! I'm arter you. This is as glorious as the field of Waterloo. Hurrah! hurrah!"

His voice was suddenly hushed, for he immediately jumped in

at a garret window, and attempted to open the door, but it was locked on the outside.

"Here's a go!' cried Rafferty, trying the door. "He's locked us in."

"Have we made a mistake, and come in at the wrong window? And yet I am sure he came in here."

"Hark! There he is, sure enough."

"Where?"

"Down-stairs. There's a row."

They listened, and they heard the sounds of altercation, women's voices, and struggling and screaming, down-stairs.

"D——n!" said Henry Morton, wound up to the highest state of desperation. "Burst the door open."

"But it opens this way. If I were on the other side," said Rafferty, "I'd have it opened in a minute."

He looked around, and saw a small poker, that had been used till it had become short and sharp.

"Here's the thing. Now 'open sesame,'" said Brolickbones, as he pushed it between the lock and the door. The door yielded, and they were free.

"Now for it," he said, throwing down the poker, "now for the murdering vagabond; we'll have him."

They both rushed down-stairs until they came to the second-floor landing, where there were a number of people, men, women, and children, standing talking together.

"Hilloa!" said a man.

"Hilloa!" said Rafferty.

"What do you mean by breaking into people's houses in this style for? I'll have ye all transported, ye vagabond thieves. Ye sha'n't come here."

"Just be aisy, honey," said Rafferty; "if ye are going to fight for the murdering thief, all I have got to tell ye is, you'll have a tough job to get over a Waterloo man."

"Oh, you murdering wretch!" said a female voice; "if you comes here I'll kill you outright, I will."

"And then I'm coming."

"My good people," said Henry Morton, advancing, "we are in pursuit of a great criminal, and I charge ye all to aid me in securing him."

"And I charge you to go where you came from," said the man.

"You'll be liable for aiding and abetting a felon, and moreover you'll be punished for your resistance and refusal to aid me."

"Go to the devil!" said the man; "you are quite wrong; you'll be put to the treadmill as rogues and thieves, for breaking into a man's house; so you had better go back again."

"You let the villain of whom we are in pursuit through."

"I did not; he bolted past the women, who tried to stop him, but they couldn't; he knocked one down."

"It's no use talking," said Henry Morton to Brolickbones, "we must force our way out; come on, follow me."

Brolickbones, however, suddenly took the initiative, and

threw himself with such force against the man, as caused him to fall, knocking down others in his fall; like one of the skittles that has been forcibly struck, he upset many more.

Henry Morton followed close upon Brolickbones, and prevented any more violence being offered, and in a few minutes they reached the shop, which was a bird fancier's, and thence into the street.

"We've missed him, Rafferty," said Morton; "he bas escaped us this time."

"Yes, sir. We lost too much time among those rapscallions up-stairs. I wish I bad time to thrash them all singly."

"Oh, tbey are all desperately well knocked about as it is; they didn't get thrown down one over the other on the stairs without some mischief. But we must now seek some rest. Since I have been disappointed I feel the fatigue which I did not think of before."

"Nor I, sir. Jasus, it was all easy before, but now one's ready to drop into the earth, and I'm wet all over with perspiration, to say nothing of the loss of my hat, which is gone I know not where. I can't now recollect when it fell off, unless my hair lifted it off when I first saw yer honor go helter-skelter over the housetops."

"I dare say I did, Rafferty, but I didn't think of what I was doing. I wonder how we got over so safely."

"I wonder, indeed, sir; I wonder, too, we haven't both made a line or two in the newspaper, and then the news would have been an additional mischief at Morton Hall."

"So it would, Rafferty, but, now we are safe, I never felt exertion so much; you must have a new hat."

They entered a shop, where Brolickbones was accommodated with a new hat, and then they sought some place where they could sit down, rest, and have some refreshment, but their exertion and disappointment had produced a great reaction, mental and pbysical; they were fatigued, silent, and melancholy.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE time bung heavily on the hands of Mabel. She thought and grieved incessantly—indeed, she had no other occupation, save that of recalling to her mind the past, and comparing it with the present, and for one in such a situation it had but a saddening effect.

She lay on the miserable pallet which the mendicant had provided for her, and in the still hours of the night she would listen, and the slightest noise, however distant, came with a surprising distinctness on her ear that was startling.

For some hours she had lain, not sleeping, but awake, and her mind was busy in picturing to herself the many scenes of beauty and pleasure she had been a participator in.

But how was the scene changed! It seemed a dream—friends and companions were all gone. The dear scenes of her youthful pleasures—where were they? Gone—vanished; and become mere matters for the imagination to speculate upon.

Then the picture would change, and she fancied she could see the Hall and its inmates after her forced departure—their sorrow and despair—their consternation; all tended to awaken in her breast those feelings of uneasiness and regret she lay there a prey to.

Neither could she forget her present position, the solitary confinement she suffered, and the wretched mode of existence she was now compelled to endure.

She was lying thus occupied in utter darkness, and hours had elapsed since she had seen the last rays of the setting sun—those few rays which came in at the top of the window—when she thought she heard some one pass along the street and stand near the door.

She paused for some moments in silent attention, listening to ascertain whether any sound took place that indicated a return of the mendicant.

Hark! what sounds are those?—they are human feet ascending the door-steps. She could distinctly hear them, and count them, and then all was still again. What could this mean? she asked herself. It was not the mendicant—of that she was certain. It might be some one who was desirous of escaping the sudden pelting of the storm, which raged without with redoubled fury.

The footsteps are heard descending, and leave the doorway;—anon, there seemed to come on the night air a clear but low whistle, which was three times repeated. Then again all was still—no sound met her ear, save such as the storm occasioned. They were palpable enough, and were frequent; but yet they were accountable, but not so the whistle. What could it mean? No good. Some villainy was afloat; but what was it?

Alas! poor Mabel could but lie there and fear the worst, and imagine all sorts of things; but at the same time she knew nothing; and hence her fears were awakened by all the vague conceptions of her mind about something terrible. Again the low whistle was sounded, and then another was heard in the distance, and then an approach of some other persons toward the spot. This might be the mendicant, she thought; but why he, who had been so cautious as to conceal his abode from every one. and, even to prevent his being followed, had adopted several devices—why he should act thus she could not tell; but then, she could not understand his motives, and, therefore, could not judge what might be his acts. She listened again, and thought, as she lay there, she could distinguish more than two, if not more than three persons at the door. There was a shuffling of feet for several seconds, and some bungling attempts at the key-hole.

She sat up in the bed, much terrified at the thought that several men were about to be brought into the house at such an hour, and probably they were in liquor. for the key was more than once tried, and yet they could not open the door.

These were moments of great uneasiness to her. and she sat up listening with almost painful acuteness. The door was again tried unsuccessfully; but then, again, it yielded to repeated at-

tempts, and opened on its hinges, for Mabel was sure of this from the rush of cold air that entered at that moment.

There was some indistinct kind of noise that Mabel could not make out, and much shuffling and shifting of feet in the passage; the door was then carefully closed after them, and then a whispered conversation was held in the passage.

"I tell you," said one, "the house has been empty for years; and I am frequently in the neighborhood, and not a light nor a soul have I ever seen in it."

"It doesn't follow but that there might be, for all that," said another voice; "and we can't be too careful in this matter; you know how Ned Williams was taken in the other day."

"No, I don't; and I don't care, that's more. I know that you are an infernally timid cove, and would start at your own shadow if you saw it. Why don't you help me on with the cove?"

There was a whispered consultation among those who were now in the passage, and they seemed to move with great caution and care.

They seemed to be dragging something or somebody along the floor; Mabel could not distinguish which it was: indeed, she was fearfully agitated; she could not tell what to imagine. These men, be they whom they might, were doubtless murderers; and if they should find her, they would, no doubt, sacrifice her to their sense of safety, for while she lived, she knew enough to make her very dangerous to them. What, therefore, was to prevent them from taking her life, when their own lives were at stake, or when they believed so, and that was the same thing to them? She sat up in her bed, and feelings of horror and despair came over her heart with strength it is difficult to depict. Her eyes were fixed toward the door, for it was too dark even to see its shadow.

"It's d——d heavy," said one.

"Yes," replied the other; "and we mustn't complain of that."

"No, no; his purse was heavy, too; and that's some consolation; though I'm sure I'm very dry and very tired. Let's put him in this room."

"What, the front parlor?"

"Yes."

They pushed the parlor door open, and dragged somebody in; Mabel could hear the scraping of the feet of somebody that was being partially dragged and partially lifted along the ground, until it was laid on the floor, and then there was a pause, during which she could hear the men breathe, as if they had deposited a heavy burden upon the floor, and they were recovering themselves from the fatigue.

"Well," said one of them, "there ain't much accommodation here—no inducement to stay long. And, as I am wet, cold, tired, and thirsty, I will sit down on the floor for a short time."

"And can you sit down at such a moment?"

"And why not? haven't I got some brandy in my flask?

Come and sit down; we may as well enjoy the moments as they fly."

"I can only tell where you are by sound," said the other.

"We will throw a light on the subject, then; here's my darkey, it will illuminate us all, as well as the gemman in the sleepy fit that lies here."

With a convulsive shudder and great mental effort, Mabel restrained herself from uttering a loud shriek, but a suppressed sound, as that of a groan, escaped her.

"What's that?" exclaimed he who was the last to sit down.

"What's what, you fool?" exclaimed his companion.

"I thought I heard a groan. or some such thing."

"Very likely you heard a groan; it was the wind wheezing and puffing through the old, deserted house."

Mabel, though shaking in every limb as though an ague had suddenly seized her, by a kind of instinct arose and crept toward a chink in the door that led to the next room. She discovered the chink in consequence of the light showing through it from their lantern. There she saw two men dressed in large white coats, or what had been white at one time, patched over in places. They were seated on the floor; they were big, burly men, with most villainous countenances. They held the one a drinking-cup, and the other a dram-bottle. On the ground beside them there was a dark-lantern with the shade taken off, and it threw a light upon them both, throwing them out into a kind of almost supernatural relief. It gave them a strange unearthly appearance; the profiles of their countenances were very distinct. and they looked at each other with a combined expression of cunning and villainy of a most brutal character.

Mabel sickened at the sight of these two men; their countenances bespoke a degree of depravity that can scarcely be credited by any human being. Murderers seemed written upon every lineament; but yet they were apparently unconscious of their own marked character, for they sat with an apparent calmness beside each other.

On the floor beneath them lay the body of a man; he was well dressed, and tolerably young, as might be presumed by his hair and dress.

He was living and breathing, but it was heavy and labored, as though some drug had been given him, or he had been drinking to excess. The unfortunate man was tossed down almost as though he had been a lump of lumber, and there allowed to remain, which proved the strength of the drug that had been given him; and of this these two men must have been well aware.

They were drinking and conversing in low tones to each other by turns, as though something serious now engaged their attention, and they conversed mutually and seriously.

"Well, Jack," said one, "now, I tell you what it is—my opinion is that we might have a chance of being followed. Let's do what we have to do, at once; we have a distance to travel before we are in a place of safety, and there is a greater chance of being seen the later we go away from here. You know, Jack, if I am

caught, I'm safe for a hempen cravat. I have long escaped, but it is only in consequence of my being so precious cautious."

"Well, business is business; and I'm ready; but how shall we do it?"

"That's a question; I don't like cutting his throat, it makes such a bloody mess, and then there are traces which may one day see the light."

"What do you say to a little strangulation—mere choking, you know? It leaves no mark."

"So be it. Where's the rope, and beam?"

"Yonder is a nail that will hold a halter, and a man at the end of it, if ever it would anything."

As he spoke he pointed to a nail over the door, through a chink of which poor Mabel was viewing them, and listening in an agony of fear and apprehension. She could not move or speak; her whole frame seemed spell-bound; she stood like a statue, immovable, and in one position.

She had remained here ever since they had come, and she had, moreover, heard all they said; she knew they were about to commit murder, and yet she could not raise a single cry of alarm to save the wretched man from his fate.

That the mendicant was not with them she was fully aware, and who these men were, she, of course, could not guess; they were some midnight marauders and murderers, she had no doubt, but they were quite ignorant of her presence. Indeed, they were perfectly assured, in their own minds, that the house was altogether empty of even an occasional inhabitant.

The two men looked at their victim, and turned him over and over several times, but nothing more than an occasional deep breath or slight groan escaped him.

"Bill, we should have had a tough job to have had any struggle with this cove, if we hadn't drugged him."

"So we should—so we should," said the other; "and now we must manufacture a halter out of his handkerchiefs."

So saying he took two from the person of the insensible man, and began to tie them together in a peculiar manner. This done, they adjusted it round the neck of the victim in a tight slip-knot.

They now got the insensible man up in a sitting posture, and began to feel carefully over his person, and turned every one of his pockets out, one after the other, in a very expeditious manner, which showed they were old adepts at that sort of thing. Then each took him beneath the arms and dragged him to the spot indicated, and poor Mabel was horrified to find that they were about to commit the atrocious deed within a few inches of where she stood.

However, she was so entranced, that, had her life depended upon it, she could not move or close her eyes to the awful scene that was about to be enacted; neither could she utter one single shriek to save the unfortunate man's life, so bound up were her faculties. Mabel could see and hear, but she could not move, she could not speak, and her very breath came and went with a suppressed sound, the current of her blood seemed frozen within

her, and she stood glaring on the awful spectacle that was now going on so close to her.

"Come, lift him up higher," said one of the men, as he tried to fix the running knot he had made at the other end of the handkerchief, to catch fast hold of the nail.

"All right," said the man, when he had fixed the handkerchief on the nail securely.

"When shall I let him go?"

"Now; but gently."

Gradually the man withdrew the support he gave to the body, and the sufferer began to kick and plunge, making a suppressed sound in his throat.

"Hold his legs and arms."

They did so; but the nail gave way, and the half-strangled man came to the earth with a dreadful fall.

Then commenced a dreadful struggle. It was now life and death for all. During the struggle the door flew open from the violence of their attempts; but, fortunately, it escaped Mabel, who still stood terrified and incapable of motion, gazing on the horrid and deadly fray.

"Take out your knife, while I hold on by the handkerchief," said one, as he grasped it, and tightened it round the man's throat.

The other made no reply, but took from his pocket a Spanish clasp-knife, which he opened with his teeth, and then dashed it, with a heavy blow, into the prostrate man's breast, as he lifted his arms to free himself from the strangulation that he was suffering.

A sudden convulsion passed through his body, and the man was a corpse. He straightened himself on the floor, and the life-blood welled out of the gaping wound which the Spanish knife had caused.

"That was a d——d good blow, in the right place, and at the right moment."

"Yes," replied the man, coolly wiping his knife on the dead man's leg. "I thought it had been carried on too far, and in another minute or two he would have got his jaw loose, and then the neighbors would be called in. Eh!——"

"What's the matter? Why, d——e, you are as white as a sheet. Have you seen a ghost, or——"

The speaker had followed the direction of the gaze of his companion, whose eyes were nearly starting from their sockets, and his under jaw fell; and on looking round he discovered the object of his companion's terror, which was now also his own. What that was we will now explain.

Mabel, who was unable to move or speak, had stood staring, with a gaze she could not withdraw, at the deed that had been done, and the bloody spectacle before her. When she first got off the bed to peep through the chink in the door, she had wrapped a coarse white quilt around her in the dark, as it was very cold. Her appearance at the door was, therefore, to say the least of it, in keeping well with the supernatural.

The men, through their falls and struggles with their victim,

had forced the door open, yet did not seem to be aware it really was open, and the first intimation they had of it was by something unusually white attracting the attention of one, in the way we have described.

Such men are usually superstitious, and when they saw a figure all in white, with a countenance ghastly pale, standing in the attitude of bending forward with what appeared to them to be supernatural lustrous eyes, they were paralyzed, and for several minutes could not withdraw their gaze from hers.

Suddenly one jumped up; the spell that bound the other was broken, and they both dashed out of the room. along the passage, and were speedily in the street, and coursing along the town as if a whole legion of devils were after them.

However, Mabel was unable to withdraw that painful gaze which was fixed on an object so terrifying as that which lay before her.

The first thing of which she was sensible was a strong light before her. She heard some one speak; but who it was or what was said, she knew not; but then the spell was broken. She looked up and saw the mendicant standing by her in an inquiring attitude, looking alternately at her and the dead body that lay surrounded by a pool of blood.

"What means this?" he said, pointing to the body.

"Murder! murder!" exclaimed Mabel, in almost shrieking accents.

"Hush! hush! not so loud. Who has done this?"

"Murder—oh, God! oh, God!—murder!"

"I see that; but you needn't trouble yourself about it so much. Who has been here to do it, and how came they here at all; and how came this door opened, and you safe?"

Mabel made no reply; her eyes were withdrawn from the horrifying spectacle where they had been so long fixed; she was in no hurry to encounter it again, and she hid her face in her hands to shut out the very sight of that which had caused her more misery and anguish of heart than she had ever yet felt.

The mendicant now stooped to examine the body, and was about to speak, when a loud and rapid knock commenced at the street door that reverberated fearfully through the house, and caused him to start to his feet.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

YOUNG Morton, as may well be supposed, from the interest he had already seemed to take in the elderly gentleman, to whom he had, by good fortune, been enabled to be of so much service, did not forget the engagement he had made with him to pay him a visit, and hear from him some promised particulars of the causes of his apparent dejection, as well as his presence in London.

That there was some sort of mystery connected with him appeared past a doubt; indeed he had himself quite admitted as much, and although far—very far—from being ordinarily disposed to interfere in the affairs of other people, Henry could

not disguise from himself that he felt an amount of curiosity as new as it was irresistible, to know something more of the stranger, whose appearance so greatly interested him in his favor.

Notwithstanding the stirring events which had taken place in the pursuit of the mendicant, the time hung heavily on the hands of Henry, until, with propriety, he could seek the elderly stranger, and put him in mind of his promise.

Henry now started on his visit; and by walking rapidly he soon reached the temporary abode of the French gentleman, whom he had the pleasure to find had by no means forgotten the appointment, but was duly expecting him, with an impatience that looked almost like a reflex of his own.

It would answer no good purpose whatever for us to trouble the reader with the errors of pronunciation incidental to a foreigner, with but an imperfect knowledge of our language: therefore, in the conversation that ensued between Henry and the stranger, we shall assume that the one was as well able to express himself as the other; because, where the French gentleman was at fault, Henry was well able to assist him by his knowledge of both languages.

"Sir," said the old gentleman, "so strongly do I feel impelled to tell you the whole of a somewhat painful family history, that I should feel the most grievous disappointment if you did not listen to me."

Henry made a suitable reply; and after a short pause the old French gentleman said, in a voice of emotion, which showed that some of the recollections that came now thronging across his mind were of a painful nature,—

"My name is Rouselli, and I belong to, or rather am now, the head of an ancient French family, nearly allied to the noblesse. You are well aware of the strife, both external and internal, and the changes and mutations which my unhappy country has undergone for many years past, and therefore you will not consider it possible that a family of any importance in the social fabric of the country should escape some of the evils of so disorganized a state of things. I *had* a son, and by my use of that expression, you know that now I have him not. He has passed from me, and I am childless in my old age. He died the death of a soldier at Waterloo. He was a colonel of cavalry in the army of the emperor. He had followed his imperial master's fortunes on many a well-fought field, and, perhaps happily for him, he laid down his life at last for him before those misfortunes from which Napoleon never again emerged. Some years before Waterloo was fought and won, the imperial army overran the greatest part of Germany and Prussia. My son's regiment, for a considerable time, found quarters at Berlin, and as a severe winter had set in, the operations of the war were, to a certain extent, in that quarter, at least, suspended. It was at one of the entertainments got up by some of the French party in Berlin that my son first beheld Marie Mendelson, a beautiful and accomplished girl, then but eighteen years of age, and the daughter of respectable parents in Berlin. To see her, as he

wrote to me, was to love her, and that love, according as opportunity occurred, soon grew into an unconquerable passion. But there were circumstances which placed, to all appearance, an insurmountable difficulty in the way of Marie Mendelson ever becoming his. She was engaged to be married to a man named Sternholde, a Prussian, who was highly approved of by her family, but, as it appeared, not at all loved or chosen by Marie herself. This was a painful state of things, and not likely to pass off quietly. Sternbolde, the intended husband of Marie Mendelson, was a man of the most violent passions. and he soon discovered that my son looked with the eyes of affection upon Marie, as well as making the more mortifying discovery that she was not indifferent to the attractions of the handsome young officer, who, in manners and appearance, presented so striking a contrast to Sternholde, whom she was about to be sacrificed to, for nothing but a sacrifice could it be called.

"Thus matters went on for some time, until, at a ball which was attended by all the French officers, and by the principal inhabitants of Berlin, who had submitted to the new dominion, these rivals met. It became then a struggle between the two which should engross the hand of the beautiful Marie during the dances. She decided in favor of my son, and Sternholde left the ball-room, furious. That night an attempt was made to assassinate my son as be was returning to his quarters; Sternholde could not be proved to be the party, but he was more than suspected. The family of Marie now took up the business, and insisted upon her at once fulfilling her matrimonial engagement with Sternholde. They were deaf to her entreaties—they were blind to her tears, and she was dragged to the altar an unwilling bride on the same day that orders arrived for a grand movement of the French army of occupation from Prussia to meet the emperor, and concentrate a large force further south. Despair took possession of the lovers. They had a stolen interview by the aid and assistance of a faithful old domestic of the Mendelson family, whose heart bled to witness the distress of Marie, and there it was arranged that she should allow the ceremony of marriage to proceed so far as to lull suspicion, and leave her home before the bridal party reached the cathedral where the more solemn rites were to be performed. By some unfortunate circumstances, however, it appeared that Marie was compelled to fail in keeping her engagement, and, unable to elude the vigilance of her friends, she was compelled actually to allow the marriage to proceed: so that as far as the ritual of the Church could make her, she became the wife of Sternholde. She had made up her mind, however, that death was preferable to becoming really his: and when the shades of evening wrapped the city in obscurity, and preparations were proceeding at her father's house, for the purpose of celebrating the wedding with magnificence and *eclat*, she watched her opportunity, and being now unsuspected, in consequence of the ceremony of marriage having actually taken place, she left her father's house, and fled to my son. In another half hour his regiment must have left Berlin: indeed, he might be almost said to have been mounted and ready, al-

though despair and agony were at his heart. It is needless to say with what rapturous feelings he received the confiding girl, who had now given him so convincing a proof of her affection. He made some hasty arrangements for her comfort, and before she was well missed from her father's house, she was en route from Berlin, in the acknowledged character of my son's wife, for such he declared her to be. Alas—alas! what a world of misery followed close upon that step, which had been prompted by unreflecting affection. Bear with me awhile, sir; my heart bleeds at the remembrance of the past."

The old man seemed to pause at this point in his narrative, as if it were the last one upon which he could dwell with pleasure. There was certainly something romantic and ennobling in that love which could induce a girl, so tenderly nurtured, to forsake her home, her friends, and all those associations which render life dear, for the purpose of throwing herself completely and entirely upon the protection of a stranger.

"I pray you, sir," said Henry, "not to let any fancied impatience of mine hurry you forward to events, the description of which will give you pain. I own that I am deeply interested in your narrative, perhaps more so than you imagine—the name of your son and yourself, you say, is Rouselli?"

"Yes, that is our family name—a name which my poor Adolphe would have been glad to bestow, with every dignity and honor that could appertain to it, upon Marie Mendelson. You will perceive, my young friend, that, unfortunately, in consequence of that lapse of time which had enabled the marriage ceremony to be performed between Marie and Sternholde, he had a sort of claim upon her, which he was just the man to urge to its very utmost."

"I understand the church has done its part in effecting this union."

"It had; and yet, with all this apparent bar to her being my son's wife, she so trustingly, you will perceive, flew to his arms. Notwithstanding that the ceremony of marriage had been performed between her and Sternholde, my son would not be satisfied until he had induced a priest, who had devoted himself to the army, to wed them with such rites and ceremonies as the circumstances in which they were placed rendered possible. Thus was Marie twice married within the short space of almost a few hours; but there can be no doubt she looked upon her first vows as nothing better than a solemn mockery, for she had been dragged to the altar's foot by her friends, there to pledge her faith to a man whom she could neither respect nor love. It was hard for such a creature, nursed in the lap of luxury, as she had been, to endure the terrors and privations, and the hardships of a campaign; but with a noble fortitude she bore up against every fatigue and every disaster of a campaign peculiarly fatiguing and disastrous. The emperor was in the decay of his fortunes; disaster followed disaster—treachery, open and undisguised, exhibited itself on all hands; so that a brilliant army was reduced about the year 1814 to a fearful wreck. It was then that in a miserable cottage, somewhere in Flanders, the

beauty, Marie Mendelson, presented her husband with a child. It was born amid the clash of arms, and the din and horror of war; and his anxiety for fear he should be obliged to leave her, in consequence of his regiment being ordered forward, was so intense as nearly to render him helpless through sickness brought on by excessive mental anguish. Long before, under ordinary circumstances, she would have been declared fit to travel, the remnant of the army was ordered forward in order to effect a junction with the new legions which the emperor had, with immense perseverance, recently raised. Marie and her infant occupied a luggage wagon, which was confided to the care of parties whom Colonel Rouselli could depend upon; and thus for some months longer she followed in the fortunes of the army, and was in the immediate outskirts of many a brilliant engagement. Suddenly, one day, when my son was sitting in his tent along with his wife and child, a hand-grenade was thrown into the midst of them, and a loud voice cried: '*Vengeance for Sternholde!*' With the ready tact of a soldier inured to danger, he threw himself upon his face, and forced his wife to do likewise, with the child in her arms, close to the death-dealing missile. It exploded, but left them unharmed. The camp was searched, but no one answering the description of Sternholde, the Prussian, was discovered. From that hour, however, assassination of sentinels and officers became frequent, and most of the bodies had a placard pinned to their breasts, on which were the words:

"'The vengeance of Sternholde against the nation of Rouselli!'

"A superstitious fear seized upon the soldiery. They called this appearance the Battle Fiend, and the whole of that division of the army became impregnated with a kind of dread concerning him which it was wonderful brave men could give way to.

"But events were hurrying on, of a political character, which forced the emperor to make one grand effort for his own existence as a monarch. The battle of Waterloo was near at hand—that terrible conflict, which has exercised, and will continue to exercise, so great an effect upon the politics of Europe. The division of the French army with which my son's regiment was incorporated was not foremost in the field. It was not till after two o'clock, on that memorable day, that he and his regiment were called into action. It is well known to all who made themselves acquainted with the details of that terrible engagement, that, toward the latter part of it, it was fought out by the artillery and cavalry. My son's regiment, therefore, being a mounted one, came in for a full share of the affray. Marie was in the rear of the French lines; and, from time to time, Rouselli had managed to send her word that he was safe, by those parties who had the care of transporting the wounded to places of security. At last, these small detachments got so much in the habit of seeking her out, and saying 'Colonel Rouselli is safe,' that when something of a contrary nature happened, without any direction from any one, the fact was abruptly communicated to

her. The battle was lost; that last grand, decisive charge had taken place, when all the scattered cavalry met in terrific collision. Light cavalry and heavy dragoons, cuirassiers and lancers, all were intermingled, without order or precedence. Thousands fell, and among them—my son! He fell," said the old man, with much emotion, "as he always wished to fall, upon the battle-field, gloriously, his face to the foe!"

Henry felt that this was not a time to intrude a remark upon the sorrow-stricken man. With a tact beyond his years, he knew that if the mourner found not sufficient philosophy within his own heart to stem the current of his grief, it could be given him by no one.

The old man was silent for many minutes, and then stretching forth his hand, he took Henry's in his grasp, and said, gently: "My young friend, I thank you for this silent sympathy; it speaks to me more eloquently than any words in which you could have clothed feeling. The pang is past, and I can now proceed more calmly."

"Perhaps at another time," said Henry, "you will be more inclined to furnish me with the sequel of a narrative that has already excited my warmest sympathies."

"No, no; no time like the present. If I told you not all now, I should feel the weight of what I had to tell pressing heavily upon me. I will go on now. The tale is nearly over; but yet its strangest portion has yet to come."

After a pause, the old man continued, and he spoke more composedly by far than he had done before. It seemed as if, up to the point when he had told how his son had fallen, he had labored in his narrative, and it had been a pain to him of no ordinary character to bring it to its climax. Now, however, that was passed, and he proceeded with more spirit and determination.

"You must understand, my friend, that these particulars which I communicate to you found their way to my ears through the medium of a brother officer of my son's, in whom Adolphe had placed the greatest confidence, and toward whom he felt all the affection of a most attached friend. This officer was wounded likewise, but not severely; and although it was a wound which put a stop to his locomotion, yet it was not sufficient to prevent him, at a distance, from being a spectator of various events that had occurred upon the field of battle. It was toward evening then, and the scattered host of the French army was flying before the Prussian cavalry, which came comparatively fresh into the field against them. My son's wounds were not mortal, and he lay for some hours seeming dead, but really only in a trance, upon that field of blood. Marie, from the first moment that she had been roughly told he had fallen at the head of his regiment, had, with the despair of death depicted upon her countenance, flown to seek him amidst the dead and the dying. Grasping her infant to her breast, and with a feeling of despair at her heart that enabled her to tread without sickening, e'en through the pools of blood and the mangled corpses that strewed the plain, she sought the chosen of her heart. At last

she found him; she thought he was no more, and, with a shriek of agony, she flung herself beside the blood-stained form, and prayed to Heaven to take her, too, to that world which is to come. It seemed as if God's mercy had granted the mourner's prayer; she moved not, spoke not; insensibility stole over her, and as Adolphe slowly opened his eyes, upon which the film of death was gathering, and looked upon that bloody field, he became painfully conscious that beside him was the cherished idol of his heart. He saw the child, too, and he saw that it lived, although he believed that its mother was no more. The wounded officer, who was enabled, from the observations he made, to tell me this much, states that at that moment a horse, maddened by wounds, and in the agonies of death, rose up and dashed across the field, scattering destruction beneath his sounding hoofs. He was trodden on by the infuriated animal in its wild career, and the pain he endured sufficiently confused his faculties to enable him to have a faint, dreamy kind of perception of what next occurred. He thinks he heard the sound of English voices close about where Adolphe lay, and he fancied that some sort of struggle took place, for he distinctly avers that a musket was discharged by some one. Then he saw Adolphe rise up, or nearly so, but he could not be sure; darkness was coming over the plain, and he was getting fearfully faint himself, as much from exhaustion, in consequence of the want of food for many hours, as from the anguish of his wounds, and that was all he could actually tell me of his own knowledge; and from that moment I have heard nothing definite concerning my son, Marie, or the child."

"But you have heard something, although of an indefinite character?"

"Yes; but, because all inquiries have been fruitless, I am led to think that what I have heard is founded upon error, and that some accidental coincidence of circumstances must have occurred to give color to a story which surely cannot be the fact, or diligent inquiry would have been crowned with some sort of success."

"Have you any objection to impart to me those particulars which you thought you acquired?"

"None in the least; listen I will tell you all. My son's friend was taken up by the English, and conveyed to Brussels, where he remained many weeks in a church, which had been devoted to the purposes of a military hospital. There, from various parties, who came to speak to him, he learned that an English officer, while lying wounded on the field, and scarcely able to help himself, so badly was he hurt, had consigned to his care a young child, by a French officer of rank, who, shortly after bestowing such a trust upon him, and getting his promise in the name of heaven to fulfill it, expired by his side. This story was currently spoken of among the soldiery; but our friend was disabled, as you will understand, from making personal inquiry. He was told that this very officer lay dangerously wounded in Brussels, and, as his own injuries were not of a very serious character, but, on the contrary, such as promised

a speedy convalescence, he made up his mind not to appear anxious on the subject. hut to seek out the English officer when he could do so personally, and ascertain if it were indeed the child of Colonel Rouselli of which he had charge. Contrary, however, to all expectations, his wound assumed a troublesome, if not a dangerous character, after a time; a fever supervened, which disordered his faculties; and, when that subsided by the remedies pursued by the English surgeons, he had the mortification of finding that the British army had left Brussels, on their route to Paris, and that among the wounded officers who had sufficiently recovered to he sent home was this very officer, ahout whom the story of the child had been told. This was mortifying, but could not be helped, and the only resource of Adolphe's friend now was to endeavor to discover the name and rank of the party who had accepted such a trust. In pursuing these inquiries he found how difficult a thing it was to get apparently the simplest evidence upon the simplest affair. There seemed to be a general understanding and agreement that such a circumstance had taken place, of a child being placed in the care of a British officer upon the field of battle; but no two persons were agreed about his name or his rank. One person indeed, a camp-follower, asserted that it was not an officer at all, but a wild-looking Irish infantry man, who had taken charge of the child, and who was about the worst guardian it could possibly have had."

"But what name did the generality agree in giving to the English officer?"

"Martin, or Murton, or some such name; which, however, we could not find as belonging to the British army in any rank whatever, except that of the very lowest, and those individuals, when applied to, disclaimed all knowledge of the transaction."

"Alas, sir!" said Henry, "what unavailing exertions have you made to discover the truth?"

"As many as possible; and my presence here in this country is a proof that, although sixteen or seventeen years have elapsed, I have not forgotten the affair. or given up a hope of one day clearing up the mysteries which surround it."

"And was nothing," said Henry, with great hesitation, "ever heard of Marie Mendelson?"

"Nothing—nothing."

"Alas! Her fate seems to have been the most gloomy of all."

"It was it was. My son, of course, found the death which he knew might be the result of his profession; but to poor Marie the case was widely different, and whatever fate may have been hers, she is most abundantly to be pitied."

Henry turned pale and red by turns, and could not conceal the agitation into which he was thrown.

"My young friend," said old Rouselli, "you are unwell. I fear I have tried your generous feelings too much hy the recital of my misfortunes. What has come over you?"

"It is nothing—a sudden rush of feeling. I shall be better

presently. I must confess your narrative has sensihly touched me."

"Ah! you are too young to he afflicted hy such terrifying details. I regret I told you all; but I felt, somehow, impelled to do so."

"Nay, sir, do not regret, for a moment, for in telling me all, believe me, you——"

"Wherefore do you pause? what would you say? Oh, if you have any consolation to offer to a father's heart, offer it at once, and do not keep me in a horrible suspense."

"I have nothing—I have nothing. Will you, sir, permit me to call upon you at this hour to-morrow?"

"With pleasure. Your society will he grateful to me. 'Tis I that shall feel greatly indebted for such a visit."

On reaching his lodgings, Henry Morton rethought over every word of the Frenchman's narrative, and coupling it with what he already knew of Mabel's early history, felt more than ever convinced that he had in Monsieur Rouselli discovered the grandfather of the fair object of his love. To settle the fact beyond dispute, he summoned Rafferty, and quietly drew from the honest Irishman every incident of the battle-field that was in any shape connected with Mabel; and comparing them with what he had learned from the aged Frenchman was at once astonished and rejoiced to find that they harmonized so perfectly. It was now clear to him that his brother should be made acquainted with this singular discovery, and he resolved to post at once to Morton Hall. In accordance with this resolution, he wrote and dispatched the following note to Monsieur Rouselli:

"—— *Hotel.*

"SIR,—You will douhtless he surprised to hear from me instead of seeing me, for which I must apologize. I am compelled to leave town unexpectedly, but shall not be away many days. Will you permit me to heg of you not to leave your hotel until I return to London? I have urgent motives for making this request, which I cannot state in this letter, and there is not time for an interview. Allow me to heg this favor of you, that you will not quit your hotel until my return, which shall be in a very few days at the furthest.

"I am, sir, your obliged servant,

"HENRY MORTON.

"To Monsieur Rouselli."

Having sent this epistle to the old Frenchman, Henry Morton ordered Rafferty to get the horses ready, and a few minutes afterward both parties were on their way to Morton Hall, where they were received, on their arrival, with that hearty and politely generous welcome so characteristic of the Mortons; and while Rafferty went to pay his respects to the domestics of the household, Henry was closeted with Captain Morton and his wife, to whom he related every incident that had occurred from the time he left the Hall in search of Mabel down to the moment of his return. That part of the young man's narrative bearing upon Monsieur Rouselli, affected Captain Morton to such a

degree that he resolved to start at once for London, and, accompanied by Henry, to call upon the aged Frenchman.

The next morning the whole party were astir at daybreak, and after a hearty breakfast, the sound of horses' feet were heard at the door; and then, taking an affectionate leave of Mrs. Morton, Captain Morton, followed by his brother, betook himself to the saddle, and then, accompanied by Rafferty Brolickbones, left Morton Hall for London. At first they traveled slowly, but after a short time they put their horses to their mettle, and the sound of their feet might be heard for some distance in a quick and rapid pace. And thus they went forward, stopping at different places, waiting only to allow their blown animals to recover their wind, and to cool themselves before they started on their journey again with renewed strength and vigor.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE knocking at the door of the house in which the mendicant had confined Mabel, and in which so deep and terrible a tragedy had so short a time before been enacted, completely confounded both her and her persecutor. They stood both in the same attitude in which it had surprised them. Again came the startling sounds, and they rang and echoed through the old house in a manner that would have led to the supposition that the house was similarly attacked on all sides. Still the mendicant attempted not an escape. He was so thoroughly bewildered and surprised that he could not think of safety, but gazed alternately at the body of the murdered man, which lay at his feet, and then at Mabel.

How the body came there he could not conceive. That it was murdered he knew, and that it was murdered in that room, too, was apparent, from the quantity of blood that lay about the body, and collected in a pool where the floor lay lower.

That Mabel had done it he could not credit; but at the same time, who could have done it, and who could have brought it there?

Poor Mabel, too, stood like one in a trance. She could not think she saw the hideous spectacle. She had been an involuntary witness of all that had happened and could not but feel her heart chilled by the accumulation of horrors that had that night taken place, and surrounded her.

At this moment noises were heard

"Force the door in," said a deep, stern voice.

"Ay, ay," was the answer.

In another moment there was a crash, and the door was thrown down with a loud, sharp noise.

At that moment footsteps were heard in the passage, and the same voice was heard to say:—"They came here. I am sure we shall find the murderer in the house, and his victim."

Then, and only at that moment, did the mendicant seem to recover himself sufficiently to think of self-preservation.

"D——n!" he muttered; and then, looking from one way to the other, he seemed to have made up his mind, and darted out to escape by a sudden and desperate effort to rush through the persons, whoever they might be.

In this he had to deal with men who were accustomed to surprises; and the mendicant had no sooner got into the passage, than he found himself grappled by a stout, powerful man, who seized him by the throat, and from whom he could not free himself.

"Here, Bill, I've got one cove, as he was trying to make a dive and get out. Just come and put on the darbies. The gentleman won't be quiet, though he knows he can't get away. There, confound you, if you won't take things more quietly, take that, and that, will you, and be cursed to you!"

Immediately following this was heard a sound that indicated a bumping of heads against the wall in the passage. The other man spoken to now came, and the mendicant was secured by handcuffs, so that he could not get away.

"Now we have you safe," he said, "we will examine the house, and see what you have been up to."

"I have done nothing."

"Then you need not be under any alarm. You are safe enough, so don't put yourself in a fume."

The mendicant certainly did seem to be taken unawares, and had lost his usual presence of mind in this instance; indeed, his whole faculties seemed to have received a shock. It was a surprise that had taken possession of his faculties, and from this he was but slowly recovering to a full consciousness that he was placed in the last position that he could with safety to his life enjoy; he therefore made use of the only means of escape that suggested itself to him, and this, unfortunately for him, had failed.

"Come, bring him into the room; but one can guard him now, for he has not the use of his hands."

They now entered the place; the room in which the stranger had been cruelly and brutally murdered. The first man who entered slipped as his foot stepped into a pool of blood.

"Hilloa, Jem, what's the matter?"

"Hang me if I know, but I tumbled over something soft, and down I came."

"Why, here's the dead body!"

"It is hardly cold yet, poor wretch; how savage and brutal must this fellow be."

"I never injured that man."

"Is not killing an injury?"

"Yes, but I never killed him."

"Who did?"

"I don't know."

"Ah, that's all very well. Well, well, you will have an opportunity of trying to make the beak believe all that—I don't believe a word of it."

"There's one that can clear me; she well knows I am innocent. Mabel, say I am innocent."

"Place me as I was among my friends; do me justice, and I will say all I have seen."

"No, I cannot, will not do that."

"Then my lips are sealed."

"A pretty job this," said one of the officers, as he looked at the body; "why, he's tried to hang him, and couldn't, and then stabbed him; as sure as I'm alive he has; what a hard-hearted brute,—but there, look in his face, and you will tell what he is."

"For all you say," said the mendicant, "I am innocent; and, as for you, Mabel, this day's work will and must be a bitter one to you when you reflect that by refraining from uttering the truth, you have brought me to death."

"What cunning! I say, my friend, your doubling and twisting about only makes you sink deeper into the mire. Recollect all you say we shall have to repeat."

"You may say what I say, that I am innocent of this crime, and she who stands there is well aware that I only speak the truth. Justice, Mabel—justice."

"And justice I say, too," said Mabel; "restore me to the arms of those friends from whom you have torn me; do justice there, and then you may demand justice for yourself."

"There, that's what I call common sense; and if he can't see it, he ought to be hanged without the benefit of the clergy."

"You see he's a double rascal; he's been committing abduction, which is of itself a transportable offense; and were it not that we are sure of his being hung, why we'd have him committed on that score; but I tell you what, we can't have him transported after he is hanged, and to transport him first would be to put off the final account, and put the country to greater expense than he is at all worth."

"Well, we had better bring him along; he must be locked up safely for the night."

"Yes, yes; come along," said another, to the head officer; "we can make this all right."

"Very well; now, then, are you all ready? Now, my amiable-looking cut-throat, will you please to move? and to move at our pace, too, for a short walk, and then we'll have a coach; we'll endeavor to indulge you as well as ourselves."

"I am ready," said the mendicant, turning to the officers. "Mabel, be at the police-office to-morrow, and clear me of this foul imputation."

"Where are my friends?"

These were the last words of Mabel that reached the ear of the mendicant.

Mabel heard the retreating footsteps of the officer with a trance-like feeling. She was scarcely aware of her own position and her own freedom. She heard their steps become fainter and fainter, and then she thought she could hear the footsteps of the mendicant; she could, she imagined, distinguish them from the others. It was with a painful feeling that she remembered slowly that she was alone; that, in fact, she was worse than alone, because there was the mangled corpse lying huddled up in a heap not far from her. Was the mendicant really gone?

It seemed a dream; the whole of the occurrence a dream of the most hideous aspect that ever crept over the waiting senses of human being; a dream that made the blood run cold, and the flesh creep into knots. No, no; hideous and horrible as it was, yet it was real; there was nothing but what was plain matter of fact. She listened with breathless attention to ascertain if that fearful man should return to place a bar between her and hope and liberty. No, she heard no one, no sound—no footsteps reached her ear. She was free!

She went into the room again, and sought for the bed upon which lay the only things she had in the way of covering for protecting herself in the open air. It was merely what she had wrapped herself up in when she had left Morton Hall. So protected she came to the door of that room where she had seen so much crime committed.

Here she paused. Her heart beat violently. Could she cross that room, and in all probability come in contact with that dreadful corpse, all besmeared with blood? It made her tremble to think of it.

She stepped slowly and cautiously along the room, but bad scarcely got half way across when she felt her foot slip along the floor a short way. A suppressed scream of terror came to her lips, and died away before she gave utterance to it; for she knew she had stepped into the pool of blood—so cold, so slimy, that a chill of horror crept through her frame. Great as was her terror, she could scarcely move to escape the clotted gore that lay on the dappled boards; but, by a sudden impulse, she made a violent effort, and rushed into the passage, where the cold air that came in at the door somewhat recovered her. She paused, and leaned her head on her hand, as she supported herself against the cold wall. The sound of some distant passengers, however, recalled her to herself, and she crept cautiously to the door.

"Thank Heaven, I am free," she exclaimed, in a half-audible voice; "I am free once more."

Poor Mabel, she hurried on from the vicinity of the house in which she bad seen enough of crime and horror to appal the stoutest heart. She never heeded where she was going; she only thought of getting away from that place of horrors.

What she was to do, or where she was to go for shelter, she knew not; but unable to devise any scheme, she kept walking on until she felt fit to drop on the earth.

There were no places open but a few late houses, and into these she could not venture to go. She crossed the road and ran up a short street, and crossed the road into another. She was soon lost to herself, and she could not tell where she was, nor how far she might be from those who had persecuted her.

It was very late, in fact, near morning, when she escaped from the house; and after an hour or two's walk, she found herself, after sunrise, in the neighborhood of London, in the outskirts.

How she came there she knew not, but she was very fatigued and cold. Not knowing where to go, she sat down in a door-

way to rest, and to shelter herself from the wind that blew so cold.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE party of officers who had taken the mendicant prisoner, were in search of a notorious offender, whom they believed to be the principal of a gang of daring and unscrupulous men, who hesitated at neither robbery nor murder.

The unfortunate gentleman who had heen murdered was a country gentleman named Pearson, who had only recently come to town, with the idea of discovering his daughter, who had been seduced, and who was living in some part of London. He was a man of some wealth and rank in the county in which he lived.

The deluded girl had been decoyed from home some months before under a promise of marriage, and her flight and prolonged ahsence had driven her father to the verge of insanity. Her seducer was, in reality, an abandoned villain, who gained a precarious suhsistence hy consorting with a large gang of thieves, burglars, resurrectionists and assassins, by whom he was, on account of his superior criminal talents, elected chief of the entire band.

Mr. Pearson, at length, almost despaired of finding his daughter, when one morning he received the following note:

"SIR—If you will hring two hundred pounds to the corner of —— street, and wait for half an hour after nine o'clock at night, and then follow the man who shall speak to you, until you come to a house, you may see me and your daughter; hut unless the money be forthcoming, and secrecy observed, you'll see neither. Yours, etc., PHILIP."

The letter was opened hy Mr. Pearson, who at once resolved to accept the terms; and, placing the two hundred pounds into his pocket, he determined to go to the spot indicated; hut before he did so, he had the precaution to inform a party of officers of the occurrence.

"You had better not trust yourself with him, sir," said one, "you'll find he will roh you."

"Oh, no; I don't think that; besides, I want to find my daughter, and if he get not the money he will ill-use her."

"Well, what had we better do? Watch you at a distance—eh?" suggested one.

"That will he the best."

"And when you enter a house, we'll come in after you?"

"You had better not."

"What shall we do?"

"Wait till I and my daughter come out, and then you can go in and take him; he deserves it—a villain, as he is."

"It is, indeed, sir. I have half a fear that we shall miss him, somehow or other."

"Oh, no! you cannot, in consequence of this arrangement,"

"That may he; hut he has the devil's luck and his own," said the officer.

When nine o'clock came, Mr. Pearson went to the spot indicated, and though it rained hard, yet he resolved to hrave it out, and stopped the required time—indeed, more than an hour over the time appointed hy the villain.

It was just as he was giving the whole affair up as a bad job, that suddenly a man, whom he had noticed on several occasions had passed him, came up to him and said,—

"Is your name Pearson?"

"It is."

"Follow me, then."

And without any further conversation, he walked away at a quick rate. Mr. Pearson followed at the same pace.

The officers had been concealed in a neighhoring house, and there waited the departure of Mr. Pearson. They feared if they were seen the person who was appointed to meet Mr. Pearson would not take any notice; hut, seeing them, would walk away. To avoid this it was they posted themselves in a house, and it was to enahle the thieves to watch any person about the neighborhood, so that there would be no possihility of a surprise. Seeing no one at hand, the man came up to Mr. Pearson, after he had watched well, and uttered the words ahove. Mr. Pearson followed the man up for upward of an hour, when they were joined hy several others, when Mr. Pearson seemed alarmed, and endeavored to get away, when he was suddenly seized, and hurried onward with a velocity that outstripped the officers, and threw them out. They then came to the house where the mendicant had confined Mahel, not knowing that any one was there; and then commited the murder. Terrified at the sudden apparition of Mabel, they fled, and afterward the mendicant came in. The rest is known.

CHAPTER XXXI.

EARLY the next morning the mendicant was taken from the temporary prison where he had been placed for the night, and conveyed in a carriage, with an officer on each side of him, to Bow street, to be examined by a magistrate.

Nothing was said during the drive, and when they arrived at the office, and got out, until the night charges were disposed of, the mendicant was locked up in a cell attached to the office.

He remained there more than an hour and a half, when he was taken into the office and placed in the dock.

"Well," inquired the magistrate, "what does this man stand charged with?"

"Murder, your worship."

"State the particulars."

"From information," said the officer, "I and some other officers were placed in waiting to watch where Mr. Pearson should be conducted to, and then to make a capture."

"You had some previous charge?"

"Yes; we were after another man."

"Oh, this is not the man?"

"No, your worship; the affair I was on was of another character, and different persons; this turned up accidently, and was only committed last night."

"Go on."

"We watched, but were suddenly at fault, owing to the caution we were compelled to use in following lest we should be observed, and the whole affair discovered, and we lose our man."

"I see, exactly."

"We, however, discovered the house, and then we were compelled to force our way in, where we discovered the unfortunate gentleman to be murdered, and this man stood beside him."

"And was he robbed?"

"Yes; everything taken."

"Had he much?"

"We know that he had a heavy sum of money about him."

"And it was gone?"

"It was."

"And the prisoner was with the body?"

"He was."

"How long a time elapsed after you first missed him to the time you found the prisoner with the dead body?"

"Not half an hour; about twenty minutes."

Some other evidence was gone into, to corroborate the above, by the other officers, and then the magistrate turned to the mendicant and said:

"Well, prisoner, what have you to say? I am bound to tell you what you do say will be made use of against you."

"I am innocent, and the young female who was in the house at the time can tell you so. I came in but a few moments before the officers, and was more surprised to see a dead body there than they could be."

"Are you the owner of the house?"

"No; it is a deserted one, and I am in distress, and slept there for want of means to get a better."

"Well," said the magistrate, to one of the officers, "it would be as well to send for the young woman, and in the meantime we will adjourn the examination."

* * * * * * *

In about an hour and a half the prisoner was again placed at the bar, and the examination continued:

"Have you discovered the young woman?" inquired the magistrate.

"No, your worship; there are no traces of her."

"Your witness, then, is not forthcoming?" said the magistrate to the mendicant.

"It seems not: I must trust to chance for her arrival; she is a stranger to town, and, seeing that I was taken away, she thought that no place for her, especially as there was a dead body in it. She may hear of my peril and come forward."

"It is to be hoped she may, otherwise she will place you in a very disagreeable position. What are you?"

"I have no business."

"No business, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, there is sufficient ground to commit you at once; but at the same time I shall remand you and give you an opportunity of finding out your witness, and in the meanwhile we may ascertain something about you."

The mendicant was then removed from the bar, and reconducted to the cell, where he was left till it was convenient to carry him to the Compter.

"It is a wonder he didn't commit you at once," said the officer; "and I am more surprised at his adjourning for a couple of hours for your witness."

"Yes: I did not expect it."

"Nor anybody else; but it matters not. You will be up on the next examination day, and then you will be committed."

CHAPTER XXXII.

Mabel was puzzled what to do with herself after she had escaped from the house of horrors in which she had been confined by the mendicant.

Which way to turn she knew not; not a friend at hand to whom she could apply for advice; and she wandered about, not knowing where she was going, and, after a while, found herself, as we have said, in the outskirts of London.

She felt wearied and tired, and yet she had not the means to purchase rest and refreshment. Now, however, when it was broad daylight, and people were rushing to and fro from all quarters, she felt a sense of security that she had not hitherto felt, but the means of existence troubled her.

Seeing a goldsmith's open, and an announcement that old jewelry was bought, and a variety of other announcements, she determined to sell a small ring she possessed; and for that purpose entered the shop, and, seeing an individual behind the counter, she said to him, "Will you purchase this ring of me?"

The man looked very hard at Mabel, and then at the ring, which he weighed in his hand, and carefully examined it over and over, and finally he went to a vial, from which he took a piece of wire, and dropped a small drop of some liquid upon it, and then he took the scales, and, having weighed it, he said to Mabel, in a soft voice:

"Nine-and-sixpence, miss, is all I can give for it; that is the utmost value of the metal."

"I must trust to you, sir, for its value," said Mabel, "for I do not know it myself. I will take that sum."

"It is your own, I presume?" said the shopkeeper, inquiringly.

"Yes; certainly."

The money was counted out on the counter carefully by the goldsmith, who said when he had done so:

"We buy these things, you see, for the sake of the metal only, and it is only the price of the gold we can offer, as the ring will be broken up and melted."

Thank you," said Mabel; "perhaps you can direct me to the —— road?"

She named the road that led toward that part of the country whence she had lately come against her will, being suddenly seized by a vague idea of taking that road back again, and finding her way thither by herself, and unaided. She was conscious that she had not means to insure traveling by any other conveyance than that which nature had provided her with, and she thought she could accomplish it, especially pressed as she was by circumstances.

The shopkeeper directed her on her route, without asking any questions; and she walked onward, and never rested until she saw the signs of London were fast fading from before her eyes.

How light her heart felt in comparison to what she had felt when cooped up in that lonely house, where she had seen what she never hoped to see again!

The sun was high up in the heavens, and she felt the fatigue of walking, for her strength had diminished of late, because she had been but poorly cared for by the mendicant, who had supplied her with poor and indifferent food; her confinement and mental disquietude all preyed upon her, and reduced her strength.

She determined that the next quiet unpretending-looking place she came to, she would stop for refreshments and rest. It was not very long before she came to one that suited her taste, and appeared all she wanted. It was a little, lone ale-house, with benches that were unoccupied; and then the house, too, at that hour, was empty. The inmates were employed in their domestic duties, and preparing all for the afternoon. Mabel entered the little parlor, in which were several highly-polished chairs and tables, and the floor had recently been sanded. There was a good fire in the grate, which burned brightly and pleasantly as she entered the room. Mabel sat herself down on a seat near the fire, and waited until some one entered the room.

She did not remain here long before the landlady came, to whom she stated her desire for food and rest. The landlady was a fat, comfortable, cheerful-looking body, and without asking any questions set about furnishing her young guest with a good and substantial breakfast. This was speedily accomplished, and when Mabel had satisfied her hunger she was shown to a neat little bed-chamber up-stairs, where stood a small, comfortable-looking couch, which invited her to repose. Weary, feverish. and exhausted, Mabel dropped upon the couch and soon fell into a deep sleep, from which she did not awake till some hours after dawn of the following day.

Having completed her toilet, and feeling somewhat cheerful and refreshed, she descended to breakfast, and found the landlady engaged in reading a morning journal. The latter laid down her paper as her guest entered the apartment, and cheerfully

prepared to wait upon her while she dispatched her morning meal. When this was over the landlady said while clearing away the table:

"There is an account of a very shocking murder in the paper. I never read anything equal to it."

"Was it a man or woman?"

"A gentleman; he was hanged first, and then stabbed. Oh, it was frightful!"

Mabel trembled, for the horrible scene she had witnessed in the lonely house again presented itself before her.

"Has the murderer been taken?" she asked in as calm a voice as she could assume.

"Oh, yes, my dear; but he denies all knowledge of the crime. But that's the way with that sort of people; they never confess anything. He says there's a young lady who knows of his innocence, but the officers can't find her; and they will be sure to hang him."

"But suppose this young lady should come forward and say he was not the murderer?"

"Then he would get clear, of course, if the magistrates could be persuaded to believe her."

"But if not."

"Then they will send him to Newgate for trial, and after that hang him."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Yes, my dear. If you read the paper, you will see all about it. The villain is to have another examination to-morrow."

So saying, the landlady handed her the newspaper.

"Do you want anything, ma'am?"

"Not at present, thank you."

The landlady left the room and Mabel was left alone. She was deeply imbued with the consideration of the condition of the mendicant. The strange conduct of this man was to her unexplainable. He must have known something, even if he were not what he represented himself to be—her father. She could not help believing he must be some relation, and yet she shuddered to think what. He was the last man in the world that she would have desired for a father. Indeed, her thoughts revolted from such a contemplation. He had forcibly taken her from her friends; used threats and violence toward her; but he had done no more than was necessary to accomplish that purpose; unjustifiable as that purpose was, she had nothing else to complain of. Great as this was, it sank before her, when she thought of the death that he would suffer. She could not look coldly on, and see him die a death so horrible as that of public execution, when it only wanted the breath of her mouth to save him. The more she thought of these things, the more she felt that it was highly improper to leave even a bad man to such a fate—to a public death for a crime he was not guilty of. It was unjust in her, nay, criminal in her to permit it. She took up the paper, and then read the account of the remand of the mendicant, and the intimation that on that day, when he was next brought up, he would be committed for trial;

and when she had finished, she laid the paper down for a minute or two, seemingly lost in meditation.

"To-morrow," she muttered "yes, to-morrow, and then he will be again brought up. I will go and save him, though I may be again subject to his power, and yet when I tell my tale, he dare not again seize me. Besides, I may as well take my lodgings up here until I return.

"Well, well," she muttered, "perhaps Captain Morton may hear of my situation, if it get into the papers."

The next morning Mabel took leave of the landlady, and bent her steps toward London again, where she arrived at an early hour, and where she proceeded at once toward the police office. It was some difficulty for her to find it out, and when she did, she almost shrank from going in.

One of the officers belonging to the court came forward, and seeing she was strange and excited, said to her:

"What do you want? can I be of any service to you?"

"Will the man who is charged with murder be brought up to-day?"

"Yes; he was remanded to this day."

"I wish to be present when he is brought up."

"Then come this way—quick, if you please."

Mabel immediately followed. and was soon in the court, where she was placed by the officer, who had taken it into his head to be very civil, indeed.

She saw the mendicant placed in the dock. He looked much the same, perhaps a little paler, but he was firm and collected, and looked round the court with a careless eye; he did not observe, Mabel, however, and turned from the multitude to the magistrates.

The evidence was read over in the presence of the mendicant, and each witness was asked if he had anything to add to his former depositions, and having signed them, the magistrate turned toward the prisoner, and said to him, in a distinct voice:

"Prisoner, have you anything further to say by way of defense?"

"I have nothing to add but that I am innocent of the crime laid to my charge. I had not been in the house five minutes before the officers came in, and I had not removed from the shade and suspicion of the first moment, when I was taken."

"Have you any witnesses?"

"There is one who could prove what I say, but I cannot tell where to find her."

"You will have opportunities and facilities afforded you before the day of your trial, which will take place shortly; for it will be my duty to commit you."

"Stay!" said a voice in the court.

That voice was Mabel's. All eyes were turned toward the place where it came from, and all eyes were fixed upon her.

"'Tis she!" exclaimed the mendicant.

"Who?"

"My witness. Now I care not whether she come as friend or foe; she can but tell the truth."

"Who was that," inquired the magistrate, "that interrupted the proceedings?"

The officer now stepped up to her, saying: "You must step here, if you please, and tell his worship why you spoke just now."

Mabel did as she was desired, and then the magistrate, when he had fixed his eyes for a moment or two upon her, said:

"What do you know of this matter?"

"That he is innocent."

"Who did commit the murder, then?"

"Several men, who left the house before this man returned to it, after some hours' absence."

"How long had he returned?"

"About three or four minutes; scarcely so much."

"Well, tell us all you know about it."

Mabel then went into a full relation of all that had occurred after the entrance of the murderers into the house, until the entrance of the officers who took the mendicant into custody.

"And why did you not come forward before?"

"Because I felt afraid of that man, and was almost determined to leave him to his fate."

"How came you in that house?" inquired the magistrate.

"I was forcibly taken and confined there by this man," replied Mabel. "He took me from my friends."

"What is your name?"

"Mabel Morton."

"Where do you live?"

"At Morton Hall."

"How came you in town?"

"I was forcibly carried away from that place, and was forcibly brought to town by this man, who retained me in custody till he was taken by the officers, and I then escaped."

"You were forcibly confined by him against your will?"

"I was."

"A clear case of abduction. What motive did he allege for detaining you in this manner?"

"He said he was my father, and thus tore me from the arms of my friends and benefactors, who had been more than parents to me since my childhood. He tore me away from them."

"What do you know of this man?"

"Nothing more than what I have told you. I never saw him till lately, and never desire to do so again."

"Well, your testimony seems disinterested enough. It certainly acquits him of murder; but at the expense of a very serious charge of abduction."

"It matters not," said the mendicant. "I am innocent of the blood of this man. I care not for the result. What I have said to this young female in private I now tell her. I have told her nothing but the truth, and that, when I have the will, I have the means of proving."

"You had better set about it," said the magistrate; "for, under all circumstances, I shall not think it consistent with my duty to part with you, even upon bail. You will remain in cus-

tody till your trial comes on. I shall remand you till this day week, and, in the meantime, we will correspond with this Captain Morton, and obtain from him additional evidence."

The mendicant seemed uneasy.

"Miss Morton," said the magistrate, "you have been brought to town against your will—how have you lodged yourself?"

"I have no lodging, sir. I was about to make an attempt to get back to Morton Hall, as I am quite a stranger, and have neither friends nor money here. When I saw the account of this man's examination, I thought I should be doing a great wrong to let him die such a death."

"Certainly; you were quite right; but you cannot return to the Hall at present. I shall require your attendance at the remand, and at the trial. You have no bail in London and only you can prove it. One of the officers shall provide you with proper accommodation until I can write to your friends; and when they return an answer, or come up for you, will obtain immediate aid from them. Until that time you will be taken care of."

"Thank you, sir," said Mabel. "You will then write to Captain Morton?"

"I will."

"That will then relieve me of much of my uneasiness as to how I am to get back to them again."

"You will have facilities for writing, also," said the magistrate, "and can do as you please in that respect."

There was a pause of a few moments, after which the magistrate turned to the mendicant, saying,—"Prisoner, you are remanded until this day week, when you will, in all probability, be committed for trial on the charge of abduction."

"I am prepared. Can I see this witness in private?" inquired the mendicant, as he was removed.

"Certainly not," said the magistrate.

"Then, Mabel," said the mendicant, "remember what I have told you of your parents and your birth."

He was then removed, and Mabel followed the old officer who had before spoken to her.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AFTER Mabel had, in the heroic manner in which we have recorded, saved her cruel persecutor from a fate which he richly deserved, it will be recollected that she was retained in the hands of the police, virtually under their surveillance, although not with any of the degrading accompaniments of loss of liberty. An officer had been directed to procure for her a respectable lodging and to supply her with the means of current subsistence, until a full and ample inquiry had been made into the truth of what she had stated. This was accordingly done. The officer to whose care she was given was a very civil man, and rather better educated than most of his class; he regretted that he could not accommodate her in his own house, where he would have been certain of her safety; but he had not any room

to spare; so he felt compelled to do what he could to find her some unexceptionable place of abode.

Of that, as a matter of course, he was a far better judge than she could be, and so she left it entirely to him, telling him that in her ignorance of London and all its localities, she had no choice whatever as to where she should reside.

"I only hope," she said, "that those who seem disposed to act kindly to me have no doubts of the truth of what I have related. It would be a most wretched thing for me, after all my sufferings, to think that I was, even for one hour, suspected."

"Oh! you must not make yourself unhappy about that. The magistrate will at once write to the parties you have named in the country as knowing something of you. A reply will, of course, come by return of post. and then you will no doubt feel yourself in a position which will be very much for the better."

"I do, indeed, now hope," she said, "that my miseries are nearly at an end. I think that, if I can once again behold the kind faces of those dear friends who lightened the paths of my early childhood with their love, I should be most supremely blest."

"That is a result which may come about very soon; and now I think, upon recollection, that I shall be able to place you in a house where I know you will receive both protection and comfort."

"A thousand thanks—a thousand thanks," said Mabel. "These are luxuries both which I have been sufficiently long without, most fully to know the value of, and appreciate."

"It is over the water—that is to say, on the Surrey side of the river."

"But where are we now?"

"This is Blackfriars Bridge."

There was the accustomed busy scene upon the river, and as Mabel looked through the old balustrades which used to flank the bridge, and saw the numbers of persons who were in boats of all sorts and description upon the stream so famous in historical recollection, her thoughts wandered back in imagination to the primitive time when the banks of that river, now so thronged with buildings for the convenience of commerce, were soft green slopes, a-down which the timid deer would quietly steal to slake his thirst in the stream.

The officer kindly indulged her with as leisurely a survey of the river as she pleased, and then they passed on to the densely populated district lying over the bridge, a district which, to the inhabitants of the Middlesex side of the river, ever presents so odd and different an aspect, and, by some early error of association, is always considered to be a great distance from any attractive part of London.

In one of these streets, which abound on the Surrey side of the water, and are composed of houses that at one time have made vigorous efforts to be mighty genteel, without being able to accomplish that great desideratum, the officer paused, and knocked at the door of a lodging-house.

The door was opened by a dirty drab of a girl, about fifteen,

who answered in the affirmative upon the officer inquiring if Mrs. Jenkins were within.

Mabel and the officer were shown into a remarkably dirty parlor, each of the windows of which was decorated with a placard, announcing, "Furnished Apartments:" and in a few moments Mrs. Jenkins made her appearance. It was early in the day, and, consequently, Mrs. Jenkins was a melancholy spectacle of faded finery. She dressed always upon the showy and ornamental principle, so that the gaudy trappings, which had become too dingy to go out in, were used as the home attire, until sufficient leisure arose for the more elaborate and satisfactory manifestations of the toilet.

"Oh! Mr. Long," she said, "how do you do?"

"Very well, thank you, ma'am. This young lady is a friend of mine, ma'am, from the country. I cannot accommodate her at my house, and she wants a home for a few days only. Can you do it, Mrs. Jenkins?"

"Well, let me see. The back room, second floor, is out of town, and the front attic talks of going."

"Anywhere that is clean and comfortable will do. The young lady is not at all fastidious, and you look to me, if you please, for the money."

"Oh, I am quite sure, Mr. Long, that with any friend of yours, that all is right. I think the second floor back will be the thing."

"Very good, Mrs. Jenkins, I will call to-morrow or next day, if you please; and here, Miss Morton, is some money."

He handed a small sum to Mabel, whom he had previously recommended not to take Mrs. Jenkins, or anybody else into her confidence with regard to who or what she was; but that if she were challenged with the fact, just to admit that she was the person who, no doubt, next day, would figure at some length in the police reports of the morning papers.

But Mabel was in no great danger of being found out in this way; for Mrs. Jenkins very rarely saw a newspaper at all, and when she did, it was one borrowed from a neighboring public-house, and which was usually about a week old.

When Mr. Long was gone, which was almost immediately after he had made the arrangement for Mabel remaining, Mrs. Jenkins said, very graciously:

"How do you mean to manage, miss?"

"Manage?" said Mabel, "in what respect, madam?"

"Oh, as to the meals, and all that sort of thing."

"I really am so completely ignorant of London, and so unaccustomed to do anything of the sort, that I am afraid I shall be very much at a loss."

"Well, then, in course, the best way will be to let me buy in for you whatever you want, give you a little hill when you go away, you know, so that you will have no trouble at all."

"I should be much obliged by your taking so much trouble," said Mabel, "and, probably, I should have requested you to do so, but that I dreaded imposing upon your goodness."

"Oh, don't mention that. When I pop out, you know, for

what I want myself, nothing can be easier than to get you what you want at the same time. One trouble does for both beautifully."

Mabel admitted that it did, and Mrs. Jenkins was in such high spirits at the idea of having got hold of somebody who permitted her to bring in a little bill, that she actually invited Mabel to tea on that identical afternoon, which invitation was duly accepted upon the spot.

A little bill is the lodging-house keeper's delight. They would not give a pin's head for anybody who comes in and merely pays the rent—not they. It is the little bill which presents itself to their imagination in glowing colors; and let you take a lodging where you will—always provided you give the landlady a *carte blanche* regarding a little bill—you will find that the air has had the most beneficial effect upon your appetite; and if you analyze the little bill, you will find that it takes half a pound of butter to butter a roll, two pennyworths of milk for two cups of coffee, and a half-quartern loaf to make three slices of toast; a pound of tea for yourself and friend twice, and that mutton-chops are three and sixpence a pound.

Reader, if you have any doubts regarding such phenomena, go and try it. We have, and know, from dire experience, the truth of what we assert.

But Mabel knew nothing of all this, and she partook of some horrible tea with Mrs. Jenkins, in perfect innocence of heart.

Little did she suspect what a combination of circumstances was then taking place to alter her whole course of life. During the very period when she was at the very extremity of her distresses, Henry Morton and Monsieur Rouselli were holding that most deeply interesting and important conversation, which opened to his perception the whole of her history, and solved some mysteries which, from the long lapse of time they had become so, threatened to remain so to the crack of doom.

The very circumstances which, one would have thought, tended at once to unite Mabel to those who loved her so well, and who had so deeply regretted her loss, had in them some phases which delayed so pleasant a consummation.

Henry Morton, after his deeply interesting interview with Monsieur Rouselli, was, as the reader may well suppose, in by far too excited a frame of mind to read newspapers, and hence he was in complete ignorance of what had taken place.

The fact is, he left London to go down to Morton Hall on the very day that Mabel, with that noble sense of justice which prompted her to do so, came forward to exonerate him who had been her worst enemy from a false charge.

Then followed the coming to town again, and all the deeply interesting surmises connected with the fate of Mabel, so that the concerns of the world, which the pages of a newspaper might contain, were unknown to him. Little did he dream that those pages would contain something of so deeply and personally interesting a nature to himself.

Things, too, will happen most crossly sometimes, and there cannot be a more notable example of their crossness than in a

few events which now happened, one succeeding the other with great rapidity.

They were these:

The magistrate who had received Mabel's deposition with regard to the mendicant, could not, until the labors of the day were concluded, find time to write to Captain Morton, and when he did so it was at some length, and he missed that day's post.

Considering, too, as he likewise did, that the subject of his communication was of a strictly personal nature, for he had his own suspicions, from Mabel's story, that, after all, she might be, granting the truth of all she said, a child of the captain's—he took especial care to write the word "private" legibly upon the envelope of the letter.

This letter, then, did not reach Morton Hall until after Captain Morton and his brother had left it, and as Mrs. Morton had been educated in decent society, and so never dreamed for one moment of opening a letter addressed to her husband and marked "private," the epistle of the magistrate remained unfortunately unanswered.

That gentleman, too, had most particularly requested an answer by return of post; and indeed, it was one of those communications which ought to have been answered at once and without the least delay, inasmuch as it involved some important consequences to several people. But there the note remained in a drawer in Captain Morton's study, where, by direction of Mrs. Morton, it was at once placed upon its arrival. Probably, had she guessed that it related to Mabel, she would have felt herself authorized at once in opening it; but such a suspicion never once crossed her mind, and so, devoured by anxiety and tortured by suspense, she remained in the same house with the very letter which would have given her the greatest amount of contentment, inasmuch as it would have let her know that Mabel was alive and well, and only waiting for her dearest and best friends to come to her and claim her as their own.

As regarded her comforts at the lodging-house, Mabel considered she had nothing to complain of.

She did not though, it must be premised, contrast Mrs. Jenkins's second floor back room with her own delightful chamber at Morton Hall, where she had passed so many happy hours. Ah, no! but dingy, dark, and, in some respects, dirty as was her present abode, it came out to her imagination in pleasant relief against the dreadful home she had had with the mendicant.

She, too, waited with all the fever of natural impatience for the reply of Captain Morton, and how often she told herself that that reply would be prompt indeed.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

By inquiries of Mrs. Jenkins, who, never forgetting the "little bill," was always particularly civil to Mabel, the latter ascertained when a letter might, in the due course of events, come from the part of the country which Captain Morton resided in,

To ascertain this point was to Mabel quite equivalent to knowing when such a letter as she knew Captain Morton would write would arrive actually; and as the morning came, her anxiety increased to such an extent that the observant Mrs. Jenkins could not but be aware that something of a very strangely interesting nature indeed must be on the mind of her lodger. In vain, however, she, by all sorts of oblique hints, endeavored to get out of Mabel what it was that put her into such a perfect fever of expectation. She could get no sort of information or satisfaction. When, however, tired out at last with fishing for intelligence, she said:

"Really, Miss Morton, I am quite certain that you have something on your mind which it would ease you very much to tell to some kind friend."

Mabel quietly replied:

"I am certainly in a state of anxiety about some affair which cannot concern you, and which I have made up my mind not to communicate."

"Oh, indeed! Well, I never—of course, miss, you are the best judge of that."

"Yes, of course," said Mabel.

"Very good. I am sure it was only for your sake I asked. I am just about the last person in the world to be at all curious about other people's affairs, I do assure you; and if ever I do go the length of condescending to listen to anybody about anything, it's only with a *sanginous* hope, I can tell you, of doing 'em a world of good."

"Mrs. Jenkins, I give you credit for the very best intentions, and beg you will say no more upon the subject."

This was most provoking, just to be given credit for good intentions, and quietly put off with that doubtful compliment without a hope of the least hint of what it was that made Mabel so nervous and expectant.

But there was no help for it. Poor Mrs. Jenkins was doomed to be the victim of disappointed curiosity, and as it certainly would not do to press a lodger too far who had no objections to a "little bill." she felt herself, as she said, taking one thing in consideration with another, and putting this and that together, compelled to give up the affair of finding out Mabel's business in London as a bad job.

It was something to be relieved from the oblique inquiries of Mrs. Jenkins, which had really, to Mabel, become a serious inconvenience, and she felt pleased accordingly thereat, and waited with more patience than before the arrival of news from Morton Hall. But, alas! the hour when a letter ought to have been brought to her, or news of one having come to the magistrate, came and went, and nothing ensued.

Poor Mabel retired to her own dingy room, and wept alone for more than an hour. Then she made an effort to shake off such an amount of deep depression, and she paced the room several times, endeavoring to invent some plausible reason which should fully account for the non-arrival of news.

Later considerably in the day the officer Long came and in-

quired for her. At the sound of his name she flew to meet him, not doubting but that now she would have all her most anxious expectations fulfilled, and that he was the bearer of some message or letter from Morton Hall.

As good fortune would have it, too, Mrs. Jenkins was out, so that Mabel and the officer had the dingy parlor all to themselves, which it would have been a hard case to get had the lady been at home, considering her curiosity.

"You have news for me?" exclaimed Mabel.

"Nothing of the sort. The magistrate spoke to me about an hour ago about it. He asked me to come to you and say that he had written to Morton Hall, and that he had particularly requested an answer by return of post; but none had come. And now, Miss Morton, mind you, you must not accuse me of doubting you, or of saying anything unkind to you, but the magistrate has serious misgivings, I can see, in his own mind, with regard to the truth of your story."

"Heaven help me!"

"And he has desired me to ask if you still adhere to it in the face of this fact of no answer being returned to the application he has made respecting you to Captain Morton, of Morton Hall?"

A crimson flush came over the sweet countenance of Mabel, and she was silent.

"Nay," added the officer, "you consider yourself insulted, I can see, by the doubt merely which has been cast upon you, but place yourself in the magistrate's situation, and then ask yourself what you could do more than he has done?"

A moment's reflection went far toward convincing Mabel that, although with her own knowledge of her own truthfulness, and of how much she had suffered, it was hard to be doubted, yet other persons could not have such a knowledge, and she replied,—

"I am wrong to feel offended at any doubts that may be expressed concerning my statement so long as those doubts are not expressed offensively, and, after all, are only doubts. I can no more account than you can, or the magistrate, why a letter has not come from Captain Morton!"

"Well, miss, my idea was that your friends would come to town, some of them personally, and that such was the true reason why no letter had been written."

"It is! it is!" exclaimed Mabel, as she clasped her hands with delight. "It is the reason; oh, why was I so dull as not to think of that? Oh, yes, they will come to see me, to confirm all that I have said, and to take me back again with them to my happy, happy home!"

Overcome by an excess of emotion, she sank back upon a couch that was in the room, and burst into tears.

"This is truth," said the officer.

He said nothing to her for some moments. He preferred allowing the tide of passion to have its way; but when he saw that she was sufficiently composed to speak more calmly, as well as to listen, he said,—

"I am quite sure that such is the case, and I stated as much myself before I came here to the magistrate."

"You did; and yet he doubted me?"

"Why, I must say he did, and for a very insufficient reason, as far as my mind goes in the matter. He said that the only thing which could have induced Captain Morton to come to London, instead of writing, would be to get here sooner than the post, and as such had not occurred, he rather felt inclined to doubt if there was such a person at all as Captain Morton, and such a place as Morton Hall."

"That was cruel."

"Well, well; you will have the triumph of showing him that he is wrong; and as for his supposition, Captain Morton might start to get to London sooner than the post, it is likely enough he might do so, and yet be delayed by a thousand incidents and accidents on the road to which the post would not be at all subjected."

"Yes, yes; you are right."

"I feel pretty sure I am; I have seen a good deal of human nature, Miss Morton, and I think now I can trust my judgment a little; I believe every word that you have said to be the strict truth and nothing but the truth."

"You do me justice, and you have the thanks of a grateful heart. He, who has been to me all that the kindest of parents could be, will be able to thank you more efficiently than I can; and that he will soon be here to do so I feel assured."

"I have to go to the magistrate's private house, to report to him my present interview with you, and I will tell him of my own firm impression as regards what you have said being correct in every particular. Make yourself as comfortable now as you can. Don't tell anything to Mrs. Jenkins: she is not, in her way, a bad sort of woman, but then she cannot keep anything to herself, and if she knew who you were, and why you were here, it would be in the course of a very few hours spread over the entire neighborhood."

"I have resisted her inquiries."

"That is right; I will call upon you to-morrow morning, without fail, and then I hope to have some pleasant intelligence to give to you."

"I hope so, too; many thanks for all you have done for me."

"Do you require more money?"

"No; I have that which you gave me still. I have spent none of it, and, indeed, may as well return it to you: for Mrs. Jenkins, whatever may be her gossiping faults, has had the kindness to save me all trouble by purchasing whatever I require, and she will put down all the items, she says, in a bill."

A smile came over the officer's face as he said:

"Well, that is kind, to be sure; but it will do just as well. You tell her I will pay her, and she will then go on being as kind in the way of little bills as she is now."

Mabel saw that there was something in the transaction which excited the risible faculties of the officer, but she had not the least idea of what it was; and, as she did not ask him, he saw

no necessity for telling her that Mrs. Jenkins would cheat her wholesale.

After a few more remarks, and a reiterated promise of calling on the morrow, he left her; and although all her anxiety could not be said to be removed, yet she felt so thoroughly convinced that the officer's suggestion respecting Captain Morton's coming to town was a true one, that she would not have been at all astonished if he had knocked at the door.

Of course she considered that when he came to town he would lose not a moment in going to the magistrate who had written, and there he would get her address, which she well knew he would not have in his possession many minutes before he was on his road to her.

The very possibility, then, that at any moment he might arrive kept her in a continued flutter of spirits.

But did she think of no one in that family which was so dear to her, but of Captain Morton? Ah, yes! From the very first moment that doubts of her parentage had crossed her mind, she had associated some of her sweetest dreams of future happiness with the image of the captain's brother; and her heart now fluttered with the fond hope that he would come, too, on the wings of affection to seek her.

But hour after hour passed away, and they came not. She passed a sleepless night of nervous expectation, but no one came to tell her any one wanted her.

True, she did hear a noise in the night as of some one stumbling up the staircase, and passing her room door to go to the other above, and that was all that disturbed the stillness of the long and weary hours during which she courted sleep in vain.

When she rose in the morning, her looks proclaimed pretty clearly that she had had no repose, and Mrs. Jenkins exclaimed,—

"I knew it! I knew it!"

"You knew what, madam?"

"Why, I knew you could not sleep one blessed wink after half-past three, as never was, all on account of that wretch."

"What wretch?"

"Oh, I will get rid of him, I will. I hate the sight of him, I do. A good-for-nothing fellow, I'll be bound. Coming in at such a time o' night, too."

"I do not know to whom you allude, Mrs. Jenkins; but, as regards my not sleeping, you are perfectly correct."

"But did you hear no noise?"

"Yes, I certainly heard a noise, as of some one tumbling upstairs."

"Yes, at half-past three, as never was."

"I did not know what was the hour, nor can I say it was that which awakened me, for I was awake when it occurred. Who was it?"

"Why, now, I'll just tell you, and it only shows how people ought to be, in this world, continually upon their blessed guards, you see, Miss Morton. Yesterday evening there comes a man,

wrapped up in a cloak, and he calls for the lady of the house—ahem!—meaning me. Well, I has him shown into the parlor, and down I goes. 'Madam,' he says, 'have you any apartments to let?' 'Yes,' says I; 'the attic went away to-day, so it's well aired,' says I; 'and the first floor back will be vacant in a week.' 'Ah?' says he, 'the first floor back would have done best for me—I do not like going so far up-stairs as the attic.' 'Well, but,' I up and says, 'cannot you do with the attic for a week, till the first floor back is gone, you see?' 'Yes, to be sure,' he says; 'give me a key, and I'll take possession at once. There's some rent in advance.' And so he makes no more ado, but down he throws a sovereign on the table, which, in course, I takes up; but I says: 'Well, sir, of course I haven't no doubt in the world but it's all right; but business is business, and we always does ask for a reference; so, if you will be so good as to give me one, I shall be much obliged.' 'Oh, yes,' says be, 'you can go to the Lord Mayor and tell him that his friend Mr. Smith has referred to him, and you will soon be satisfied.' 'The Lord Mayor, sir,' says I; 'I think I sees me going and bothering the Lord Mayor about any such thing.' 'Well,' he says, 'that's my reference. At all events, I cannot help it if you won't go; am I not to have a lodging because you object to going to the Lord Mayor, especially when I am willing to pay you your own price?' Well, Miss Morton, I was staggered; this seemed so very reasonable; and I says to him, 'Sir,' says I, 'I will go to the Lord Mayor; and, in the meantime, there's a key, and you can bring in your things,' says I: for, to tell the truth, Miss Morton, I just as much thought of going to the Lord Mayor as I thought of going to the great mogul."

"And have you been deceived?"

"I think I really have. He has brought in notbing, nothing at all in the world. He says he wants nothing, not even a pair of boots cleaned. He came home in the middle of the night, and he bas gone out again now."

"But still, in all this, Mrs. Jenkins, I do not see that there is anything reprehensible, or that can be really found fault with."

"Ah, but it is not at all lodger-like; not the least, I should say. It's uncommonly mysterious; and if I was to say I liked it, I should be telling a confounded—a-hem!—that I should, Miss Morton. I can assure you I shall get rid of him: no such lodgers will do for me. I like a gentleman to come in like a gentleman, and bring all his clothes and his little fid-fads, and say to me, 'Mrs. Jenkins, I want you to bring me a lot of things for my breakfast. I dine out, and sometimes have a friend in tbe evening.'"

"But does not all tbat give you much more trouble, Mrs. Jenkins?"

"Yes, it does, in a manner of speaking, but I don't mind trouble, and it's Christian like. But you do look pale, indeed! Ah, you are worriting yourself, as I said to——"

"As you said?" interrupted Mabel. "I do sincerely hope, Mrs. Jenkins, that you will not make me a subject of remark to any one."

"Lor' bless me, if you would but hear me out, now; I was going to say, as I said to myself, that was all."

"Oh, I beg your pardon."

"Me talk of anybody to nobody; I think I see me. I do believe I am just about the very last person in the whole world who ever says anything about nobody to everybody. No, Miss Morton, no; if you was to say to me, 'Mrs. Jenkins,' says you, 'I will now tell you all what has happened to me, and what is going to happen;' it would sink in my bosom, it would, and no body would know nothing."

"Such discretion," said Mabel, "is a great virtue, and I believe it to be rare, too."

At this moment, and before Mrs. Jenkins could, as the Methodist parsons say, improve upon the occasion, so as to present to herself even a ghost of a chance of worming some of her history out of Mabel, there came a sudden and violent knock at the street door, and then a ring at the area bell, which was sufficient to break the wire.

"Bless my heart and life! what can that be?"

The door was opened by the dirty apology for a servant, and in another moment Long, the officer, came into the room.

"News! news!" exclaimed Mabel, "you have news for me?"

"I have, indeed."

"And—and have they come—they have come?"

"They have not. But the news I bring you is, that the man whom you charged with your abduction from your friends, has managed to escape from prison."

"Escape?"

"Yes; and the magistrate has taken up an opinion now that you would be gone from here; and that, in fact, you and he are in league together, in some way."

"Let him come," said Mabel, with offended pride, "and he will find me here; or, if I am thought so harshly of, let him cast me into some prison where he will know I cannot, a weak girl as I am, escape from."

"Bless us and save us!" shouted Mrs. Jenkins, "what does it all mean? Tell me; I don't know anything about it. Do tell me--do you want me to burst? What is it. eh? What is it. Mr. Long? What is it all about, my good man? Who's escaped? who hasn't come, what's it all about, eh?—eh?—tell me?"

"Good God! woman," cried the officer, "will you hold your tongue? neither I nor Miss Morton here, can get in a word edgeways."

"I hold my tongue!"

"Yes, you. Now do, for Heaven's sake! What is it to you, I should like to know? It can be no affair of yours, so do, my dear madam, suffer me to talk with Miss Morton quietly."

Mrs. Jenkins looked unutterable things, but she said nothing; and then the officer turning to Mabel, added:

"Do not be at all alarmed at the turn affairs have taken; I still defended you; and it was in consequence of the state of irritation into which the magistrate had thrown me, that I

knocked and rang so violently at the door. I cannot think what has become of your friends."

"No one then has come from the country to me?—no letter—no communications of any sort? Alas! alas! what will become of me?"

"Nay, do not despair. It is odd, certainly, that now two posts should have elapsed, and no sort of notice been taken of the magistrate's communications, and that is what annoys him, and I have no doubt has unsettled him a good deal."

"Well, I am innocent of that neglect."

"Yes; but you know an angry man don't reason. But now, tell me; for I want to go back to him prepared with evidence upon the point; can you suggest any mode of proof of there being such a person as Captain Morton, and such a place as Morton Hall, without the necessity of some one actually going into the country to find out?"

"I really know not."

"The magistrate says that he has looked through the army list, and the only officer of the name of Morton is now in Canada."

"Captain Morton is out of the army now. He fought at Waterloo, as I have often heard, and after that memorable battle retired from the army."

"Well, that is something. At the Horse Guards all that can be proved, or disproved, from authentic sources of information; so do you rest contented for the present, while I go to make such inquiries. I will be myself responsible for you, so do not go out of the house, in case you should be wanted. You cannot tell, you know, what may have happened since you came away from Morton Hall. The family may have left it, or a thousand things may have occurred to hinder Captain Morton from receiving your note sent him by the magistrate."

"Yes, yes; most certainly."

"So you should console yourself with the thought that all will be well at last, as I have no doubt it will; and in the meantime, all the exertions of the police will be directed to a discovery of the hiding-place of the man whom you have declared innocent of one crime, but accused of another."

"When—oh, when will fate cease from persecuting me?"

"Come, come, you take things too seriously."

"Yes," half screamed Mrs. Jenkins; "she wants a adviser. She wants a sympathizing indiwidual. Look at me—look at me, I say!"

"As far as I am concerned," said Long, "it cannot, of course, make the smallest difference, and Miss Morton may tell you or not tell you, Mrs. Jenkins, what it is that now harasses her so much. If she does, I should say that you ought to give the most solemn pledge of secrecy."

"I'll pledge everything," said Mrs. Jenkins.

"Nay, nay, you must excuse me—indeed you must," remarked Mabel. "I am quite unequal to the task of entering into a history of all I have suffered, and of all I now suffer. I cannot, unless some strong and urgent necessity arise, do so; and therefore,

Mrs. Jenkins, without any disrespect to you, and fully giving you credit for the best motives, I ask you, as a favor, to excuse me."

The countenance of Mrs. Jenkins fell, and she gave a groan, as she said:

"Then, I ain't to know after all."

"Yes," said Mabel; "after all, you shall know; but not now. Do not ask me now for a confidence that would distress me much in the process of giving it."

The case was hopeless. Mrs. Jenkins gave it up in despair as regarded Mabel; but she followed the officer to the door and said, in a very confidential sort of tone:

"My dear Mr. Long, what has she done?"

"Done—done? Why, what made you think she had done anything? She is not accused of doing anything."

"Well, but—but——"

"But what?"

"Why, you know, Mr. Long, that there is some dreadful mystery in the whole affair. I knew there was from the very first, and I might just as well know it as not."

"Well, then——"

"Yes—yes, Mr. Long."

"You must know, then, Mrs. Jenkins, as regards her, I mean the young lady in the parlor, she minds her own business, and it would be a good thing if every one else did the same. So good-morning, ma'am, good-morning."

Away walked the officer, leaving poor Mrs. Jenkins in a perfect fever of indignation and impatience.

"What!" she exclaimed—"what! will nobody tell me anything about anybody? Am I to endure all this in my own house? Am I to be made certain that something is going on that's, perhaps, absolutely terrific, and not know anything about it? No—no—n--o—I'll put on my shawl and bonnet, and go to my mother's, and ask her what she would do under such dreadful circumstances. I'll warrant she would not put up with it a moment, not she. She's a clever woman, and kept a lodging-house for thirty years."

With this resolve—certainly a valorous one—Mrs. Jenkins retired to her own tiring-room, and, to the great relief of Mabel, she soon after sallied forth, to go to her mother, who was one of those regular old female sharks who had been for thirty years "taking in,"—so the phrase goes—"and doing for," the male population of London.

Mabel, now, instead of finding the perils and the troubles which surrounded her diminishing, found them daily increasing.

The silence and the non-appearance of Captain Morton, or some, at least, of the Morton family, was to her one of the most inexplicable things in the whole world. Time enough had now elapsed to cover all accidental delays on the road from Morton Hall to the metropolis, and she could only now fall back upon what had been suggested by the officer, namely, that some circumstances must have happened to induce the Morton family to leave the Hall.

Thus poor Mabel passed some hours, until, quite exhausted by her previous night's watchfulness, she lay down, dressed as she was, upon her bed, and fell into a sound and peaceful slumber.

In such a state she was likely to remain long; and feeling, as we do, all the sympathy which we cannot but feel for one so circumstanced, we gladly leave her in so composed a condition for a while, and turn to some of the other characters and events of our tale, which is now so rapidly drawing to its close.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE mendicant was again remanded, as we have already seen, and returned to prison; but upon this occasion he was not remanded upon the more serious charge of murder, because the evidence of Mabel acquitted him of that; but he was remanded upon the charge of abduction, and that with all its concomitant evils was serious enough, and dangerous enough, too.

The officers were much surprised at the turn affairs had taken with the mendicant; they knew not what to make of it, whether to believe Mabel or not.

They could not, however, doubt her, for there was so much apparent sincerity and truth in all she said and uttered that they were compelled to give up their previously positively-made-up conclusion respecting his guilt; but many of them suspended their opinion upon the point until the inquiries had been made respecting the truth of Mabel's statement as regarded Captain Morton.

It was arranged that the mendicant should be placed in one of the cells that had been that day vacated by a prisoner who had been committed to Newgate. When thrust into this place, the mendicant sat down on the only seat there was, but not from any desire to sit. He was lost in deep thought, and remained for some time in silence, without moving a muscle.

"Have I changed my condition for one better?" he murmured. "Am I better than I was? Am I not rather as dangerously placed? and have I not seen all my hopes ruined? They will make inquiries at Morton Hall, and the neighborhood, and then other matters will come out which will not tell in my favor. At all events, I shall run serious danger, and almost certain detection."

He paused a moment or two, and then considered a few moments, before he muttered again—"Oh! it must, it will be so. An escape could be planned and executed, I have no doubt, suddenly and with energy. Yes, I'll make the attempt at all events. I can lose nothing, though I may gain; it is wise, therefore, to make the attempt to gain my liberty, when its failure can cost me nothing."

He rose up, and walked about for some time. It was now dark, and he could hear a bustling about among the turnkeys, and the turning of locks and keys.

"My turn will come presently," he muttered: "and then now or never—neck or nothing!"

In a few moments more he heard the turnkey coming toward him, and his cell, which was a secret one, was at length visited by the turnkey.

He could hear the lock turn, and then the bulky form of the turnkey was seen entering the cell.

"Well," he said, "what have you to say for your supper? Here it is, light and wholesome."

As he spoke, he placed some bread and water on the table.

"You'll have some swiggins for breakfast; that will be warm. Ain't you grateful?"

"Oh, yes," said the mendicant; "here's your health!" and at the same time he lifted the water as if he were about to drink it, and suddenly smacked it into the turnkey's face. The man gasped and staggered from the effects of the water, and then the mendicant felled him by a blow upon the temple. which caused him to drop as if he had been shot. In an instant the mendicant took the keys and some silver from the fallen man, opened the cell door, and stepped out. At the same time he locked the door, securing the turnkey in the cell, and freeing himself from immediate pursuit.

For a moment he paused; but he recollected which way he came, and he groped his way in the dark, until he came to a place where the passage entered another, which led right and left. He walked down lightly and rapidly, until he came to the end of the passage, which terminated in a cross-way, that seemed to lead to several rooms. A door was suddenly opened, and a man came out and went away. He was one of the turnkeys, and when he came out of the door, the mendicant at once saw that this was the wicket-gate which led into the street. He heard voices in this place, and yet, to get out, he must pass through this place. There was a door that led into it, but it was only ajar, and he crept softly toward it and peeped in at it. The door was shut, but the key was in the door, and he determined to make the attempt. The odds were formidable, because there were three men in the room. He had not expected so many. He pushed open the door very gently, and walked into the room without being seen, and had seized a large walking-stick which lay in one corner. He hesitated; how to act he knew not. Whether he had better risk a rush at the wicket-gate at once, or whether he should make an attack upon the turnkeys and stun them. It was a moment of indecision; but there was no time to lose, for there was a desperate noise in the passage, made by the imprisoned turnkey.

"What can all this noise mean?" exclaimed one of the turnkeys. "What can be the matter?"

"I don't know. Some of the visitors are not very quiet. It seems to me as if some of the good fellows, by way of amusement, had begun to kick at the doors."

"Ha! what is that?"

This last exclamation was caused by the mendicant having touched the key with his hand, and turned it in the lock, and made a slight noise.

"The devil!" exclaimed one.

"An escape, by G—d!" shouted the others.

"Stop him! stop him!" they all three cried out until they were out of breath, and they made desperate efforts to do so. Before they reached the mendicant one measured his length upon the stone flooring, while the next shared the same fate, but the third stood up.

"Now, then, my lad, I have you," he exclaimed; "you don't get away from me, at all events."

As he spoke he seized the mendicant by the collar, but received such a blow in the eye from the handle of the stick that it made him stagger; and, when at a pace or two's distance, the mendicant brought down a swordsman's blow across the head, so that his body immediately collapsed into a heap, as if deprived of life. In another moment the mendicant had opened the wicket-gate and made a dash into the street.

The alarm-bell was rung, and soon there were a number of men who were ready to pursue. The mendicant had not time to do more than to pull the gate after him, and then, finding himself so closely pressed, he made a dash toward Smithfield.

"Stop him! stop thief! stop him!" were the cries of the turnkeys, who made desperate attempts to overtake the mendicant, but he had too great a stake on the issue of the race to allow himself to be overtaken by any one, if human exertion could carry him away. He dashed along Long lane into Barbican, and then among some vehicles of one kind and another, until he neared the streets that led to Fore street, and others in that quarter.

They came to London Bridge, and when once on the other side the mendicant began to think that there was a probability of his being alone. He paused a moment to look back toward the bridge he had just crossed, but was immediately apprised that he was very closely followed by a hand being placed on his shoulder, and a voice exclaiming:

"I have you, by G—d!"

The mendicant saw how matters were. He dived beneath the arms of the captor and rushed full speed down a street to the right, running toward Southwark, where he hoped to be able to shake off the pursuers. They closed upon him very fast, and the mendicant saw that he was likely to be soon inclosed and secured, and there would be no escape.

Suddenly the thought struck him he might make a dart into some of the old houses and scramble over the roof, leaving his pursuers in uncertainty which way he went. No sooner thought of than done, and he rushed into a house and closed the door suddenly. He was too breathless to do much; but while he panted for breath, he locked the door. He had no sooner done so than he felt a violent rush at the door, as if some one had endeavored to push it open.

But the officers threw themselves against the door; the lock gave way, and the next moment they were in the hall, where they were met by a woman, who was staring up the staircase, as if frightened at some flying specter.

"Did you see a tall, ill-looking man go up just now, my good woman?"

"A man has just got into the loft," said the woman, "and I suppose he is on top of the house by this time."

"That's he," said the person who questioned her. "Follow me, lads, we'll soon be after him—we'll soon have him neck and heels—we'll keep him safe this time."

They, after a short loss of time, burst open the trap-door, and got out of the loft on the top of the houses.

The streets were full of people, and all looking anxiously to the roof of the house, and there they could see the mendicant stealing along the house-tops for some six or seven houses, and then they lost sight of him behind some chimneys.

The officers then came along the roofs, directed by the cries of the mob from one spot to the other, until they came to the place where the mendicant disappeared, and then they seemed to pause for a moment.

"There, down there is where he disappeared," said the mob.

The officers, too, presently disappeared from the eyes of the mob, and did not reappear.

The mendicant had got down a kind of platform, that had been constructed for some purpose or other, and then into a house, the door of which opened into a courtway. Here he was detained in the house by some person who waited to detain him, and who would have done so, but that the mendicant struck him down, and then made his escape by stepping into the court.

Of course the officers were immediately put upon his trail, and a sharp chase ensued amongst a number of courts and alleys.

Suddenly he slipped and fell. Here was a triumph—the officer's hands absolutely touched his coat; but, ah! the chance of war—the officer himself fell, and the mendicant dashed into a public-house, and the officers who came up next made a rush into the place, but it was vacant. Looking round they saw another room. There were three doors, and each led in a different direction. After a moment's consideration he made a dash through the opposite door, and then out of it: but it led into a court, which led two ways—they scoured down the one that had no thoroughfare at one end, and but one at the other.

No signs of the fugitive could be seen anywhere, and the officers looked at each other in blank dismay. They were done, and panting as they were with exertion, this disappointment was the more bitter; and then inconsolable were they for the great exertion they had made to no purpose.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

POOR Mabel's situation was becoming every day one of more and more anxiety and dread. Indeed, every hour might be said to add materially to the difficulties which beset her, and every minute of the hour brought with it its share of evil instead of consolation.

She quite exhausted her mind in vain efforts to discover what could have possibly happened to prevent the Mortons from writ-

ing to her or coming personally once again to take her under their protection; but amid all the wild and improbable cogitations that from time to time took possession of her mind, she never for one moment committed the injustice of attributing their silence and non-appearance to a want of affection for her.

Ah, no! she knew too well upon what a rock of sincerity that affection was based. She knew too well that no ordinary circumstances could shake it, and it was in picturing to herself some calamities as having possibly occurred to the Mortons that she produced for herself such a world of mental anxiety. If another day or two should elapse without receiving any tidings of them, she felt that her situation would become one of a most precarious character, and that she should be open to suspicions of having by no means adhered to the truth in the statements which she had made.

And perhaps it was no small aggravation of her miseries that she should be so situated that she had no one who could counsel her well; that there was no friend near her to whom she could speak in perfect confidence of spirit, and with a knowledge that she was perfectly understood and believed.

Far from Mrs. Jenkins being any such person, Mabel was quite delighted at her absence, if anything could be said to delight her at such a time.

But, by some means, what Mrs. Jenkins had said concerning her new lodger, Mabel could not forget, and without having seen him, or knowing why or wherefore, Mabel began to have a great dread of this mysterious personage.

She ascertained, toward the evening of the same day, from the servant, that the stranger was at home, and had been shut up in his room for a considerable time, so that, in consequence of Mrs. Jenkins not being returned from her visit of consultation to her mother, Mabel almost dreaded to go to her own apartment in consequence of its proximity to that occupied by the stranger.

When she reached her own she heard her fellow lodger pacing to and fro overhead with rapid strides; and she felt that, while he chose to continue that exercise, any attempt on her part to sleep would be completely out of the question.

At length the pacing ceased; but it was almost immediately followed by a loud, mocking laugh, which fell on the ears of Mabel like a death-knell. There could be no mistaking it. It was the mendicant's! And every pulse of Mabel's was in an instant pale and cold as death.

The striking of a neighboring clock broke the spell in which she was wrapt, and restored her to consciousness. Her first thought was to fly; and mechanically obeying its impulse, she seized the handle of the door, and turning back the bolt, hastily half-opened it to pass forth. But at that moment her ear detected the creaking of steps upon the stairs; and she hastily drew back, nearly, but not quite closing the door, and leaving it just sufficiently ajar to enable her to see the lodger, who was passing down-stairs, and claim his protection. This she could

easily do, as the individual upon the staircase carried a lamp in his hand, as was palpable by the rays it flung before him.

Her heart beat quickly, and she stood there with almost suppressed breath to listen and to observe.

It was evident that, from some reason or another, the individual who so soon would be before her eyes, was most fearful of awakening attention to his movements, or he would not have adopted so careful a mode of getting down-stairs.

It seemed as if he were a minute before he would venture to place his foot upon one of the steps, and then it was only by a subdued creaking of it that Mabel could be sure that he was coming.

Now he was close at hand. Now she saw his arm. He carried the candle in his left hand, and was shading it with his right.

Such an arrangement was calculated to throw a strong light upon his face, and it did so. Mabel with difficulty prevented herself from uttering an exclamation of affright; for in that face she at once recognized the too well-known and repulsive features of the mendicant.

He passed on, too intent upon his own footsteps and upon shielding the light from any blasts of wind, to observe that a door was partially open, as Mabel's was. And it was well that he did so, for had he paused and chosen to be inquisitive, he must have seen her, as the sudden terror and surprise of seeing him there for the moment froze up her faculties, and she could not move from the spot on which she stood.

That he had escaped from the prison she was aware, because the officer on his last visit had said as much; but that he should be there in the very house where she had found an asylum—not a very desirable one, certainly, but still it was one—surpassed all belief.

But she could not be mistaken. She, of all persons, could not for one moment doubt the identity of that man upon whom she had too often looked with undisguised aversion and terror. His every feature was impressed indelibly upon her memory. There could be no possibility of a mistake. It was that fearful man—that man who had wrested her from all she held dear on earth, and who had plunged her in such a sea of terrors and difficulties as had now for some time surrounded her.

He passed on. The light which he carried slowly faded away, and all upon the staircase was darkness again. Then Mabel staggered back till she came to a chair, upon which she sat, with a sigh that told of the agony of apprehension that had come over her.

Then arose the deeply interesting question of what should she do contingent upon this discovery.

"Why is he here," she asked herself, "but to do me some injury? By some means he has found out the fact of my residence here, and yet has power, he fancies, to harm me. Oh, Heaven! protect me against that dreadful man and all his fearful machinations; for that he is now contriving something

against my peace, my liberty, and perhaps my life, admits not of a doubt."

She could not think that the coming there of this man was the result of accident. It was too unlikely, and therefore, if it were by design, there must be some deep-laid plan inimical to her happiness. How could she know but that he might have confederates whom he had even now gone down-stairs to admit into the house?

This thought was one full of alarm, and it at once roused her to action.

"I must fly," she said—"I must fly from here at once, and at any risks and chances. Heaven aid me now, or I shall despair indeed."

It was far easier, however, to decide upon the question of flight, than to carry it into execution; and yet she hastily arrayed herself for the streets, and walked to the door of her apartment without having, in the agitation of her mind, been able to lay down any fixed course of action.

Flight! flight! from the place which contained that fiend in human shape, who had been the bane of her young existence, was the only tangible idea which she thought of.

She could not pause to consider its dangers, or if it were a practicable or a safe step, or if by any more judicious course, she could save herself from the necessity of adopting it; but she left her room, and with trembling steps, and in a state of mental agitation which transcends description, she commenced descending the staircase, down which, so shortly before, she had watched the disappearance of her enemy.

While she saw no light she considered she was safe from encountering him, and all was darkness, but she knew the staircase well enough to descend by the aid of the balustrades in the dark as she in a few moments reached the passage unmolested.

The secret door was gained. To open it was the work of a moment, although to the agitated mind of Mabel it seemed as if it never would obey the lock, and then she was in the street.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THERE was only one circumstance which cast a gloom over the hopefulness with which the Mortons came to London, and that consisted in the fact, that it became necessary to communicate to Monsieur Rouselli the sad end of the young man whom he had sent to England to make inquiries concerning Mabel.

The necessity of making this communication, after the argument which Captain Morton had used in favor of it, was admitted by his brother, who promised, since he might be said to have a kind of acquaintance with Monsieur Rouselli, to be the medium through which he should, with as much consideration as possible for his feelings, be made acquainted with the painful truth.

It was toward the latter part of the day that the Mortons,

with Rafferty Brolickbones, reached London, so that as they felt greatly fatigued, a visit to Monsieur Rouselli was delayed until the morning.

We will, however, do both Captain Morton and his brother the justice to say, that if the news which they had to tell him had not been tinctured by the piece of mournful intelligence they had to add to it respecting the murder of the traveler, of which it will be recollected, Jem, the hostler, had been so falsely accused, they would not have allowed the old man to sleep that night without the pleasurable reflections which were sure to be induced by news of Mabel.

As early, however, upon the following morning as they thought he would be likely to be stirring, they both, or rather we ought to say all three (for Rafferty went likewise) proceeded to Monsieur Rouselli's lodgings, to make to him those mingled communications of pain and pleasure.

Monsieur Rouselli, when their names were announced to him, at once and eagerly desired that they should be admitted, and he received them with all the warmth and courtesy of a gentleman.

"I am certain, my dear friend," he said to Henry, "that you bring some good news to me, or you would not, as I am free to confess you have done, have awakened expectations such as those I have been nursing in my heart since last I saw you."

"Let me assure you," said Henry, "that you do me no more than justice. I have, sir, some news to communicate to you, which I do hope and expect will be of the most pleasing and satisfactory nature to you; but, sir, along with that good news I have one piece of intelligence that will grieve you much."

"No, no," he said, "not along with it, and not following it; you shall tell me the bad news first, and when my mind, oppressed with that, seems, as possibly it may, to be upon the point of sinking, you shall restore me to myself with your better tidings."

"Be it so, sir. The young gentleman whom you sent to England to make inquiries concerning Mabel, has, I regret to say, found a grave among us."

Old Monsieur Rouselli wrung his hands, as he exclaimed:

"Alas! alas! he dead? Heaven take him into its holy keeping. Oh, why has the fell hand of disease seized upon the young, such as he was, and left the old withered trunk, such as I, still living? Dead—dead!"

He turned aside to hide the tears that gushed, despite all his exertions to retain them, from his eyes; and Captain Morton took the opportunity of whispering to his brother:

"He talks of the hand of death coming from disease. Unless he should insist upon knowing the whole particulars, I would not undeceive him."

"I will not."

"Ward it off if you can."

"Most assuredly I will. He need not have the additional pang of knowing how this person for whom he felt so much affection, has come to his end."

After a time Monsieur Rouselli spoke, saying:

"I cannot, sir, say that I am totally unprepared for this blow. The very fact that for so long I had heard nothing, ought to have been, and indeed was, a sufficient warranty of his death. But still, let us anticipate as closely as we may, such a circumstance in connection with those we love; the fact itself comes upon us with as great a shock as if the mind had never dwelt upon it. Tell me of his death, and what he said, and what he did."

"Nay, sir," interposed Captain Morton, "believe me that I speak to you as a sincere friend, when I say to you, why would you seek to know more than that he died, and was placed in the grave by friendly and sympathizing hands? Why seek to harrow your imagination by details which have all terminated in the tomb?"

"You are right—you are right," said Monsieur Rouselli. "I will be content with the amount of grief I have, without seeking aggravating circumstances for the purpose of adding to it. Only tell me this much. Is there the least doubt of the accuracy of this statement?"

"Not the smallest."

"Enough—enough. I—I will not ask more. I am a poor, weak old man now, with no one to whom I can cling, feeling that the bonds of kindred hold them to me. Alas! alas! Even he, as well as my poor son, has gone from me, and I—I am quite desolate, now—quite desolate!"

"Not so," said Captain Morton. "You forget, sir, in this sudden accession of grief that has come over you, that you had a choice of which you should hear first—the good news which we brought to you, or the bad. You have heard the bad."

"Oh! what can compensate me for the loss of him whom I loved so well?"

"Another whom you will love as well, if not better."

"Another?"

"Yes, sir; the child of your son lives."

"My son's child! the infant who—who—— Bear with me, gentlemen—I am old. You would not mock me?"

"On my soul I would not. I tell you that the child whom your son, in his last moments, on the blood-stained field of Waterloo, committed to the care of an English officer, lives, and is one who will compensate you for all evils."

The old man rose, and tottered toward Captain Morton. He took him by the hand, and made an effort to speak, but he could not. Tears came in abundance to his relief; and the captain, who was himself much affected, led him to a chair.

"Be composed, sir," he said; "and you shall listen to the eventful story. That child, I assure you on my word of honor, was preserved from the battle-field by him to whose charge your son committed her, and she grew in beauty and gentleness to be a blessing to him."

"And he—where is he—that noble spirit, who so faithfully fulfilled his trust?"

"Nay, sir, you give me too much commendation."

"You—you, sir?"

"Yes; it was I who——"

Captain Morton found himself clasped in the old man's arms before he could say more.

"You saved that dear infant?" he said. "You have been the generous soldier who, when lying even on the field of carnage, wounded, sought to relieve the pangs of an enemy by accepting the sacred trust which he committed to you?"

"Nay, sir, be calm. I should have been undeserving the name of man had I acted otherwise than I did."

"Bravo!" cried Rafferty Brolickbones, springing and laying hold of Monsieur Rouselli's hand, to which he gave a shake that nearly knocked the old man down. "Bravo! you are the finest old cock for a Frenchman that I ever saw."

"What do you mean, my friend?"

"Why, by the holy poker! I mane that I am ready any day in the week, barring a Friday, 'cos that's unlucky, to take the divil's own oath that, at some period or another in your history, ould gentleman, some Irish blood has got into your family."

"Now, Rafferty, do not make yourself troublesome," said Captain Morton; "you are too violent, and I have only, as you know, permitted you to come here, in order that in consequence of having been present when Mabel was committed to my care on the field of Waterloo, you might be able to answer any questions this gentleman might wish to put to you."

"And were you there, indeed?" said old Monsieur Rouselli.

"I rather think I was, sir; more by token that I got as elegant a rap on the head as ever a Brolickbones would like to have. It's a mighty good thing it hit so hard a place."

"And you saw the last moments of my son—of my dear son?"

"I did, sir."

"You shall another time—another time you shall tell me all. Not now, my friend, not now."

"Very good, sir; when you like. By Jingo, Mister Henry will never make me believe but there's some Irish blood in his veins. Maybe there was an Irishman of some sort in his mother's family, who knows?"

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ALMOST maddened by terror, Mabel ran into the street. She knew not whither she fled, or in what direction. Terror alone was the impulse she moved under. She knew not what was going on around her, or whether she was pursued. Fear, indeed, told her she was; but she had no reason for believing she was, beyond that she knew nothing—nay, she attempted not to think.

The mind was in abeyance. Agitated and impelled by fears and hopes, she had no room for reflection or caution. She merely fled, and that with the utmost precipitation. But she was compelled to slacken her speed; for the fatigue and terror

she had undergone had had its effect upon her, and she was soon aroused by the necessity of stopping.

One thing alone presented itself very forcibly to her, and that was the fact that she ran some danger in the streets, where she was liable to insult and discovery. What could be done, or where she could go for a few hours she knew not; but this she knew, she must endeavor to hide herself, for she was incapable of much more exertion.

It was near a market that she found herself, and there were many odd corners and places where she could remain in quiet until daybreak. She entered a place where there were a good many packages and carts, some under a covered way, and others in the open air. Among some of the former she contrived to pass, and sat down upon a hamper, and leaning against the wall, she, after thinking over the events of the last few days, fell asleep.

She did not awake until the day was far advanced, and the hum and noise of people were heard on all sides of her: she got up and walked out from her place of concealment unmolested by any one; there being so many persons, she was not more noticed than the rest.

It was later in the morning than she had imagined, and she determined that she must adopt some course of action, but what that was to be was almost as difficult as the necessity for some course being pursued.

"What will be said," she thought, "when it becomes known that I have left my lodgings, contrary to my express promise? I shall be deemed an impostor; the best thing I can do will be to go immediately to the police-office, and there see the magistrate or officer."

This was certainly the best plan she could adopt, and she at once determined that, when it was late enough, she would go to the magistrate and relate all that had happened.

"This man has escaped from prison; he is a criminal of the worst character, and he has committed so many crimes, to make it unsafe that he should escape: and he haunts me; my life is not secure while he is at liberty."

There was some time to spare, and Mabel walked slowly about; but ever fearful of encountering that fearful man, she kept within the vicinity of the office. As soon as the office was open, Mabel entered and sat down in the waiting-room. Here she believed she was safe; for the mendicant, now he had escaped from the hands of the officers, would never willingly run into their power again. In this she was right—she was safe. That morning there was a communication made to the presiding magistrate to the effect that the officer under whose care she had been placed had just been to her lodgings to see her, and found that she had suddenly quitted the place in the middle of the night, and had left no trace behind her. There were several minutes' pause after making this communication, and the magistrate seemed to be considering within himself what could be the cause of it.

"What could have been her motive for leaving in so sudden a manner?" remarked his worship.

"I really don't know, sir. She seemed to be very grateful for what I did for her, so that I really did not expect this."

"Nor I."

"She said nothing to any one, and no trace could be found."

"The man has escaped from his prison, too," said the magistrate, significantly.

"Yes, they are both gone," said the officer; "and putting this and that together, your worship, why it looks like a very black job."

His worship said it did, and took time to consider what he should say next.

"It strikes me," said the magistrate, "that this Miss Mabel Morton is in league with the man, who, after all, may and is very probably the murderer."

"There's no doubt of it now, your worship, and her evidence was all flam—mere moonshine, your worship, save and except, of course, the perjury."

"Exactly."

"That by accusing him of one crime she gave him the opportunity of escaping from the effects of another."

"And he has now adroitly escaped from the punishment awarded to either," said the magistrate.

"Exactly, your worship."

"And we have been done—defeated, and justice has been completely diverted from its proper course."

"I think your worship is right. In this instance it seems to me as if it were a planned thing between them."

"Well," said his worship, "I must admit I have been deceived—completely deceived, by the manner, appearance, and tale of the girl herself—that I had every reliance upon her."

"Some of our men seemed to have doubted her from the first, and yet they could not tell why they should, save that she had a very unsettled air."

"She had; but that might be ascribed to so many sources, that we could not judge from that."

There was now a long pause, and then the magistrate said,—

"Well, I don't see what can be done, save take measures to follow and apprehend them. Another post will probably confirm the opinion that she is an impostor."

"No doubt it will, your worship—no doubt of it."

At that moment Mabel, being informed that the night charges were disposed of, and that she might, if she desired, make any application to the bench she pleased, entered the court and heard the last sentence or two, and had also some glimmering of a suspicion that it alluded to herself. She, with the aid of an officer, made her way through the crowd to the witness-box.

"A young woman wants to make an application to your worship," said the usher.

The officer who had been speaking to his worship turned

round, and at once recognized Mabel, for it was he who had procured the lodging.

"Why, here she is, your worship," he said, with the utmost satisfaction depicted on his countenance.

"Who?" inquired the magistrate, not knowing what was meant, for his eye had been wandering over the paper.

"Mabel Morton, the young woman we were speaking of just now, who had left the lodgings I procured for her by your worship's orders, near the water."

In another moment Mabel stood up in the box, and the magistrate at once saw she had been suffering greatly from some cause or other, and he said kindly,—

"Your presence here at this moment certainly gives a contradiction to some surmises that were being made as to the motive that induced you to quit the lodging the officer provided for you by my orders."

"I left on the impulse of the moment," said Mabel.

"And you will be able, at once, to explain the cause of your doing so satisfactorily, I dare say."

"I hope so," said Mabel, who for some moments seemed to be anxious to gain time and strength.

"Where have you passed the night?"

"In wandering about I know not where," replied Mabel, "until the office opened, and since that time I have been here."

"You have been here?"

"Yes, in the waiting-room."

"Is that a fact?" he asked the officer who accompanied her into the office.

"Yes, your worship, she has been here since the office opened."

"God bless me! and here have we been wondering where she could be."

"It is very strange," said the officer, "why she should not have stopped where I left her, because then I could have found her at a moment's notice, when I wanted. But as she's here, she can best tell your worship why she did it."

"Certainly. Now, Miss Morton, be so kind as to furnish us with the key to this mysterious conduct on your part—quitting, without leave, your lodgings."

"I am sorry to have done so, but couldn't help it, your worship; I was compelled," said Mabel.

"Compelled! who compelled?"

"The officer told me," said Mabel, who took no notice of the last question—"the officer told me that the man whom I had so much cause to fear, had broken out of prison, and was once more at liberty."

"He told you the truth."

"Exactly, your worship; but in the night I heard some one walking about overhead for a long time. I could not go to sleep; the sound of the feet seemed dreadful, and even familiar to me; I could not sleep. I determined, at length, so great was my fright, to call on some one for help. I endeavored to do so, and for that purpose opened my door, but, instead of that, I was ter-

rified at the sight of that dreadful man, from whom I have suffered so much."

"What, do you mean to tell me that you saw the man you accuse of abduction and saved from being committed for trial for murder?"

"I did, your worship."

This seemed to have an astounding effect upon all present, and there was a pause of some moments.

"Did he see you?" inquired the magistrate.

"No sir."

"What was he about?"

"He was coming down from the room above," replied Mabel, "with a light in his hand."

"And he was the man who walked about overhead?" inquired the magistrate.

"I suppose it was, your worship; at least, I think it was; but I was so terrified that I scarce knew what to do."

"And you quitted the house because you saw the man there?" said the magistrate.

"I did," she replied. "I thought he had come there on purpose to secure me again. Indeed—indeed, I was half frightened into the belief that I had been sent there on purpose to be taken back again."

"Upon my word, said the magistrate, "this is certainly one of the strangest affairs I can remember. You knew nothing of the man's being there, of course?" said the magistrate, inquiringly, to the officer.

"I didn't, indeed, your worship, else I would have secured him, your worship."

"So I should imagine," said the magistrate.

"I have come here," added Mabel, "thinking I ought to do so, for several reasons, one of which is, I am destitute, and have no assistance until my friends send me aid from Morton Hall. And another is, I ought to come and explain why I left my lodgings, having given my word that I would not do so."

"Very good," said the magistrate; "very right and proper. You have acted very properly."

"And, above all, to let your worship know where the man is to be found at this moment."

"Yes, I see; we'll take care of that. You will have no objection to go back, and to show the officers the man you mean?"

"No, your worship. I never wish to see him again; but beyond that I have no objection."

"Very well, then; let two officers go back with this young lady to the house, and then see if this man is to be found there now; perhaps he may have fled."

"I really cannot say. I was too terrified to know distinctly what was done on the occasion. I saw him, and that to me was all that was needed to terrify me. I thought, I can hardly tell you what, sir; but I felt as if my whole life depended upon my immediate escape."

"Well," said the magistrate, "I can easily understand your

fears; but the officers will protect you—no harm can come to you with them."

"I am perfectly satisfied."

"Are you ready?" inquired the magistrate of the officer.

"I am, your worship," he replied.

"And your fellow-officer—where is he?"

"I expect him every moment, your worship," replied the officer. "He is just the man for the job."

"Do not lose more time than necessary."

"No, your worship; though if he intends going, he's gone by this time; and if not, he'll be good for a few hours. You may come this way, if you please, Miss Morton," said the officer to Mabel. "His worship has nothing more to say to you. Follow me if you please."

Mabel followed the officer out into an ante-room, where he said to her:

"Well, after what you have related as having gone through with him, I am not much surprised at your fears; but his worship, and I too, really thought you had imposed upon us, to screen the mendicant from the punishment of the graver crime."

"Oh, no, no."

"Your presence here now sufficiently disproves that. But what did you do—where did you hide yourself all night?"

"It was very late when I left the house, and the greater part of the night I wandered about, not knowing where I was; but I came to a market, and sat down in a basket, till I fell asleep, and then walked about till I came here."

"And have you had no breakfast?"

"None."

"Goodness me!" said the officer, "yours is a desperate case; why, I should have been dead by this time. Go without eating and drinking all this time! Why, bless my soul, I'm hungry at the thought! Sit down, and I'll get you something, before my brother-officer comes in, for we must be off immediately."

So saying, he left the room. Mabel did feel sinking for want of sustenance and rest. How she had continued to exist through her recent troubles and privations, she could not understand. The fact was, she had been a sufferer beyond the strength of many; but it was the constant and great excitement that carried her through it. She paused in her thoughts, as she heard footsteps of different people passing and repassing, fearful of hearing the one she most of all dreaded.

Presently the officer returned with some coffee and toast he had procured from a neighboring coffee-shop, which he placed before her, saying at the same tine—"Eat this, and be as quick as you can, in case Thorburn should come in, because we must start that instant."

The coffee refreshed her; and, by the time she had hastily finished her meal the officer re-entered the room.

"Well," he said, "I am glad to see you have finished it. You must now come with me, for the officer I was waiting for is come in."

"I am quite ready," said Mabel.

"Wait a moment, and I'll see if he is."

So saying, he left the room, and was absent about five minutes, when he returned with another officer, a big, muscular man, about his own height and size; he was a powerfully made man, of a most determined character.

"This is Thorburn," he said. "You will please to accompany us to the room you say this man resides in."

"He did so when I left."

"Exactly. I dare say, if you haven't frightened him, he'll be there now."

"I know no more than what I told the magistrate," said Mabel; "but I am quite ready."

"And so am I," said Thorburn. "We shall have the gentleman tight enough. If we do once secure him, he shall never get loose again; I'll forgive him if he does."

"Yes, yes; he will have no child's play this time. He must be a very devil in frame and nature if he gets loose again, after our hands have been once closed upon him."

"No, no; he's safe enough—safe enough."

"Then I am ready," said Mabel, as she stood by the two men, who were each of them a remarkable contrast to her light and fragile form.

They all three left the ante-room, and walked out of the office into the streets. There was the usual every-day bustle; not a sound that could be heard distinctly. There was a Babel of sounds, but the one so confused the other, that it was more than difficult to separate them from each other.

Amid such bustle and noise they all proceeded toward the bridge, to pass over the water, to reach the lodgings which the officer had selected for her.

"And now," said Mabel, "as we are close upon the spot, let me tell you to be careful, for he will not hesitate to use the most desperate resistance. Life is nothing to him; he would destroy any one for the mere chance of an escape."

"Never fear, miss, we will take care of ourselves. We are used to these cases, and have often taken characters as desperate as he. But, nevertheless, we will not run into any useless danger, especially as you will be placed at his mercy immediately; but there is no danger of that, at all events."

They now arrived at the house in which the officer had placed Mabel, and in which she had seen the mendicant.

"Now," said the officer, "you had better keep clear of any struggling that may go on, because ugly blows may be given; and I have seen enough to know that such a man may be a more awkward customer than may, at first sight, be imagined."

"Ay," said Thorburn, "very likely. But I don't think he can get out of our clutches; we are too strong for that."

"Ay, ay," said the other, "we are strong; but you know, Thorburn, there are as strong men as we are, and some stronger; not that I should hesitate about this man, but you are always so confident in your strength."

"And good reason, too," returned the other.

"Well, I know you have done some clever things in your time; but so have other people."

"Yes, I know that."

"Well, then, you needn't make so much noise about it, but say less, and be less of a brute than you are."

"Pho—pho! you haven't courage enough now. I don't care for man or devil."

"Nor I."

"Well, but you never say so," said Thorburn.

"No; there is no need when I mean it. I have not any inclination, nor do I see any necessity, for attempting to make people believe what time will show them, without any trouble on my part."

"Well, well—we have both our different ways. Mine's blunt and bull-dog like, I dare say; but then I have done some things by it that I couldn't have done otherwise. But just hold off awhile, for we have work before us. Here is the house. Now, Miss Morton, here we are; have you any objection to go in?"

"I don't see that I need mind," said Mabel. "I can go into my own room?"

"Certainly; you will be safe there," replied the officer. "You can shut yourself in."

"And then shall I come after you when you carry him away?" inquired Mabel.

"You may as well come and see how he is disposed of, and then your mind will be at ease with regard to that one object of terror, at all events," said the officer.

They now entered the house, and proceeded up-stairs without any interruption of any sort, until they arrived at the room in which she lodged.

"Here," said Mabel, "is my apartment," as she opened the door and walked in. "Yes, just as I left it."

"And the room above is the one you mean?" said the officer, pointing upward.

"It is."

"Then there's our man," said Thorburn.

"Yes," replied his companion. "Now follow up close; but don't make more noise than a cat."

"All right. I'm as dumb as a bundle of feathers. Go on; I'm close to you. Let me go in first."

"You do as you are told," said the other, with much shortness. "I am sent to apprehend him, and you help and aid me."

"Very good. Go on, or else I'll do all the work myself."

"Silence!"

They both crept forward without the least noise, until they came on a level with the stairs, or rather the landing, so that they could see under the door.

There was heard a heavy footstep crossing the floor, backward and forward, as if some one was walking across the flooring several times in succession.

"That's him," said the officer.

"Then push on; we are all right—push on. Put your back to the door, and in we go."

"No, no; we may get him to open the door himself, and then we can at once seize him without giving him any time to arm himself, as I am persuaded that such a character will use any means of inflicting mischief."

"I don't care a curse if——"

"Hush!—he hears you. See, he has stopped walking," said the other officer, as he got on his feet and stood by the door. "Come on; we will wait here a moment or two."

They waited a moment or two; but they found that nothing was to be gained by so doing; so he knocked gently at the door and awaited the effect.

Without a moment's hesitation the mendicant stepped to the door and opened it.

It was evident he had not expected such visitors, for he started as he beheld the two officers. His own heart at once told him the nature of their call, had not a glance at the men been sufficient. In an instant, before the officers could make a move to prevent him, he had shut the door in their faces, and double-locked it.

"There," said Thorburn; "well, now, how do you like that?"

"D——n!"

"Well, then, the next act of the man will be to throw himself out of the window, cut his own throat, or shoot one of us. What do you say to that?"

"Come, come, Thorburn, don't give us any more of your nonsense; what do you think we had better do in such an emergency as this?"

"Knock at the door, and say what you want at once, and, if he refuses to open it, go in."

The officer at once knocked roughly at the door, and awaited but a moment for an answer, and, receiving none, he repeated the summons, saying:

"Open, in the king's name."

No answer, however, was returned to this, and he drew back a yard or so, sayiug:

"If you do not open the door, I will soon make way into the room."

As he spoke he made a rush at the door, followed closely by Thorburn, with the intention of bursting it open; but just as they arrived at it, they found it open; they both passed headlong into the apartment several yards before they could recover themselves.

"Here's a go!" exclaimed Thorburn.

Before anything more could be said or done a rush was made by the mendicant past the officers, toward the stair-head, as if for the purpose of flight downward, but before he could reach it the officers had seized him by the collar of the coat; and then a desperate struggle ensued among them.

"Surrender!" exclaimed the officer. "You cannot escape."

"I will try!" exclaimed the mendicant.

As he spoke he made a desperate effort to throw off one of the men, to get one arm free; but they succeeded in clinging to him and holding him down.

"Go quietly," said Thorburn, "and you will be carefully treated; but if you go on in this way you may depend upon it we shall drag you by the heels till the pavement wears a hole in your head."

The mendicant, however, seemed to have no fear of such an operation, far from it; he seemed to imagine it a motive for additional exertion, and the three lay struggling and rolling on the stairs.

Of course this could not be done without causing an uproar in the house. Poor Mabel sat in the room alone, and terrified at the sounds that reached her, for they told her plainly of the desperate nature of the resistance the mendicant was making to the officers.

She clasped her hands in an agony of fear and supplication, praying for a termination of the dreadful struggle, but not a fatal one, which she most feared.

The people in the house, consisting of various lodgers, came out to view the struggle, and, as in all similar cares, they took part with the weakest against the officers. Indeed, some people never can bear the idea of an officer doing his duty. It grates against their feelings, and they fancy they can feel the grasp of the official on their own coats. Thus it was, the officers were assailed with hoots and groans, and, as they struggled together, they encouraged the mendicant to resist.

"That's right, boy, stick to 'em," said one man; "what your hands can't do, let your teeth.

This advice was taken; for the mendicant suddenly seized Thorburn by the cheek with his teeth, which caused the other suddenly to loose his hold, and exclaim, as he seized him by the throat—

"You infernal, tiger-like villain. I'll strangle you; and, as for you," he added, addressing those who were advising the prisoner, "if you go on in this manner, I shall be obliged to return for some of you."

"Ah! you're a fine fellow. Why, you are big enough to eat him, and there are two of you, and yet you can't hold him like men."

The mendicant, however, gained his object, and that was to free his arms—one of them at least—for Thorburn's grasp was at his throat, while his companion held him by the neck and one arm.

During this time the mendicant made so much resistance as to keep the two officers well employed, though the grasp on his throat was becoming each moment more dangerous and more distressing. His breath, already short, was nearly stopped; and but for the sudden release he knew he could procure, he must have surrendered. He got his hand into his pocket, and pulled out a small pocket-pistol. With some difficulty he contrived to cock it, and then, placing the muzzle close to Thorburn's body, he discharged the contents full into him.

The unfortunate man suddenly let go his hold, stood upright on the stairs, and, placing his hand to the lower part of his body, exclaimed—

"I'm a dead man, by G—d!"

He reeled backward, and, being on the stairs, lost his footing, and thus fell headlong down on to the next landing, without sense or motion.

The sounds and words were elèctric—they were heard by all in the house, and a dreadful consternation seized upon all who saw the dreadful occurrence, and they who had offered gratuitous advice instantly disappeared.

The other officer, for a moment, stood up, and gazed at the fallen body of his brother officer. He saw it was no use offering aid to one already dead.

The mendicant himself felt the release of the hand, and soon gained breath. A few deep and rapid inspirations seemed to restore, in some measure, his strength—not as it was before, but it enabled him to renew the struggle with the remaining officer.

This was of a most desperate character, for both seemed nearly equal in strength—the officer the stronger of the two, but not much—both were exhausted.

"Murderer! villain! surrender!"

"Never while I breathe. I have killed one man—I know my doom—see you do not share his fate."

"Not if I can hold you, villain as you are," said the other. "I call upon you, in the name of the king, to help me."

No one, however, responded to this appeal, and the officer continued to hold the mendicant.

"If you do not help me, I will have you all punished; you are bound to help me by law."

However, the law was not very potent there; it was, at all events, disobeyed; for no one took any notice of the behest. Seeing it was a struggle for life and death, the officer did all he could to disable his opponent, who seemed almost insensible to pain or fatigue, though he, in fact, was hardly able to stand from fatigue.

He tore him away from the banisters, and dashed his head against the wall. The blood flowed copiously from both; and, in a few moments more, the mendicant gave a sudden swing, and they both came with such force against the hand-rails, that they all flew out, and officer and mendicant fell into the passage beneath, where they lay for a minute or two, stunned.

The officer was the first to recover, and taking advantage of the moment, had nearly slipped the handcuffs over the mendicant's hands; but by a sudden twist he saved himself from being thus secured. The struggle was again renewed, and they both fought their way down the stairs.

Scarce a word was spoken by either; they were too much occupied by the desperate nature of the struggle they were engaged in, and which had been painfully prolonged. Had neither of them such strong and exciting motives—the one for capturing and the other for escaping—the conflict must soon have ended one way or the other: but the fact was, mental excitement aided the bodily strength, and made them almost insensible to what they suffered.

Their struggles were weak and slow to what they had been,

and their endeavors grew weaker and weaker, until at length they reached the passage leading to the door.

There was Mabel, waiting like one newly risen from the grave, pale, agitated, and trembling; she could scarcely stand; but when she heard them approaching, she threw the door open and stepped into the street.

The fresh air that came in from the street seemed to revive the mendicant, and he began to struggle anew as they came along the passage to the street-door, and when once in the street the struggles of the two men were really tremendous.

This sudden spurt of exertion, after what they had done, could last but a few minutes, and indeed it was quickly over, for, in the struggle, the officer's head struck against a lamp-post, and he staggered a pace or two, and was unable to see. The mendicant found his grasp loosen, and in an instant he was free, and in another moment he was out of sight.

"D——n!" muttered the officer. "Escaped, by Heaven, and, after such a struggle, it's too bad."

There stood the officer, pale and trembling from exertion, the picture of disappointment and vexation; behind him a little way stood also Mabel. She, too, was pale and trembling; terror had seized upon her heart, and she could scarcely move or speak, but she could see the flight of the mendicant, and also knew the mischief that had been done.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The flight of the mendicant, as may easily be imagined, was continued for some distance: indeed, he was by far too fearful to look back. He believed the officers were after him—close at his heels; until he shaped his course through a densely crowded neighborhood, where he hoped, by twisting and turning, to gain ground, and throw his pursuers out of the track.

Then, indeed, he did venture to look round, but saw no one whom he could recognize. He could not move—his heart beat violently, and the blood rushed fearfully through his veins, and his temples throbbed. Indeed, he was at the very last stage of exertion.

Any less exciting motive would never have carried him through the immense exertion he had made; and for ten lives he could not now have made the exertion that would save one.

"They have missed me!" he said; "they have missed me! I am safe; I have escaped."

Still he moved not—he was bound to the spot—he knew not which way to move—he feared to turn to the right or the left—the fear of meeting some of his pursuers.

It was just probable he might do so; but to remain where he was, was equally dangerous. What was he to do? He must encounter some danger; and he had better encounter that which seemed to present the best chance of escape.

To choose was a difficulty—between what seemed probable or possible, in either case; and the necessity there was for his mov-

ing away, lest he should attract too much attention, from those who were near the spot, and thus defeat his own object. He did move away, and toward a part of the town he knew full well—there was an empty house, and in this he thought he could for a time find shelter. To this be made an immediate retreat, not in so rapid a manner as he had before made—that might attract more attention than was at all desirable.

Rapid flight through London was only admissible in very urgent cases, hut there was danger in being stopped, both by passers-hy and also hy some accidental encounter in so crowded a place. The mendicant, therefore, assumed a rapid and cautious walk, until he came to a long and narrow lane. Here he paused for a moment or two, and looked ahout him. He did not want to be noticed going into this neigbborhood, for it was just possihle that he should be waited for hy any of tbe officers, and that would insure his detection. Seeing, however, no one near, he went down the lane, and stopped before a house he had, on one or two occasions, stopped at before, and where he had concealed himself for some hours without being detected.

"Ah!" he muttered, as he looked up at a large, empty house, "this is the place. I suppose it's condemned."

He gazed around him on all sides, but saw no one looking; but he beard a hue and a cry of some sort at tbe end of the street, as if it were approaching, and without a moment's hesitation the mendicant darted into the house. The door swung hack with some violence, and went with a tremendous hang against the wall, and then hack again; hut there was no lock or hasp to catch it, and it swung backward and forward several times before it rested in quiet. In an instant the mendicant, with a light step, was up-stairs, and had reached the first floor landing before he paused, and then he stopped to listen to the many echoes that resounded throughout the empty house. But then, when they had nearly subsided, other sounds reached his ears he had not expected.

"Hilloa! who's that?" sbouted a deep, boarse voice, from below tbe ground-floor.

The mendicant paused and listened.

"Oh! I'm not alone," be muttered. "Who can this be? but no matter, I'll have no companion."

"Hilloa, who's above?" shouted the same voice. No answer. "Is that you, Jack?" No answer still, and the voice below paused a moment or two, and the other appeared to be listening.

"What's the matter?" inquired another voice below, but in a lower tone.

"I don't know, only somebody banged the door fit to knock a bole through the wall into the next house."

"The devil!"

"Didn't you hear it, then?" inquired the first.

"I was in the cellars," said the other. "I heard something, hut couldn't tell what it was. It was sometbing that shook the place a bit, hut where it came from I could not tell."

"I could, though."

"Have you been up to see?" inquired the second voice.

"No," said the first; "I haven't heard anyhody move. I dare say it was only the wind."

"It may be; but were I you, I'd go up and see, and so satisfy myself at all events."

"And why don't you, yourself?"

"Are you afraid of a sound," inquired the second voice, "that you want somebody else to go and see for you?"

"Oh, I dare say—I dare say it's the wind."

"It may be; but it may be an ill wind to us, and if you do not go up, I will!"

"Just stand back—I'll go; I have nothing to fear—you have—but you may as well keep close at hand."

The mendicant listened attentively, and could hear they were both creeping up the stairs into the passage, and when there they examined the place, hut saw no one that could have caused the disturbance.

"It was only the wind."

"Most likely some one going by gave it a push on purpose, for the lark of the thing."

"Curse their larks."

"So say I; hut they will do it, though they know there's nohody here to frighten, hut they like to hear themselves, or the noise they make."

"So they do; but yet it is possible that they may have gone up-stairs."

"It is not very likely, I should think, hut yet it is possible," said the first voice.

"Listen awhile."

They approached the stairs and stood in an attitude of attention for some moments, perfectly still with suppressed hreathing.

"I hear nothing," said one. "Nor I; hut—but what was that—a shadow? where did that come from?"

"A shadow!"

"Yes, did you not see it? a shadow came between me and the skylight in the roof."

To explain this we may say that the mendicant had stood there in hreathless agitation, listening to the conversation that was being carried on in whispers below; but he suddenly peeped over the banisters, and saw the two men below, with their ears turned upward to catch the sligbtest sound that might be uttered or made, proceeding from above. The mendicant had not thought upon the skyligbt ahove, and the shadow below; but he saw the two ears turned upward endeavoring to catch something.

Thinking it would be a pity they should not catch something, he turned about to see what he could oblige them with. There was notbing at all at hand, save one or two large pantiles, and they stood invitingly balancing upon the very extremity of the landing, just over the precise spot where the two men were standing at that moment. The pantiles bad fallen from the roof above, which was not in the best state of repair, as may be imagined, in consequence of their absence from their appropri-

ate position. The mendicant gently touched two of these, which lay contiguous to each other, and the motion completely turned them over, and down they fell just as he had intended them.

They reached their destination exactly, for they fell flat upon the cheeks of the two men, to their intense astonishment and horror; for they were completely beaten down, not only with the force of the blow, but with amazement likewise. In an instant after, the mendicant, by rapid strides, entered the room on the first floor, and then going into a small closet, he pushed aside the shelves which opened unto a flight of stairs, and then having closed the door, he paused. He could hear the voices of the two men who had been listening, and who had been treated so unceremoniously by the fall of the tiles, and who, after the first surprise had subsided, recovered themselves, and one of them exclaimed—

"There's somebody up-stairs."

"I think not," replied his companion; "we haven't heard a sound, and nobody could move about those empty rooms without being heard, much less kick tiles over."

"You may say what you please, but there's somebody up-stairs; but what an infernal blow on the face I have received; why, it was enough to have broken my jaw."

"And mine; see, my face is cut."

"A little."

"Quite enough: at all events, I'll go up; come on, we can't remain in this state of uncertainty; we may have some game carried on that we little think of, if we do not take proper care; I am sure of that."

"Very well; let's make a thorough search over the place, and in the meantime we may as well secure the door."

"Let down the bar."

Having secured the door, the two men then ascended the stairs and examined the staircase closet, for there was one; it was a large, old-fashioned rambling house, where there were capabilities almost sufficient to conceal a troop of cavalry.

"Well, I must say that this is the oddest old pile ever I saw; there ain't a place but what has some hole, or cupboard, or something of the sort; I can't tell how they could have been ingenious enough to have built a house with them."

"Why, it does seem as though the house had been built with a view to the construction of cupboards."

"Ah, it does; I suppose they built it up first, and tried their hand at what they could make of it afterward, and in all the odd corners they placed a cupboard."

"There's been nobody here, I think."

"Well, I think not, too; but it was very strange all that noise should have arisen from nothing, or from no cause at all. I can't understand it."

"Very likely some one came by and did it for the sake of amusement, and then turned tail."

"I heard no one run away."

"And you heard no one come in, did you?" inquired the first speaker, in a louder tone of voice.

"I did not."

"And yet you were much more likely to do that than the former, since they would be nearer to you."

"Well, well, we may as well return; but I'll take good care nobody else gets in or out without my knowledge; I'll manage that all right enough."

So saying, the two men left the room, and the mendicant heard them descend the stairs and pass the street door, at which they were occupied for some time in doing something which he could only guess at.

"There, they cannot get that undone at all from the outside," he said, "and as for the inside, I shall be soon called up by the noise, and I am a match for any man, and you for another; eh, is it not so?"

"I should say so; or at all events, I will try."

"Here are the pantiles; would you like to save one of them as a keepsake?"

"Oh, no, I don't need one of them to remind me of them; I'm not so forgetful as all that."

The men descended below, but they were heard no more.

The mendicant came out again into the room he had left, and pondered over what he had heard, and tried to regain his composure, for his recent exertions were not to be easily forgotten, nor would he be likely at all to recover from them.

He stood in that attitude for more than one hour, with his eyes fixed upon the floor, as if in deep meditation; but yet not the lightest sound passed unnoticed by him.

"What can be the meaning of this?" he muttered. "When I was here last, there was no soul breathing here, nor were there even any signs or traces of its having been used for any purpose whatever; but it is all altered. There are no signs of occupation on the outside; the boards are up before the windows, and it seems, in fact, as if boarded up, because it was dangerous and uninhabitable. Would these men have talked so much, if they came like myself, hiding? No, I think not; and yet they may be merely securing a retreat; and if they are disturbed, they would endeavor to find out the cause somehow or other. I'll remain here at all events; they seem to occupy the lower part, and I'll occupy the upper; a fair division is no cause of quarrel, if they should discover me. Anything but being taken—that would be utter destruction. All things considered, I had better die resisting than undergo the slow torture preparatory to an execution; for if I be taken, that will be the inevitable result."

Thus, having satisfied himself entirely that the steps he had taken, and was about to take, were the best that could be adopted under the circumstances, he determined to make a more extended but careful search over the upper part of the house, so that he might be forearmed by being forewarned as to what was to be expected from any quarter of the house. He went upstairs a flight higher, and found nothing that in any way excited his suspicions, and he returned below, and looked very carefully

about, and returned to the cupboard on the stairs, which he had not noticed before; for it was by far too artfully concealed to be found out, save upon the closest inspection. It was with much difficulty he contrived to open it; but he at length, after various attempts, succeeded in doing so, and then, to his joy, he found what he most needed. This was food. He had eaten nothing since the previous day, and now he was half famished, and his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. There was a large barrel, in which was placed the tap, and some jugs were at hand. In an instant the mendicant took one of the largest, and filled it with the beer which it contained; and while doing that, placed half a large meat-pie in his pocket, and the jug being full, he closed the door, but had scarcely reached the landing, when he heard the men below:

"There—there's somebody at the beer."

"Don't be a fool—there's nobody there—nobody at all. How are they to get at the beer?"

"How can I tell till I see? I tell you, there must have been somebody there."

"Go up with you, or let me pass. I think you are mad, or the house haunted, I don't know which."

"Nor I either," replied the first; "but I'll find out something or other before I have done. I know I have heard the running of the beer, despite all you can say. I heard the door shut, too, and that's more—so, come on."

The two men now came to the cupboard, and the mendicant reached the door of the closet.

"There," said one, "the door is all right, you see."

"Ah! Well, let us see if the beer is all right. Then you may laugh, because I can afford it, when I know the beer has not suffered."

"Ah! you wouldn't care for anything, so long as you got beer with you."

"Indeed I should not."

They now opened the door, and one of the men examined the tap very carefully, and then he said,—

"There has been some drawn here. Look, 'tis quite fresh, and besides, I laid the key here."

"Nonsense! you haven't drawn any beer this hour, it is true, but you couldn't tell how long that which hangs on the tap has been there."

"Oh! don't tell me. Give me the stone jug; we'll try it ourselves—I'm thirsty."

"The stone jug did you say?"

"Yes, to be sure; it hung up on the right hand; it's the biggest of the lot."

"I don't see it on the right or left," said his companion.

"Nor I neither now. I'll swear it was here when we came here last. You saw it?"

"I did. I hung it up myself."

"Well, this is a pretty go, at all events. What'll the club say to such goings on?"

"They won't believe a word about it."

"Nothing; but I'll tell you what it is, there's somebody in the house who are as thirsty as coach-horses, or they wouldn't have taken the largest jug. We must make a careful search all over the house. Come on."

"Yes; let's have some beer, now we are here."

Accordingly they both drank heartily of the beer, and then, in putting the jug by, their eyes fell upon the dish in which the meat pie had been. No sooner had they become aware of the extent of their deprivation than they both stared, and their countenances changed; a dull, leaden expression came over them, and they looked at each other in dismay.

"What do you think of this?" inquired one. "Didn't we have some of that for dinner—eh?"

"We did."

"Well, then, where is it gone now? It was there, you know; you'll admit that?"

"Yes, I must admit that—I can't help it. I saw it put there myself. But what shall we do?"

"Do? why, search the house right over—every hole and cupboard, until we find the wretch, and then we'll have his ears or his life."

"He must not escape us; he will know too much if he be permitted to leave this house alive. We shall not be safe, depend upon that."

"I think not either. There," he added, shutting the cupboard door; "there now, that is safe; we may as well go up to the first floor, and there commence our search."

Hearing these words, the mendicant closed the door of the closet, and then shut the shelves standing on the stairs behind this closet. This was scarcely effected before the men entered the room, and looked round, and walked across the floor.

"I thought I heard something here," said one.

"Did you? Well you might. All I can say is, it is a queer affair. The beer and the pie are a mystery to me. But look about—there is a closet."

The closet-door was opened, but it seemed the men were not acquainted with the secret of the movable back, for they did not attempt to open it. Soon after they both quitted the room. to examine other parts of the house. He could hear them go into various rooms, and then return another way.

The mendicant ate the food he had so opportunely come by in quiet, and quenched his burning thirst with the beer. He had suffered dreadfully from the exertion he had made to get away from the officers, and in the continuance of his flight. A less active and powerful man would have dropped dead long ago; and as it was he had bled at the ears and nose. His eyes were bloodshot, and his whole appearance was soiled, and it betrayed every sign of the struggle he had been engaged in, and his dress appeared torn and destroyed, such as it was. He sat there for some time, until he had eaten as much as he required; the remainder he secured, and having emptied the jug, cautiously stole back to the cupboard on the stairs, and deposited it on the

shelf whence he had taken it, then he as cautiously retired to the place where he had before concealed himself.

Scarcely had he done so ere the two men descended the stairs, having searched the house to no purpose, and were returning much annoyed, not to say somewhat dismayed, at an occurrence that seemed beyond their comprehension.

"There's nobody in the house, that's certain," said one of them: "but that somebody must have been in, that's equally certain."

"Yes; but I can't understand it at all. How they could contrive to get out again is beyond my belief."

"Well, perhaps they may have done with the jug, and put it back again. Ah! ah! I dare say that is a pretty idea truly, but we'll take another jug of beer down, and that will save our having the trouble to come and fetch it when we want it—eh?"

"Well, I suppose a jug won't hurt us, as we have had more than usual exertion."

They both stepped to the cupboard, and then opened the door; one of the men lifted up his arm with the intention of taking down one of the jugs; but his eye rested upon the one he had before missed. For a moment he was transfixed with amazement; then, starting back, he pointed to the jug, exclaiming,—"There—there!"

"Well, what? Oh, d——e!"

This exclamation was uttered in consequence of the eye of the other man resting upon the jug, to which his companion pointed; and he, likewise, took a step back, and paused a moment.

"Well, I never! What's the matter now? Who's done this? I never was in such a place."

"Such a place! I believe the devil's got loose among us."

"Don't mention names while you are here; you don't know who you might see suddenly."

"Come along. I won't stay up here any longer. My belief is, the place is haunted."

"Won't you have any beer before you go? There is the jug, you know."

"No, no; I'll have none. It may be in the butt, you know. Come down, I have had enough of this—quite enough for once; we don't doubt the fact; do you?"

"Oh, no; but I'll have some beer, if there be any deviltry in it or not."

So saying, he drew some beer, and the men descended again below, having first unfastened the door, being apparently convinced that they could do no good by fastening it, and it was possible the cause of their trouble might be kept in by it.

When the mendicant became convinced that there was no further search after him, he quitted the place where he had seated himself, and descended the narrow stairs until he came to the basement-story, and then he emerged into the underground rooms, which were old and dilapidated in the extreme; there were many of them. He could hear the sound of the men's voices in conversation, and to this he for a time listened; but being convinced that it did not concern him, he left the

spot and proceeded forward, and found that there was a large range of buildings behind. These he had seen before, and they now bore the same appearance, save there were traces of persons having been there recently. Broken pipes and tobacco ashes were signs that there had been, at some time or other, a meeting of some persons, who had more than ordinary reasons for secrecy.

In one part of a large room, or cellar, or perhaps shed, for it partook of all characters, a quantity of straw was heaped up in one corner, partially in sheaves, and partially loose. After some consideration and self-communion, he crept into the straw, and buried himself as far into it as he could. He hoped there to sleep in safety and peace a few hours, and to enable him to recover from the fatigue that he had undergone that eventful day. How long he could lay there he did not know, but he believed that he was safer there than anywhere else; indeed, there was no other place where he could sleep, save the passage and stairs, and they were not safe, because they must be known to every one who was acquainted with the house, though the door in the closet might not, since it was a communication that was carefully concealed on both sides. To the very bottom of the straw he crept; there were ample means of breathing, for the straw above was chiefly in trusses, and piled up crossways. Here, with such a feeling of security as a man, hunted by society from place to place, could feel, he fell into a deep sleep, such as he had not had for some days; exhausted nature required some such means of—not renovation—but cessation from intense exertion of mind and body.

How long he lay there he could not tell; but he was aroused from his slumbers by loud shouting and laughter, accompanied by knocking upon the table, and the jingling of glasses, and other noises, and a rough voice said;

"D—n it all, Giles, you are a rare boy. You make no bones of what you say or do."

"In coorse I doesn't. I never minds—why should I? I'm among friends, ain't I?"

"You are, my boy."

"Then why should I not say what I mean? I means what I say, gentlemen, and I'll stick to it."

"You do, do you?"

"In coorse I does."

"Now, I'll tell you what, the last feller as I had anything to do with, served me so. He was a pal of mine, but he wanted to split——"

"Ay, ay."

"Yes; and what do you think it was all about?"

"Don't know."

"Why, then, it was this ere—I put up the job; it didn't okkipy us a quarter of an hour. We got fifty-three pounds—that wasn't amiss."

"Very good indeed. Well, I hope I may never have less than fifty-three pounds for a quarter of an hour's work."

"Between two, you know."

"Yes, yes; twenty-six pun' ten, each."

"No; I gave him twenty-six pounds, and took twenty-seven myself. I did the business, and put it up too. I only had ten shillings more than my share, and that made a pound more than he had, which wasn't much to cry about."

"No, nothing at all; that was right enough—and no more than was right either."

"Well, he took the sulks upon that. He thought I wanted to do him. He thought I hadn't acted right, and grumbled about it, sorely; so I said to him: 'Here, Bill, do you take the sovereign; one on us must know most about this affair and has done the most—and that must be you; take it. I see it don't set on your stomach—I shan't want it.' No; he wouldn't have it at all; grumbled, but swore he wouldn't have it. Well, I didn't say no more, but I left the matter as it stood, and then I was told next day that I must beware of Bill, because he was getting dangerous.

"'Dangerous!' said I. 'Yes,' said my friend; 'you and he did a job last night, didn't you?' 'Yes,' said I; 'who told you?' 'Bill.' 'Then he means splitting,' said I; 'if he tells one, he'll tell another.' 'He does. You had better come with me and I'll show you what he means.' Well, I went with him, and looked through a passage window into a room, where he was sitting with an officer. The window was open, and I could hear what was said by either, and I heard the officer say to him, 'Well, then you'll bring him to the bar?' 'I will.' 'Well, then, call for what you will treat him with, and say that one good turn deserves another.' 'I will. You'll know what I mean—he's the man. It's all right between us?' 'Yes, certainly, I understand; you have helped me to a prisoner before now, and this Giles I want particularly.' This was enough for me. I went away. I knew where to see him, about an hour afterward. I went and saw him. How precious friendly he was. I said to him, 'Come this way, I have a new job for you—one I've just thought of; come along.' 'Have you?' said he. 'Yes,' I said; 'come along.' And we came here, and into this very room. There was nobody here then.' 'Well,' said he, 'what is it?' 'Why,' I said, 'you haven't any idea of splitting, have you—of selling me, eh?' You should have seen his face! He tried to keep his countenance, and he said he had no such intention, and wondered how I could think of such a thing, and expressed his willingness to work with me as he had done. 'Well,' said I, 'I thought when you were settling with the trap to-night, you intended so doing, especially as I heard him and you plan how I was to be taken.' He staggered, and I sprung forward and seized him by the throat, and held him fast. We struggled, and we fell. He was stunned, and I never released my hold of his throat, but held him there till he was dead."

"What did you do with the body?"

"Ah!" said another, "'tis easy to kill a man, but how to get rid of the body is the trouble."

"Sack it, but I had none."

"Tell us tbe secret, Giles; tell us tbe secret—it's worth knowing, anyhow, isn't it?"

"Well, I'll tell you. I put him up in a sack; and then I put the sack on my shoulder, and carried it to a surgeon's, who paid me handsomely for the body, and made no inquiries as to how I came by it or anything else; so I made a good thing of it."

At that moment, from some reason, and which the mendicant could not for bis life control, he was compelled to sneeze in so loud and decided a tone, that it startled every one present.

"What's that?" exclaimed one.

"It's very like a sneeze," says Giles; "and it strikes me it was a man, too; it's a decided case in my opinion. There's somebody more here than has been invited."

There was a look of consternation among all present, save Giles, wbo continued—

"It strikes me, mates, that somebody's on the look-out, and somebody may be in the straw; what do you say to a searcb? It's not the right sort of thing to be listening to a gentleman's conversation. I say, pull him out."

"Then that explains all about the jug, the beer, and the meat-pie, eh? There's somebody about who knows more than we do; it's dangerous, decidedly dangerous."

"Pull the straw over; see who it is; don't stand staring like petrified pigs, but go into bim at once! Wbat's the use of looking on?"

Tbe mendicant now saw he sbould be discovered, but determined that he would make an effort to escape by dasbing through them, as soon as he found they had removed the straw,—no doubt he thought the onset would take them by surprise, and he should get clear off. He felt the trusses, one by one, pulled off, until he was exposed to their view.

"Here he is!" cried one.

In an instant the mendicant made a desperate rush toward the door, and had almost succeeded in escaping them; but one of them placed a stick between his feet and he was thrown down, headlong, on the bricks.

"That's tbe plan," said Giles; "lend us a hand, boys; one take a leg, another an arm, and then, you know, we can make a subject."

In an instant the advice was acted upon, and four strong men pinned him to the earth by his four limbs. He could not move—it was hopeless; and yet be struggled fiercely for some minutes witb such strength as only he possessed, but it was unavailing.

"Eh, you warmint! so you were listening, were you? you want to make market of us, do you? but we'll make one of you, at all events."

"I had no intention of listening to you—I was asleep half the time."

"He knows too much; he bas been bere too long; he knows the house better tban we do."

"It is a very good trap, though," said one, "and very well

done; but we are by far too old hands to be taken in in that manner. It won't do."

"You won't take my life?" said the mendicant.

"But we will, though," said Giles. "You would have taken ours, or helped to do so; but we must do a little in the way of self-defense. Murdering you, or hanging us, comes to the same thing in the end."

The mendicant struggled fiercely for a moment or two; he seemed to think there would be no chance of life, save in his own effort, and, for a moment, he had nearly freed himself from their hold; but the man called Giles threw himself, with his knees, on the mendicant's chest. The blow was a dreadful one, and caused him to straighten himself out, and he was instantly secured in that position; when Giles, having pulled out a large cotton pocket handkerchief, instantly covered the mendicant's mouth and nostrils, and then leaned upon him with all his strength and might. The struggle was a short but fierce one, and soon ended. The mendicant was stretched motionless on the earth, without a sign of life.

"He's not done for," said Giles. "I expect we shall have a supper out of this."

"Out of what!"

"We can dispose of the body, you know."

"Oh, yes! where shall we take him?"

"I'll show you. Put him in a sack, and we'll manage all else; there will be time enough yet to get to the house. We shall get a few pounds for him; not that that is much, but then we shall have got rid of the body, and it is worth something to do that."

"So it is," was the reply.

They now produced a large sack, into which the body was thrust, with some exertion; such as bending the legs, and so on, until they contrived to secure the mouth of the sack with a piece of cord. This done, a short consultation was held. They all agreed that they would take it at once in turn, as they went along. Shouldering the burden, they left the house, and proceeded to a surgeon. where they knew they could dispose of it; and they were speedily shown into a small room, and awaited the presence of the surgeon.

"Well," he said, as he entered the room, "what have you got now for me? Some of those short poor wretches that you have brought us lately?"

"No; you have one here that you won't match every day in the week, even alive."

"Come, that's good."

"Ay, he's long and broad, and a regular good 'un, and wouldn't have disgraced a grenadier company."

"Well, what is it to be—five pounds?"

"Five pounds! Well, doctor, we must take it elsewhere. I thought we'd give you the first chance; but we must do more than clear our expenses."

"How much do you want?"

"Ten; and not too much either; who would run all the risk for less money?"

"No; I'll give you eight. Let me tell you, eight pounds is a long price," said the surgeon.

"But it's a long corpse."

However, it was agreed amongst them that they would take the eight pounds, which was paid, and the whole party left the house, after depositing the body on the table, divested of its clothes.

In a short time afterward, the surgeon returned to the dissecting-room, with a couple of pupils. They arranged the body, and then the surgeon, taking the knife in his hand, said, with the air of a great man:

"You see that body, gentlemen, is a very fresh one, indeed, and I dare say blood will follow."

"I should say, from its appearance, it had never been buried," remarked one of the pupils.

"Why?" inquired the surgeon.

"Because the body has never been washed, and people are very particular about that."

"It is true; but we don't know where this body has come from,—it's a good subject,—a very perfect one,—a strong and well-made man, but by no means fat, you see; the limbs and muscles are well developed; indeed, when a limb is well developed, we mean both bone and muscle." There was a pause, and then he added. "Now, we will make the incision."

He held the knife in his right hand, and began to score down the stomach of the mendicant, who, not being quite dead, began to revive with a loud "Oh!" The surgeon and pupils began by degrees to back from the table, and, when the mendicant slowly sat up, the surgeon went down on his knees, saying:

"Holy Ghost!—our Father! for what we are going to receive, oh, dear! make us truly thankful."

The pupils, ere this, had scampered down-stairs, and the surgeon, when he saw the body moving off the table, scrambled on all-fours underneath, until he reached the door, which he secured, and ran down-stairs.

For some moments the mendicant stood up, and gazed about him, unable to comprehend the nature of what had occurred, or where he was. After much confusion of thoughts, he remembered the last scene that had occurred, and then comprehended how he came there. After a little while, he dressed himself, then, taking a large stick in his hand, he sat down very quietly beside the door, there to wait in patience its being opened.

In about an hour the surgeon and his pupils returned, having gained courage by means of libations of brandy, and the reflection that there was but one against three,

Opening the door, the surgeon popped his head in to see where the body was, when the mendicant dropped the stick upon his crown, and the surgeon disappeared; in another moment the mendicant rushed out; the pupils, making a faint resistauce, and receiving a blow or two from the impetuous mendicant, tumbled over each other on the stairs, and amid the confusion

the mendicant reached the street-door, which he succeeded in opening before they could move to offer any opposition, and he got clear off.

CHAPTER XL.

THE information which had been now given by the Mortons to Monsieur Rouselli, partly of a joyous, and partly of a sad character, as it was, at first did not seem likely to produce any bad consequences upon the health of the old man, for he, to all appearance, quickly enough recovered from the first shock that he had sustained; but it was when he was left alone that memory conjured up to him the scenes of the past, and he felt deeply and keenly all his misfortunes. And when we come to consider the melancholy situation of the old man, we can scarcely wonder at his indulgence in such regrets. He had lost that son who had been dearer to him than life itself. That dear son, for whom he would have laid down his existence a hundred times over rather than he should have suffered, and, likewise, that son's child, who might, and from all that he had now heard, would have been such a solace and joy to him. She, too, was gone; perchance dead: or what was, perhaps, worse than a direct knowledge of her death, he was, in her case, left to all the agony of thought, and to all the horrors of a too keen and vivid imagination. And then, too, as if some fatality hung over all that he loved,—as if to have his affection was a fatal-gift that soon hurried the possessor to the tomb,—the young and generous-minded man who, to assuage the father's deep griefs, had devoted his life to the task of endeavoring to discover his son's child, had fallen a sacrifice to his devotion. Yes; he, too, was dead! and Monsieur Rouselli might well tell himsels that he was desolate, or nearly so; for what now had he to cling to but the hope of Mabel being found, after she had been so long missing? No wonder that he tormented himself with harrowing reflections—reflections which, at his age, were sure to tell most fearfully upon the physical structure; so that when Captain Morton and his brother saw him again, they were surprised at the ravages that grief was making in him.

But what could they do? and what could they say to him further than they had said to assuage his griefs? They could only implore him to hope,—that last resource of the wretched.—and when he told them upon what a slender foundation he considered that hope was resting, they could not but very faintly contradict him.

When Captain Morton, an hour or so after having seen old Monsieur Rouselli, was seated by himself in deep thought, and with something of dejection upon his countenance, Rafferty Brolickbones came to him, and with more earnestness of manner than he usually threw into his speeches, he said—

"Sir, if it pleases you, or if it don't, I'm after wanting a matter of a pound or two."

"Money, Rafferty?"

"It's only a pair of sovereigns that I want to look at just now;

I suppose there's some prize money for them as finds out Miss Mabel?"

Captain Morton looked steadfastly at the weather-beaten countenance of his follower, as he said,—"Rafferty, if you know anything of where Mabel is, it is a piece of needless cruelty to keep it from me."

"Faith, sir, then I don't know."

"Then what made you ask such a question, Rafferty, as that which just came from your lips?"

"Only for information, sir. Your honor may depend that it ain't long Rafferty Brolickbones shall know anything of where Miss Mabel is, but he'll tell it to you."

"Well, well, Rafferty, I feel sure of that. Always recollect that mystery defeats itself. There is the amount of money you require; and remember, Rafferty, what a dreadful piece of bad management you made of hiding in the tree, instead of letting me know that Mabel was to be in such danger on the banks of the lake into which you fell, and——"

"There now, aisy, sir, again; faith, then, don't I know all about that same? Does your honor think I forget it? By the mass and the holy poker, no; don't be after taking up a poor fellow's misfortunes, sir, and tying them up in a bundle to throw them whack in his eye."

Away went Rafferty; but if the truth must be told, Rafferty had a sort of plot of his own, which he did hope would lead to some good results.

Since that unfortunate piece of cleverness of his which had resulted in a good ducking to himself, and in poor Mabel being placed in the power of the desperate character, from whom she had so great a difficulty in rescuing herself, poor Rafferty had been upon the tenter-hooks of impatience to do something which should redeem that error, and show that he was not such a bad schemer as such an untoward event would seem to proclaim him to be. Of course, that something which he wanted to do was to recover Mabel if he could, and from the moment that he set foot in London, he had been unceasing in his inquiries concerning her. These inquiries he conducted in a very strange manner, for he would walk along the streets, looking up at the people's names over their shop doors till he saw an Irish one, when in he would walk, with all the assurance incidental to his nation, and exclaiming,—"The top of the morning to you," or, "it's a mighty fine day," he seldom failed to get into a long conversation.

Then before he left, he took an opportunity of saying:

"Do you happen to know a swate young creature of a young lady, anyway, that's lost and don't know where to find herself? because if you do, tell me, and I'll find her for herself, the swate creature."

Everybody answered in the negative, until one day he stepped into a milk-shop, which bore above its door the inviting name Dermott.

"Here's a mercy," said Rafferty; "a Dermott! och, murder; I must go in and knock him down, or something. The Der-

motts and the Brolickbones have been fast friends since Ould Ireland was made. Och, murder, who'd have thought of finding a Dermott.

The milkman received Rafferty graciously, and they soon got into a long chat, and then came Rafferty's question about his knowing or not knowing of a young lady who had lost herself.

"A great beauty," said Dermott, "is she? Well, then, it's the oddest thing in life; but there was a servant-girl in here for two new-laid eggs this morning, and she said to me, 'Mr. Dermott,' says she, 'you're a man of discretion entirely,' she says, 'and there's a young lady in our house,' she says, 'as has lost herself anyway."

"Och, murder, fililoo!"

"So I up and says, says I, 'is there,' says I, and that's all I said."

"Bad cess to you, Dermott, why didn't you ask her all about it?"

"Because I didn't, and that's the reason, I tell you. But you can ask her yourself anyhow. She's a countryman of ours."

"Is she? then all's right. Where shall I find the darlint?"

"I'll be bound, now, as it's getting on toward the dusk, if you walk past the 'airy' of No. 7, and whistle the 'Groves of Blarney,' she'll come out in less than no time. You are not so young as you was, but you ain't the ugliest man in the world, after all."

"Thank you kindly," said Rafferty: "don't you see me blushing? No. 7. I'll go, and if it should be the same I want to find out, it shan't be the worst day's work you ever did, Dermott, to tell me."

Away went Rafferty to No. 7. while Dermott came to the door after him, and flung an old shoe after him for luck, which hit him on the side of the head.

"Thank you for nothing," said Rafferty, as he walked on and soon found himself at the area rails of No. 7.

It was a respectable enough looking house, and he tried the persuasive tune of the Groves of Blarney, as had been suggested to him by Dermott, without, however, producing any apparent effect upon the nymph of the kitchen. He had gone through the whole tune about five times, with all sorts of variations, and then he got tired of it, and dealt one of the rails a hearty kick. This was a more effectual proceeding, for he saw a face at the kitchen window, the contour of which was sufficient at a glance to convince him that it came from the land of praties and buttermilk; so he put on his most insinuating appearance, and nodded and winked with a force that was quite miraculous.

"Bedad," he said, as the face disappeared, "if that don't bring her out, she's one of a thousand."

Rafferty now prudently walked away some paces, and he was quite delighted to find that in a few minutes the area gate was opened, and the girl came out with a key dangling on her finger and a basket on her arm.

"Och, murder!" said Rafferty, as he came up to her, "what a

mighty pretty girl you are, to be sure. How is the young lady?"

"Oh, good gracious, do you know?"

"Yes, to be sure, but I'm a friend, you know. Tell me all about her, and then I shall know if you know, and there will be golden guineas enough for you to roll over and over in."

"You don't mean that? Will the captain——"

"The what—the captain—did she speak of the captain?"

"She speaks of nothing else but the captain, and she cries all day long. Poor thing, I do pity her, and I wonder how they can have the heart to behave to her as they do. Keeping her locked up in such a way, all to please some wretch that they know, who brought her from the country—poor thing, for all the world like a felonious felon."

"The villain of the world."

"Oh, you may say that, Mr. ——, what do you call 'em?"

"Rafferty Brolickbones, my darlint; at your service."

"Yes, Mr. Brolick—something. You may say that, and never a word of a lie. I'd give you one of the eyes out of my head to do her a service. It was but this morning she said to me, 'Judith,' says she,—she calls me that, but my rale name is Judy,—'well,' says she 'if the captain knew I was here he'd storm the house,' says she."

"And so he would."

"Would he, indeed? Is he handsome?"

"As like me as one pea is like another."

"You don't say so? Oh, tell him she thinks of nothing but him. Tell him she does nothing but cry all day long. Has he come up all the way out of the country to look for her?"

"Faith then, he has, my dear, and he won't go back again without her, you may depend. You may look upon your fortune as made entirely, you may; for the captain has got lots of money, and is as generous as a waterspout."

"Is he, indeed? Oh, what a nice fellow he must be. I do hate missus, and I hate master, and so if you and the captain like to run away with us——"

"With us?"

"Yes; me and the young lady, poor dear thing. How she does mope, to be sure. She writes lots of letters to him, and then she tears them up and puts them in the fire. They want to kill her."

"I tell you what it is, my darlint, I'll come and take her away. She'll know me as soon as she sees me, and then you'll know that it's all right. When shall I come?"

"Why, suppose you come after they have all gone to bed to-night, you know? Then I'll tell her that the captain has come up from the country for her, and she can step down-stairs, for I'll take care to give her something to break the room door open where they shut her up. At twelve, then, to-night."

"Amin! I'll be here, and you tell her that the captain has not known a minute's peace or comfort since she's been gone, and that he would be a dead man in another year and a day if he didn't see her again, for she's the darlint of his heart."

"Yes; I'll tell her. At twelve, mind, and you kick at the area rails."

"I will, I will. Was he a downright ugly chap that brought her?"

"Ugly? I never saw in all my life an uglier."

"That's him, then. Did he make out he was her father too, the vagabond?"

"Oh, yes, and I believe he is, too, or else our people, I don't suppose, would have took her in as they have, you know."

"Then I can tell you he isn't. He is only a thief of the world; I know him well. He's no more her father than you are. But that's no matter now; I'll come at twelve o'clock and give a kick at the rails; and mind you have the young swate creature ready now."

"Oh, there's no fear of that."

"Adoo! then, as we says on the continent, where we whacked the French. Hurrah for the Brolickbones."

CHAPTER XLI.

RAFFERTY thought it most remarkably cunning to keep this affair a profound secret from Captain Morton. The fact was, that he had never completely got over in his mind, however it might be excused by others, the disgrace of being so completely at fault, as he had been on the evening of the abduction of Mabel from Morton Hall. That he, an old campaigner, and certainly one who ought to have known better, should have allowed himself to be so, as it were, duped, was one of those things that got altogether the better of that personal vanity which, in common with his countrymen, he possessed to no small extent. But now he flattered himself he had found an opportunity of redeeming the past, and of hearing that, if he had committed an error, that, to use his own words, he "was the boy to put it all right again."

What a triumph it would be to him to be able to bring Mabel back in safety to the arms of those who were so anxious to receive her, and who for so long had been in such great distress, solely occasioned by her absence from among them.

"Then," he thought, "they will say something, I rather think, to Rafferty."

In these pleasant anticipations he passed his time until the hour of appointment had very nearly come—that hour at which he was to go and kick at the area rails, and have the pleasure of rescuing Mabel from her state of bondage.

At about half-past eleven Rafferty was on the spot, and most anxiously did he wait until twelve should strike from a church clock which was in the immediate vicinity, so that he should then, without being too much beforehand, and so perhaps risking the success of the scheme, be fully entitled to kick away at the area rails to his heart's content.

"Oh, the darlint!" he said; "when she only once sees my face, won't she be delighted! Och, murder! this will be a pleas-

ant night, any way, for me. Sorrow's the fool they can call Rafferty Brolickbones now."

At length twelve o'clock was solemnly pealed forth from the church turret that could be just seen peeping over the tops of the houses, and in another moment Rafferty was at the area rails, and had given them a kick that made the whole mass of them vibrate again. He had not to wait long. A light flashed from the kitchen window, and then the door leading into the area was cautiously opened, and a voice said—

"Hist! hist! Is it you?"

"Yes, my jewel," said Rafferty, "it's myself, and no one else."

"Where's the captain? She says she won't come unless the captain is here himself, for fear it should be some scheme."

"Well, it is a scheme, and a mighty fine scheme, any way. You tell her it's Rafferty Brolickbones, and see if she won't come."

"Very well, wait."

Rafferty waited for some time, and then the servant came out into the area, and said in a whisper:

"No, she will see the captain before she comes out, she says; as for you, she don't know you from Adam."

"Not know me! Oh, blazes! Not know me? Tell the little darlint not to be after poking her fun at me; I'll take her to the captain before she is ten minutes older, I swear by all the blessed calendar."

"Well, I'll tell her."

Away went the servant again, and this time she was successful; for she came out in a hurry, and ran up the steps with a bag in her hand, to open the gate.

"She's coming! she's coming!" she whispered, "and so am I."

"Come along, then, my darlint; you're a mighty fine girl of your size, you are, so I won't be after saying nay to that part of the bargain."

"She is only putting on her bonnet and crying. Here she comes, here she comes. You really ought, Mr. Berleybones, to have brought the captain with you—captains give a sort of confidence to young ladies, you know."

"May be so. But where's the odds? It's a happy man he'll be when he sees her."

From the kitchen now emerged the form of a young female, closely enveloped in a large shawl. With quick step and agitated manner she ascended to the area gate; and in another moment both she and the servant were in the street.

"There goes the gate shut," said the servant; "and they sha'n't say in the morning they don't know where the key is."

As she spoke, she cast the key down the area, and, at the same moment, the young lady laid her head upon Rafferty's arm, and said,—

"Do not deceive me, but take me to Captain Lovemore at once."

Rafferty might at that moment have been knocked down by

the smallest young potato that was ever seen. The young lady was not Mabel, and it was all a mistake from first to last.

"Cap-cap-captain who?" he shouted.

"Lovemore."

"The divil! Och, murder! You ain't you and I'm not meself. We are neither of us anybody."

"Oh, good God! you wretch! what do you mean?" said the servant.

"By Jasus! I don't know," said Rafferty; "one—two—three, here goes. The divil take the hindmost."

As he spoke, away he ran, at a speed which, as the puffing shopkeepers say, "defied all competition." The young lady screamed, the servant accompanied her; and, finally, poor Rafferty sank exhausted on the door-step of a house, some two or three blocks off, in a state of mind of the most uncomfortable character.

Here was a *denouement* to all his cleverness. He drew a long breath and wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"Oh, hedad," he said. "I've made a pretty mess of that, anyway. It wasn't her, after all. And the trouble I had, too—oh, murder! There's nothing but misfortunes coming to the share of the Brolickbones, now. What's to be done?"

Rafferty remained in deep thought for some time, and more than once it occurred to him that he ought to go and punish the milkman who had led him astray; but when he came to think how ludicrous a figure he should cut if the affair came to the ears of Captain Morton, he, with a long sigh, saw that he must give it up, and content himself with renewing his search, having now no clew at all, and no more prospect of success than just what he first started with.

"East, west, north or south," he said, "which way am I to go now to find Mabel?"

This was an easy question to ask, but he found it a difficult one to answer. However, as he could not stand where he was all night, he walked on in a listless mood, and not in the best of spirits. To him, likewise, it was no agreeable reflection that he had brought trouble upon the young lady whom he had mistaken for Mabel, and who had evidently mistaken Captain Morton for some other captain to whom she was attached. He did think of making an attempt of some kind to repair this error, but, probably, had he, in his Irish manner, really tried to do so, he would have made confusion worse confounded, and it was quite a mercy that he gave up the idea.

"Well," he said with a sigh, "there's nothing to be done to-night, so I'll just find out a bed somewhere, if I can, and sleep off my disappointment. Oh, Miss Mabel, Miss Mabel, what a trouble you do give me, to be sure; and if ever I see you again, you darlint, won't it be a happy sight for me! I won't be after letting you go again so easy."

Rafferty did not like at such an hour to go to the lodgings which had been taken for them all, by Captain Morton, because he did not wish any one to know of his adventure; and he thought that, if now that he was out he were to remain all

night, he could slip quietly in in the morning, and no one be any the wiser.

In London there is no difficulty in procuring a bed, and Rafferty walked on till he came to one of those early breakfast houses which abound in some parts of London, and which, what with being late supper houses as well, are, somehow or another, never shut at all. An announcement in the window of "good beds" was just what Rafferty looked for, and he at once entered the place. In answer to his inquiries if he could have a bed there, he was told—certainly, if he paid beforehand for it; but he was further informed that he must sleep in a double-bedded room, one of the beds in which was already occupied.

"Oh!" said Rafferty, "that don't matter to me; I've often slept in a five-hundred bedded room, my good woman."

"Lor, sir!"

"Yes; I'm an old soldier, and have enjoyed many a comfortable nap with my regiment in a field."

"Oh! I understand what you mean, sir. Here, Jem, show the gentleman up-stairs to No. 7—you know where the strange man sleeps."

"Oh! a strange man, is he?" said Rafferty; "blood-an-ouns, he won't disturb me!"

"No, sir; he seems as quiet as a small lamb, and not very well; he isn't strong enough to disturb any one."

"Very well; I'm sleepy, so come on, master Jem, as you are the chambermaid."

A boy, with a broad grin upon his face, lighted Rafferty to the room, which was a low-roofed, long, rambling-looking apartment, with two beds in it, one of which was up at the further end, a long way from the door, and the other you ran a good chance of tumbling against the moment the door was opened. It was the latter that was unoccupied, and the curtains of the other were all drawn scrupulously close.

CHAPTER XLII.

Now that so much had been discovered concerning the identification of the beautiful and persecuted Mabel, and now that there could be no further doubt at all upon the minds of any of those who were so much interested in her fate, that she was the daughter of Colonel Rouselli, and consequently the grandchild of Monsieur Rouselli, there remained nothing but to stir heaven and earth to discover her.

Captain Morton and his brother held together a long and serious consultation on the subject, the result of which was an organized system of operations to be entered upon immediately, from which they hoped for success. They hoped that a very short time would suffice to procure some clew to the proceedings of the mysterious man who had been concerned in her abduction, and since nothing now but the utmost publicity could do any good in the way of discovering the retreat of the mendicant, they made up their minds that that publicity should be at once complete and ample.

"I will," said Captain Morton, "cause advertisements to be placed in every metropolitan paper, offering a large reward for any information concerning her; and I will, myself, have a private interview with the principal police authorities, so as to get their co-operation in the matter."

"We shall surely be successful," said Henry. "Oh! if I could but know that any amount of perseverance in any particular direction would afford me the least chance of obtaining a clew to where she is hidden, I would know no rest until I had adopted it. Each day's suspense is becoming to me more and more terrific."

"Do not torture yourself thus uselessly," said the captain. "Compare your state with that of Monsieur Rouselli. What must he feel?"

"He feel! Can he love her as I love her? Oh, no, no, no! not the concentrated love of a thousand relatives can equal mine."

Before Captain Morton could make any reply, it was announced to him that a man was below who wanted to speak to him, and he said instantly—

"Admit him—I refuse to see no one; for, by so doing, I may deprive myself of some information with regard to the very person whom I seek."

In a few minutes a stout, respectable-looking man made his appearance, and, advancing to Captain Morton, he said—

"Don't you recollect, sir, the hostler at the Morton Arms, who was accused of the murder of the young traveler?"

"Good God! is it you? I did not really recognize you at the moment, although now I do well."

"I am very glad to see you, sir. I only heard, by mere accident, that you were in town."

"I am very glad to see you, and, if you are not better engaged, I can give you an employment which will, I think, be congenial to you."

"Sir, I have already an employment which I have never yet forsaken—it is that of endeavoring to discover some trace of the real murderer of the traveler at the inn at the village—I have dedicated my life to that object."

"And have you any clew?"

"I had, of course, a clew which you are aware of, and I came up only yesterday, a long way from the country, in consequence."

"A clew that I am aware of! Pray what clew is that?"

"Why, the police proceedings."

"Police proceedings!"

"Yes, Captain Morton; and the principal thing I have called upon you for is, to ask Miss Mabel if she can give me a very accurate description of the fellow, so that I may aid the police."

The captain looked at his brother, and his brother looked at him; then they both shook their heads dubiously, as much as to say,—

"Poor fellow, he is a little deranged."

"Of course," said the late hostler, "if this request of mine does not meet with your approbation, I must forego it."

"Sit down, sit down," said Captain Morton, kindly, for he really thought his visitor was a little cracked.

"Thank you, sir—thank you. What a joyful surprise the letter must have been to you."

"Letter!"

"Yes, the magistrate's letter. Good God! do you suppose, Captain Morton, that I don't know anything?"

"Humor him," whispered Henry.

"No, I shall not," said Captain Morton.

"Humor who?" said the late hostler to Henry. "Is your brother mad?"

"No; but you are," said the captain. "In God's name, what do you mean by the letter? You are talking of things that have no existence but in your own brain, and as for asking Mabel any questions, I only wish you had the opportunity."

"Well, then, give me the opportunity, or refuse it at once, candidly, and let me know why you so refuse it; or if your brother here will tell me that your mind has become deranged, I will go away at once, and no longer irritate you."

"D——n your infernal impudence!" said the captain.

"Well, and d——n yours."

Henry rose and stepped between them.

"Hush—hush!" he said, "I cannot help thinking that there is some playing at some cross purposes here, which is likely to proceed, unless you explain what you really mean."

"I have explained," said the other. "I came here after finding out, as I tell you, by mere accident, where you were staying, partly to congratulate you upon the recovery of Miss Mabel, and likewise to ask you to allow me to get what particulars she can give me of that scoundrel who carried her off, and who, I have no doubt, is the same who did the dreadful murder at the inn of which I was so wrongfully accused."

"And that's what you have come for?" said the captain.

"Precisely."

"If this is a joke, it's a sorry one, but if it be really a mistake arising from misinformation of some sort, I only regret to say, that we have not yet recovered Mabel, nor have we the least idea of what has become of her, since she left Morton Hall."

"Then what is the meaning of all this?"

He handed to Captain Morton a newspaper as he spoke, which was folded so that the following article met his eye:—

"Bow Street.—Yesterday, as the sitting magistrate was about quitting his seat, a lady-like young person of great personal attractions, stepped into the witness-box and made the following extraordinary application with regard to the late murder near White-chapel, for which, it will be in the recollection of our readers, that a man unknown is in custody, who has vehemently declared his innocence. The applicant stated that she was an enforced resident with the man at the time of the alleged murder, and that he was innocent of it. She stated that her name was Mabel Morton, and that she had been abducted from her home by the man who stood accused of the murder, and whom a sense of justice induced her, notwithstanding he had been to her the greatest of enemies, to exoner-

ate from the charge preferred against him. The worthy magistrate questioned her closely, and, from the answers which she gave him, a favorable impression was created in the minds of all present. She stated that the party with whom, from earliest childhood, she had had a home, was a Captain Morton, residing in Morton Hall, in Oxfordshire; whereupon the magistrate expressed his intention of immediately writing to that gentleman; and, as she declared herself to be destitute, he directed that she should be taken care of."

"And—and," said Captain Morton, "when was all this?"

"Some days ago."

"And I not to know it?"

"We have neither of us looked at the papers lately," remarked Henry.

"But the magistrate's letter?"

"Is most likely now lying at the Hall."

"Good Heaven! then the very step which we took in coming to town has been the means of defeating our object in a speedy restoration to our dear Mabel. Oh! what may she not have suffered during this period of agonizing suspense!"

"Well," said the hostler, "all this amazes me. I, of course, thought it was the magistrate's letter that had brought you to town, and as fully expected to find Mabel with you as ever I expected anything in this world."

"Let us seek her instantly," cried Captain Morton, springing to his feet. "Come, Henry, do not let us delay another moment. Oh, what a delightful day this will be to poor old Monsieur Rouselli! Come, Henry, at once."

"Ready," said Henry, "were it to go the world over, if my reward at the conclusion of my pilgrimage was to be a sight of Mabel."

"Well," remarked the hostler, "I am glad I came, and that our cross purposes have turned out to be of some importance. Why, Heaven only knows how long you might have remained without knowing what had happened."

"We might have been days—ay, weeks; and during all that time, poor Mabel might be exposed to the cruelest of suspicions."

They had now reached the door, and the whole three of them, for the hostler asked and readily obtained permission to walk with them, proceeded to the police-office which had been named in the report. When, however, they reached there, they found that they were too early, for, although the doors were certainly open, business had not commenced.

Appearance, however, does wonders at all public places in England, and with officials of all sorts and grades. There was so much of the unmistakable gentleman in Captain Morton's aspect that the officer who kept the door was disposed to be wonderfully civil.

"The magistrate, sir," he said, "has not yet come, but if you will walk in and take a seat no doubt he will attend to any business you may have with him, the moment he arrives."

"My name you will find on that card," said Captain Morton, handing him one, "I come to make inquiry concerning a

young girl who appeared here some few days since, and gave the name of Mabel Morton."

"Oh, you are Captain Morton, sir?"

"I am."

"She is an impostor, sir, and——"

"She is not," interrupted Captain Morton; "you know not of whom you speak; she is no impostor. It is impossible that anything she could say or do should be otherwise than full of truth and excellence."

"Then, sir, you have come for her?"

"I have. Half an hour has not elapsed since I first heard of her situation. I was from home and did not get the magistrate's letter, which accounts for its having met no answer as yet."

"And that circumstance, sir, of course, is the very thing which induced us to think that it was a made-up story. I beg your pardon for saying so, but we can only take things as we find them."

"Certainly, certainly, and you will excuse me for showing so much warmth in the accusation, when I tell you that she is as dear to me as if she were a child of my own."

"No doubt of that, sir," said the officer, and then he added to himself, "and that's I suppose just what she is, if the truth were known."

"Now where is she?" added Captain Morton—"you can tell me where she is, although the magistrate is not here."

"That, indeed, sir, I cannot; she was placed in the care of an officer who has not yet come, and if he had he could not give her up to you without the magistrate's sanction; because I know that, since it was found that no answer came to the letter sent to you, sir, and your name was not found in the army list, considerable suspicion was excited as to the truth of her story."

"My name is not in the army list, for I left the army years ago, although people will still politely call me Captain Morton, and from the force of habit I answer to the title, and indeed often call myself so. I presume then I must wait."

He was admitted into the office, where he waited for half an hour with an amount of impatience that was sufficient to make that lapse of time, short as it was, appear to him half a day. Then one of the officers came to him and said that the magistrate had come and desired to see him in his private room. Captain Morton gladly obeyed the summons and was ushered, with Henry, into the presence of the police potentate.

He, the magistrate, happened to be not only a clever man, but a gentlemanly one besides, and he received the Mortons with great courtesy.

"I cannot express to you, gentlemen," he said, "how glad I am that you have come forward and verified the story of the young lady who came before me. There was so much of the very essence of truthfulness about her manner that I was myself strongly impressed in her favor, and I must own that it would have been a very great disappointment to me to have

found that she was other than what she represented herself to be.

"Sir," said Captain Morton, "for all the kindness and courtesy which you have shown her, accept my best acknowledgments. And now you may well conceive with what impatience I long to see her."

"Certainly, certainly."

The magistrate rang a bell, and when it was answered, he said:

"If Randell has come, tell him to step in here."

"He has come, sir."

In a few moments the officer to whose charge Mabel had last been committed, made his appearance. He was a respectable-looking specimen of his class, and when it was explained to him who the Mortons were, and what they had come about, he really expressed genuine satisfaction, saying,—

"I am very glad to hear it. The young lady has gained very much upon us, and my wife is so convinced of the truth of all she says, that I do believe she'd almost lay down her life for her."

"And where is she?"

"At my house, gentlemen."

"Whither you can at once take these gentlemen," said the magistrate, "and surrender up your charge to them. I suppose you have no news of the fellow who broke out of prison and against whom this young lady has a serious charge to prefer?"

"None as yet, sir; but we are sure to have him."

"No doubt, no doubt. I trust, Captain Morton, that you and the young lady will remain in town in order that she may give evidence against the fellow?"

"I shall induce her to do so. And I have, moreover, a servant with me who can identify him likewise."

"By all means then remain, and I think it will go hard with us if we do not manage to transport the rascal who has caused you so much uneasiness."

The magistrate politely bowed them out, and with the officer the two Mortons, still followed closely by the hostler, who had waited for them in the outer office, proceeded toward his house to unite themselves once again with the beautiful Mabel, who had gone through such cruel vicissitudes of fortune at a period of life when she ought to have been surrounded by all its choicest charms. And most peculiarly hard was it upon her, for there were persons who loved—persons who panted for her society, and who were as fully willing as they were able to adorn her existence with all that could render it a very romance of delight. Surely he who had as cruelly torn her from those beloved and loving friends deserved at their and at her hands no mercy.

And now that Captain Morton had, in consequence of the interesting communications of Monsieur Rouselli, got rid of the dread that the mendicant might really have the claim of a father upon Mabel, it cannot be supposed that any feeling of

consideration for that rascally individual was likely to find a place in his heart.

But now, as he reached the door of the officer's house, joy at the prospect of being so soon able to take his beloved Mabel to his arms again, overpowered every other feeling. But what were Captain Morton's sensations of pleasure compared with those of his brother Henry, the joy of whose whole existence was mingled with the thought of Mabel, whom he loved so truly. We should despair of doing justice to his thoughts and feelings.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Mabel sat alone in the officer's house absorbed in deep and melancholy reflections, not the least powerful feature of which was the seeming absolute desertion of her by the Mortons. She could not conceive how it was possible that the magistrate's letter should have remained unanswered. That it had been answered, and the answer, somehow, however rare such a thing may be, had been lost in its progress, she for some time strove to convince herself, and that consequently the whole question was only one of a little time.

But when she came again to consider what she would have done under such circumstances, and what she would have expected the Mortons to do, that hope died away from her completely, and she said, with a sigh,—

"No, no; had they intended to take any notice of me, they would, some of them, have most assuredly come to London long ere this. They are either all dead or dispersed somewhere, that the letter has never reached them—or—or they have forgotten me!"

This last supposition was indeed a terrible one, and she leaned her head upon her hands, and wept! The tears trickled through her fingers as deep sighs came from her over-burdened heart; and then suddenly she rose, as a loud knocking at the street door struck upon her ears, and recalled her to a sense of where she was.

"These are foolish tears," she said. "The time for weeping has gone past. If I am to be henceforward alone in the world, I must gather around my heart such energy as I may be capable of, and meet, with what courage I may, whatever chances may befall me. Courage! courage! I will not forget that I am innocent of all ill, and that there is a God above, who will not suffer even a sparrow to fall without his will. These tears but mar all resolution; I will shed no more."

She dashed some cold water over her face to clear away the appearance of having been weeping, for she knew that the officer's wife, from a feeling of kindness toward her, never left her for a long time alone, and to he found with the traces of tears upon her countenance seemed like a reproach against those persons who were striving to make her happy, that they had not succeeded, even sufficiently to subdue the most violent accessories of despondency.

But let us glance at the Mortons.

With the most trembling eagerness did Henry Morton and his brother reach the door of the house where they were told they again would see the dear object of their utmost solicitude.

It was the officer himself who knocked so loudly, for though on his account he would not have done so, he felt the impatience of the visitors he brought, and considered that the summons he made resound from the knocker was on their account and not his own. His wife had no suspicion that it was he who knocked, so she opened the door in a great flutter, thinking that it was at least some of the magistracy, who required the services of her husband in a wonderful hurry.

"Well, I'm sure, John," she said, when she saw him, "you are a nice article to come knocking at that rate, and putting me out of sorts."

"Hush, wife, hush! here are some gentlemen; it was for them I knocked, not for myself. Will you walk in, gentlemen, if you please? Chairs, wife, chairs."

The officer's wife when she really saw that there were visitors, guessed at once their errand, and she exclaimed—

"Oh, it is the friends of the young lady!"

"Hush! for Heaven's sake!" said Captain Morton; "I dread giving her too sudden a shock."

"Oh, where is she? Let me fly to her!" said Henry.

"No, no; pause a moment," added Captain Morton, as he sat down, and looked very pale. "I could not have believed that I should have been so agitated. Pause a moment or two, I beseech you, Henry."

Henry, was, however, all impatience, till the officer said—

"I think it would be prudent to prepare her by degrees for the unexpected appearance of those whom she has been so longing for."

"Be it so," said Henry, "but how is that to be done?"

"Leave it to my wife."

"Yes, yes, madam; do you go and prepare her as well as you can for the news, so that it may not come upon her with too sudden a shock. Tell her—nay, I cannot instruct you; you must tell her what you please, only be as brief as possible in pity to our impatience."

"I will do my best, sir," said the officer's wife; and she ascended to Mabel's apartment, leaving those below in a fever of impatience which it was no easy matter for them to combat.

The good-hearted woman tapped gently at the door, and Mabel herself opened it, and made a weak attempt at a smile, for she knew, and felt grateful that she, the officer's wife, had come to cheer her in her solitude.

"Come, my dear," said the woman; "you don't seem so happy to-day, you must hope for the best, you know. I have some news for you."

A cry of joy came from the lips of Mabel, and she said—

"Yes,—oh, yes—oh, yes—they have written!"

"They have; and what is more, they have written to say that

they are coming to town to see you, and take you home with them."

Mabel burst into tears.

"Come, now, really I have not seen you weep in your misfortunes before this good news came, and you ought not now."

"I cannot help it. They—they are tears of joy. I am rescued; they love me still; they have not deserted me. Oh! what treason it was against all that was just and true, to suspect for one instant that they could."

"I am, I assure you, as glad as if it were my own case. My husband tells me that when they come to town, and he brings them here, he hopes that you will be able to control your feelings."

"Oh! yes—yes—yes. All will be joy!"

"Well, then, I'll tell him that, and he shall bring them, as he said he would. 'Wife,' said he, 'I shall bring the friends of Miss Mabel the moment they come to town, to inquire for her at the police-office, because the magistrate will refer them to me.'"

"Yes! oh! yes."

"'And then I shall come, and you will be able to know who is with me, because I shall knock very loud, and while they remain down-stairs, you shall go up to Mabel's room, and just prepare her a little for the sudden surprise—you understand.'"

Mabel passed her hand across her brow for a moment, and then, while the color went and came upon her cheeks, like the sweet sunshine of an April day, she looked in the face of the officer's wife, and said, half choked with emotion,—

"Do not, oh! do not deceive me. Tell me, are—are they here? Yes, yes, your eyes bespeak the truth; they are, and this is but a kind subterfuge to prevent sudden joy from killing me. I see it all! They are here—I know that they are here. Henry! Henry!"

"Mabel!" cried the voice of Henry from below, for he had heard his name pronounced by those lips he valued more than all the world beside.

In an instant she had rushed past the officer's wife, and was down the short, narrow staircase, and the next moment,—oh! joy of joys! she was in the arms of Henry Morton, and lay, half-fainting, upon his breast.

The feeling that now reigned in the bosoms of these persons we should find it a vain task to attempt to describe. Thought, in a few brief moments, will achieve more in the way of depicting what Captain Morton, Henry and Mabel felt than would the most elaborate attempted description. They were very happy!

The officer had left the room, so that, for nearly half an hour, they were all three alone, but had all the world been present, they would have forgotten the fact that any eyes were bent upon, or that any other ears than those to which they severally spoke, drank in the words of hope and congratulation that flowed from their lips.

Oh! it was a sight worth a kingdom to see how Henry Morton sat by Mabel, with one of her hands clasped in his, and

looked in her face while she talked to the captain, whose whole countenance exhibited the joy that reigned over his heart, too, now that he had once more recovered possession of his lost treasure—his child of the battle-field, who, in the midst of carnage and of danger, had been intrusted to his honor and humanity.

He seemed as if suddenly time had with him taken a retrograde movement, and had gone back many years. The beaming aspect of actual youth was in his eyes, and not in the whole of the vast city in which they were, we are convinced, could there have been found a happier and a more contented group than that.

The multitude of questions that were asked, and the answers that were given in a brief space of time, defy our limits to record. Suffice that they found they had food for conversation for many a day to come.

But Captain Morton was not easy until he had fully explained to Mabel how it was that the magistrate's letter had remained unanswered; and although she smiled and told him that it was answered fully now, he would tell her the whole particulars of how he came to town to look for her.

But, as he spoke, Henry gave him a glance which induced him as yet to say nothing of old Monsieur Rouselli. The fact was, that Henry wanted to reserve that communication for himself to make, and which, after all, was a pardonable selfishness, so the captain let him have his own way, saying as an excuse for their coming to town at such a juncture, that extreme anxiety personally to aid in a search for her actuated him.

"I have given you all," she said, with a smile, "far more trouble than I shall now be worth to you."

"Nay, now, I mean to quarrel with you," said Henry, "just as if you were a total stranger, if ever you utter one word that is not in praise of yourself, if you take yourself for a subject. Now you are recovered, there are only two people in the world who shall be permitted ever to praise you, either, unless they do it very circumspectly, beside myself; so you see I am going to be monstrously jealous, troublesome and exacting."

"You are really, Henry. And who are the favored two?"

"Oh, my brother and Rafferty."

"Poor Rafferty! is he well?"

"Yes, the rascal is well enough. Confound him! But for his pretended cleverness, we should not have had the misery, dear Mabel, of being so long separated from you."

"But you forgive him?"

"Yes, his intention was blameless; and I believe the poor fellow has felt ever since most keenly the consequences of his blunder. Indeed I am sure he would any day since that fatal one which tore you from the arms of those who loved you, have cheerfully laid down his life, if by so doing he could have repaired the error which he felt he had committed. It will be a happy day for him, I am certain, when he looks upon you again."

"Is he in town? will that day be this day?"

"Yes, Mabel; but we are, I fear, very much intruding upon these people. Have they treated you with kindness, Mabel?"

"With the utmost kindness."

"Then they shall find that they have laid out this good feeling at good interest. You shall tell us of every one, dear Mabel, who, by word or action, has alleviated any distress you may have suffered, and their reward shall be ample."

"And you shall tell me," added Henry, "of any one who by word, or look, or action, has added in any way to your afflictions, and their reward shall be ample, likewise, or my name is not Henry Morton."

"Nay," said Mabel, "I do not mean to give you any such information. You know that I have but one great enemy."

"Yes, the villain! who yet, I hope, will become amenable to the laws. The officers of justice are hunting everywhere for him."

Mabel shuddered at the very thought of the mendicant, whose dreadful image had, for a time, vanished from her recollection.

"I hope never to look upon his face again!"

"Except as his accuser."

"No, no, I do not, even as his accuser, wish to look upon him. I feel and know that I am now safe, and care not for vengeance."

"He must not be allowed to escape," said Captain Morton, "nor will he. He cannot leave the country without means, and the police shall want no stimulant in tracing him to wherever he may be."

"I am, of course," said Mabel, "completely in your hands as regards this matter, and will do whatever you choose to dictate."

"We shall be able, dear Mabel," said the captain, "to give you abundant reasons for whatever we ask you to do; and now let us come away."

The captain, before he took Mabel away from the officer's house, placed in the hands of his wife a bank-note of considerable value, at the same time, in the most handsome manner, thanking her for the kindness she had shown to Mabel. These people were quite delighted at the turn affairs had taken, and no doubt the whole circumstances afforded them abundant food for conversation and congratulation for many a day.

There was now a short conference as to where they should go, and at length it was decided that Mabel, by the name of Morton, and still passing as the captain's daughter, should at once be taken to the handsome apartments in which, in preference to the hotel where the Mortons had at first gone, they had now partially established themselves.

What a change of delight was this to Mabel! In a few short hours, from actually feeling that she was in a state of destitution, and considering what was the least objectionable mode in which she could earn a livelihood, she now found herself surrounded by affectionate friends, with both the power and the

will to place before her every luxury that money could command.

And so, in a bewilderment of new and delightful emotions, and now and then trembling lest all should be some uncommonly vivid dream of felicity, we will leave Mabel while we proceed to detail what befell Rafferty Brolickbones at the place where, after his unlucky adventure, or rather misadventure, he had taken a bed for the night.

CHAPTER XLIV.

RAFFERTY, although he had said to the persons of the coffee-shop that he had no objection to the double-bedded room, yet was a little curious to know who his companion was. The curtains, however, of the bed which was occupied were all drawn so very close, that not the least vestige of the party who there slept could be perceived, and Rafferty did not like the idea of actually going up to him, and saying—

"Come, now, I want to see what sort of a fellow you are, before I consent to lie down and go to sleep in the same room with you."

He thought of doing so, but as he himself said, when he afterward told the anecdote, the natural bashfulness of an Irishman (?) kept him back, and he didn't. He then thought that it would not be a bad plan to make so much noise as to waken him up, and so induce him to look out, and be a little abusive, which would enable him, Rafferty, to come to some sort of judgment regarding him. Acting upon this idea, he sang a popular air, but it had no sort of effect, and therefore he took off one of his boots, and tossed it up to the ceiling, to which it gave an odd-looking contusion, and then came down on the floor again with a heavy blow one would have thought quite sufficient to wake anybody. But the man who was in the other bed never moved.

"The deuce take him," thought Rafferty. "I cannot stand this at all, anyhow; I must go and give him a shake."

As if then the sleeper had been by some means able actually to know what Rafferty thought, he uttered a low groan.

"Oh! he says something at last," remarked Rafferty. "Well, he's alive, and that's something. But who knows?—he may be ill, poor devil. Hilloa! Mr. What's-your-name, is there anything the matter?"

"Go to sleep," said a voice.

"Oh! thanky—the same to you, and many of them. Eh?—eh?—what did you say—eh? Oh, nothing! Very good; if you are pleased I am."

Rafferty now commenced undressing himself, which was a process his military habits enabled him to do with great celerity, and in a few minutes he plumped into bed, and prepared himself for a good few hours' repose. Before he shut his eyes, however, he called out again,

"Good-night, ye divil!"

A deep groan was the only answer.

"Bedad, and that's hardly civil, anyway," said Rafferty.

"However, every man to his liking, as the ould woman said when she kissed the cow. If you ain't enough of a Christian to say 'Good-night,' keep it to yourself, and the divil go lucky with you. A bad night to you, if you like that better."

Having delivered himself of this speech, Rafferty closed his eyes, and with a facility which was the effect of long habit, during the campaigns on the continent in which he had been engaged, where it came very desirable to catch a little sleep, without any coquetting with it, when it could be got, he was off in a moment or two. How long he slept Rafferty had no means of calculating. All he knew was that something awakened him, and that when he opened his eyes, which he did without moving, he found that the gray light of early morning was in the room.

He lay with his back toward the other bed; but immediately facing him was a dressing-glass, in which he saw it clearly reflected. As he looked—and surely a watchful Providence must have broken his slumbers at that moment—he saw the curtains of the other bed, as they were reflected in the glass, slowly opened. A hand appeared grasping a long murderous-looking knife, then a foot came out, and finally the whole figure of a man, partially attired, crept from the bed on to the floor, and began to come cautiously toward the bed on which Rafferty slept. He evidently had not the least idea that the looking-glass was betraying him, for he kept his eyes fixed upon Rafferty, whom no doubt he considered to be a perfectly easy prey. A second glance told Rafferty not only his danger, but from whom it arose. The man in the same room, with whom he had slept some hours, was no other than the mendicant—the very man whom he most wished to find, and who, doubtless, knowing him, Rafferty, had now determined upon taking his life, as the surest way of escaping from him, as well as for vengeance. Had Rafferty slept but for another five minutes, his doom in this world would have been sealed.

"Fair and easy," thought Rafferty, who was too old a campaigner to be flurried; "fair and easy. That's it, is it? Come on, my darling."

Step by step the fellow came, and Rafferty gradually freed his feet from any entanglements among the clothing as he did so. With a calmness that few men, under such trying circumstances, would have been equal to, he waited until two steps more would have brought the fellow sufficiently close to him to inflict the blow that, no doubt, from the hand of that practiced assassin, would have been almost immediately fatal. Then, as suddenly as if he had been impelled by some mechanical contrivances of great propulsive power, he sprung from the bed on the opposite side to that on which was the assassin.

This movement of Rafferty was so utterly unexpected on the part of the mendicant, who no doubt thought him profoundly sleeping, that on the impulse of the moment he uttered a cry of despair, and then a pillow, thrown by Rafferty, came with such a dab in his face that it nearly blinded him.

"Whack, fillilool" said Rafferty, as he ran round the bed,

seizing the tongs from the fire-place in his progress; "you murdering thief of the world, I've got you, have I?"

The fellow did recover sufficiently to make a desperate attempt with his knife, but happily he missed Rafferty, who gave him such a ringing blow on the top of the head with the tongs that his faculties evidently became confused, and he reeled like a drunken man, uttering, as he did so, the most diabolical curses, and stabbing at the air with his knife.

"Aisy," said Rafferty, "and don't tell anybody I hit you. There you go, now."

Rafferty put out his feet and tripped him up on to the floor with a heavy fall, where he lay, apparently unable to move.

All this scarcely occupied a minute in transacting, so that, although the disturbance was heard in the house, which, being an early one, was open, no one had really time to come to see what it was about.

Rafferty, however, now that he had conquered his enemy, quite forgot that he was not in a presentable state; but, with the tongs in his hand, opened the door of the bedroom, and walked down into the coffee-shop, which was full of people, saying, as he made his appearance, to the woman of the house, whom he met,—

"If you please, ma'am, there's been a little bit of an action up-stairs, and a gentleman wants to be taken up."

The landlady gave a scream, which was echoed by the girl who served in the coffee-shop, while Rafferty looked at them both in amazement.

"What the devil now?" he said. "I wasn't used to be so ugly!"

"How dare you come down here in your shirt?" said the landlady.

"Oh, murder!" said Rafferty, as he, for the first time became aware of the impropriety, and then, turning at once, he bolted up-stairs again amid a roar of laughter from some people who were in the coffee-shop, enjoying some abominable mixture which they flattered themselves was coffee.

The mendicant still lay upon the floor, as if in a state of exhaustion, but as Rafferty was putting on his own clothes, he saw the villain slowly put his hand toward the knife which he had dropped from his grasp, when he fell.

"Hilloa!" said Rafferty; "jist tell me now, as we have had a fair fight, whether you surrender or not?"

"I surrender," said the fellow, and, at the same instant, his eyes gleamed with satisfaction, for he thought he succeeded, unobserved, in dragging the knife toward him, with which, no doubt, reckless and desperate as he was, he would have made another attack upon Rafferty had the latter not observed the treacherous movement.

"Very good," said Rafferty: "as you have surrendered, then you'll just allow me to say, I don't allow my prisoners to be armed. Come out of that."

He walked up to him, and gave a touch with his foot to the hand which partially concealed the knife. With a shriek of

baffled malice the fellow made a stab at him, but Rafferty stepped aside, and the sharp blade went deep into the floor.

"Why, you vagabond," said Rafferty; "anybody but me would jist stamp the life out of you. But where's the odds, I mean to see you hanged, and I will before I have done with you, you may take your oath. Will you? just do try to get up, that's all; and be after laving that knife alone."

The villain now gave up all attempts against Rafferty. He felt that he was thoroughly foiled; and closing his eyes, while he made his teeth nearly meet in his lower lip, with passion, he said nothing, but awaited quietly whatever might occur. Rafferty's statement below had induced the people of the house to send for a constable, and now that official personage made his appearance at the door of Rafferty's room.

"Halloa!" he said: "what's the row?"

"Nothing," said Rafferty; "only that gentleman wants a little accommodation to-day in some jail or another."

"Oh, does he? Come, get up. Who is he?"

"Why, he's the fellow that used this mighty nice little pocket-knife here."

"Oh! why—why—let me see; I think I know him."

"I wish you joy of the acquaintance then."

"No, no! I don't mean that way. But I think I know he's a desperate malefactor."

"Oh, murder, what a discovery!"

The officer took a printed handbill from his pocket and read, every now and then looking at the mendicant.

"'Fifty pounds reward.—To whoever shall take and lodge in any of his Majesty's jails a man, name unknown, who was committed to prison on a charge of abduction, preferred by Mabel Morton. He is five feet eight inches in height, of a dark, yellowish complexion—squints—has a scar over the left eyebrow.' That's him! Here's a go! I've caught him."

"Well," said Rafferty, "that's modest. You've caught him, have you? Pray how did you catch him?"

"Oh, come, come, you won't chisel me out of my prisoner."

"Chisel you! By the holy, he'd soon have chiseled you if you had had to catch him; but we won't quarrel about trifles. Take him away at once, and we'll be after settling who caught him some other time."

The officer looked mortified, for he knew well that it was Rafferty and not himself who was entitled to the reward, so he said, as he placed the handcuffs upon the prisoner—

"I tell you what, Mr. what's your name, we'll go halves. There, now, will that content you?"

"Remarkably handsome it is," said Rafferty. "We'll spake about it another time."

"D——n you, then, take him to prison yourself."

"Very good, I can do that same; but mind me. There's Captain Morton that's in my service is as intimate with the Secretary of State as you are with any blackguard of an acquaintance you may have; and if you don't do your duty, and take this fel-

low away now, quiet and aisy, you'll be hung some fine morning as sure as you are a fool."

"Oh, d——n all the world," said the officer. "Get up, will you, get up."

He laid hold of the mendicant hy the collar, and dragged him to his feet, and then, half-dressed as he was, he took him away, in by no means an amiable mood, or one which induced him to show any indulgences *en route* to the fellow, who, if he had caught him himself, would certainly have been a good fifty pounds in his pocket, besides a hundred pounds which not two hours before Captain Morton had made up his mind to pay to whoever should succeed in capturing the fellow who had caused him and all that was dear to him such a world of anxiety and pain.

Upon the whole, now, Rafferty, when he came to review his adventures for the last twelve hours, had every reason to be well enough satisfied with them, although he had failed in his principal object, namely, the getting possession of information that would restore Mabel to her friends.

"I have caught that blackguard," he said, "at any rate; and he won't get away again quite so easy, I'm thinking."

Rafferty was right enough there; for a prisoner who has once made an escape is, when caught again, looked to rather carefully, so that now we may consider the mendicant is at length fairly in the hands of justice.

And now Rafferty, as he walked homeward, began to turn over in his mind what the officer had said about Mabel; for it will be remembered that as yet he was in the same ignorance which Captain Morton had, hy so singular a coincidence of circumstances, remained in concerning all that had happened to Mabel, so as to bring her into any connection with the police.

"What the devil did he say?" thought Rafferty, as he arrived at the door of Captain Morton's lodgings.

It was a very early hour indeed when Rafferty thus reached what might be temporarily called his home. In answer to his inquiries, he was told that the captain was not up, so he congratulated himself that he should be sure to see him the first thing, to tell him of the capture of the mendicant. But as that even was not a piece of information which he, Rafferty, considered to be of sufficient importance to warrant him in disturbing his master's slumbers, he went to his own bedroom.

"I'll just lay myself down," said Rafferty, "and finish off my night's sleep that was so disturbed by that blackguard with his long knife, and by that time the captain and Mr. Henry will be up and stirring, and I can tell them all about it, barring how I was took in about the young lady that ought to have been Mabel, but wasn't, poor thing, more misfortune to her."

With this resolve, Rafferty lay down in his clothes just as he was, and soon fell off into a sleep so profound, that it was an exceedingly doubtful case, indeed, if he should awake in anything like time to tell the captain before he went out what had occurred.

Now Rafferty would probably have been awakened, but that

in the house there was an Irish servant, who had so much feeling for him, that hearing he had come in late, she was willing he should have as long a sleep as he wanted, and without interruption, too, if she could possibly ward off any for him.

With that delightful facility which her countrymen and women have in little subversions of the truth, she had told Captain Morton, when he inquired for Rafferty, that he had got up early and gone out.

Then came the events on that morning, which we have had the pleasure of recording.

And Rafferty slept on as sound as a church, as he himself afterward remarked, while those events were ensuing that constituted a most admirable addendum to his capture of the mendicant, who was the original author of all the evil that had befallen Mabel. Indeed, so long was Rafferty's repose that Mabel had been brought home, and was fairly installed in the comfortable drawing-room before Rafferty awoke; but then he had not slept many hours, for although so much of a highly important nature had been transacted, the day was yet young.

The captain was surprised at what, from the information he had had, he believed to be the continued absence of Rafferty, and he asked Henry what he thought of it.

"I can hardly hazard an opinion," said Henry, "he is so extraordinary and erratic a personage that I don't really know what to say. He seemed to me yesterday to have something on his mind, which gave him peculiar satisfaction. I do hope sincerely he has not blundered into any scrape."

The footman came in at this moment to attend to the fire, and Captain Morton said to him:

"Has my servant come in yet?"

"Oh, dear, yes, sir, long ago."

"Long ago? why a servant here told me he had gone out long ago."

"Oh, that was Biddy, sir; you see, sir, she's Irish, and so is your servant, sir, so she would not tell of him."

"Tell of him? Why, what has he been about?"

"I don't know, sir; but he came in about daylight, early this morning, and has been in bed and asleep ever since."

"Oh, indeed, very well. It's no matter, don't disturb him."

"No, sir."

In about another hour Rafferty awoke of his own accord, and he was a little alarmed when he found it was so late, and much wondered that he had not been aroused. However, he whisked himself up as well as he could, and with serious misgivings as to what his master would say to him, he crept down-stairs, and walked into the back drawing-room, which was only separated from the front by some folding doors, which were closed; he gave an intimation of his presence by whistling an old Irish air, and pretending to be wonderfully busy in putting the various articles of furniture to rights.

"They shall speak first," thought Rafferty; "I'll know what sort of humor they are in before I condescend to say a word to

them. and may be I won't tell them, if they ain't mighty civil, what news I've got."

"Hark," said Henry, "that's Rafferty."

"Let me see him," said Mabel, who was seated by the window with Henry, while Captain Morton was writing a note to old Monsieur Rouselli, in which he desired him to come to him as soon as possible.

"No, no," said Henry; "don't say a word. I am certain that he has been at some mischief, or at something which he considers exceedingly clever; whenever he whistles in that sort of way, it is to show his great independence, and how little he cares for anybody."

"It is so," said the captain, as he folded his note. "You go up stairs, Mabel, while we find out what he has on his mind, for that he has something I'll be bound, and that it concerns you, I think I should be safe in saying, for I believe the poor fellow thinks of not much else."

"Yes, do, Mabel, do," said Henry.

Thus urged, Mabel, although she would rather have given Rafferty the pleasure of seeing her at once, glided gently from the room, and passing the half-open door of the back drawing-room without being perceived by Rafferty, she gained her bedroom at last; the bedroom which she was told was to be hers for the night, although she had not yet slept in it. When she was fairly gone, the captain called out aloud,—

"Rafferty—Rafferty!"

There was no answer.

"What can he mean by that?" added the captain, and then he called again, upon which Rafferty condescended to come into the room, saying—

"I'm thinking you called, did you?"

"You know I did. You are very inattentive, Rafferty. This is the first we have seen of you this morning."

"The first, sir?"

"Yes, where you have been, nobody knows. You are of very little assistance, Rafferty, in your attempts to find out poor Mabel."

"Little assistance, sir. Bedad, if I don't find her out myself it is not any of you that will do that same. Oh, I'll find her; wasn't I all the blessed night looking for her, and didn't I get a —what do you call it—an idea!"

"Did you really get an idea, Rafferty?" said Henry.

"Aisy now, aisy, Master Henry, wid your jokes; you know you never had but one idea in your own life, and that I made a present to you one day in a fit of confidence."

"Come, come, Rafferty," said the captain, who could scarcely forbear a smile. "If you were really looking for Mabel, you can tell us where you looked and what success you had. Our own opinion is, that we shall find her before you have the least idea of where she is."

"Oh, the vanity of some folks. You really think so, sir, do you? Now, I'll tell you, sir, I partly know where she is."

"Do you? Then, perhaps, you will be so kind as to communicate to me the information."

"Not yet; it's a secret I can't tell you yet; hut some of these days I'll bring her home to you, never fear. By the bye, I——"

"Stop, Rafferty. I'll make any wager you like with you that you won't find her."

"And so will I." said Henry. "You will just go blundering about as usual, Rafferty, and far from finding her and restoring her to us, no douht you will make yourself as ridiculous as you did when you hid yourself in the willow-tree."

"And fell into the water," added the captain, "while Mabel was carried off before your very eyes."

"Aisy—aisy! What's up now, that a poor fellow is to have his misfortunes thrown in his teeth in a handful in that way? Now, I'll confound you both. You want to fiud Mabel. Well, you want to find that thief of the world as took her from us all —good. Now, sometimes I can do a pair of things at once, and sometimes it ain't convenient at all—at all."

"If you do one we shall be satisfied."

"Then it's done," said Rafferty, assuming a cool and indifferent air. "I haven't found Miss Mabel exactly, yet, but I have found the other fellow?"

"What other fellow?"

"Why, the fellow that took her away. Match that, if you can. Bedad, and you'll find it mighty difficult to get the better of Rafferty Brolickbones. You'll need to get up early, you would."

"Well," said the captain to Henry, "since Rafferty, then, puts us upon our mettle to match what he has done, I don't see what recourse we have but to do our best."

"Certainly—none other," said Henry.

"Then perhaps you will step up-stairs and ask our dear Mabel to come down and speak to this fellow Rafferty, who pretended to take such care of her, and then got into a tree, while he let her he carried off by Heaven only knows who."

—

CHAPTER XLV.

To describe the effect of these words upon Rafferty is far beyond our power. He stood as if he never intended, on any account, to shut his eyes again, and he bent forward in an attitude of listening, as if he might well, and actually did, doubt the evidence of his own senses.

Both Henry and the captain were much amused to see such an aspect of intense astonishment upon his countenance; for he generally made a sort of boast that nothing surprised him. Oh, no, he was too old a soldier for that, and had seen too much of the world, etc. But now the tahles were turned completely, and instead of him, Rafferty, causing all the astonishment, he was completely outdone by this cool acknowledgment that Mabel was actually in the house.

"You must be after saying that again, sir," he said,

"All I said," repeated the captain, "was to request Henry would desire Mabel to step down-stairs, in order that she might hear the no doubt gratifying intelligence of the capture of the man who has wrought her so much uneasiness."

Rafferty turned to Henry, and touching his forehead with the point of his finger, he said, in a tone of genuine commiseration—

"So the poor captain has gone at last, Master Henry?"

"What do you mean, Rafferty?"

"It's what do I mane, is it, sir? Why the maning is clear enough. The captain's given his senses leave of absence, that's all. I only hope they'll come back again, soon, and report themselves at headquarters."

Had his life depended upon his keeping his gravity Henry could not have done so. He was quite upset, and laughed aloud as he cried—

"Well, Rafferty, I do think you are right; but so far as regards going up-stairs for Mabel, I can do that."

"Yes, Master Henry, you can go up-stairs, divil a doubt, for Miss Mabel, but as to coming down-stairs again with her—that's quite another affair altogether."

"We shall see."

"Yes, sir, we shall see, God willing, sir. I don't think it's decent for either of you to be poking your fun at the likes of me."

"Well, well—you go, Henry, at once."

"Yes," said Henry, and he left the room.

Rafferty looked at the captain with an odd, bewildered look, for some few moments, and then walking closer up to him, he said, in a voice that evidently struggled with emotion—

"Captain Morton, I may be an old fool. I'm old, I know, and perhaps not far from being a fool; but I loved that girl, sir, better than I loved my own heart's blood. She is dearer to me than all the world, and to save her a pain or an ache, I'd lay down my life, sir. The very sound of her voice is music to my ears. Don't trifle with me, sir—don't trifle with me, but tell me the honest truth. Have you found her?"

"She shall answer for herself," said the captain, as the door was opened, and Henry appeared, leading in Mabel by the hand.

Rafferty staggered back as if he had been shot.

"It's she!" he cried—"it is—it is. Oh! Mabel, Mabel! how could you? Never mind. Here's a day!"

He rushed up to her, and before she, or Henry, or the captain, could in the least degree stop him, he had clasped her in his arms, and kissed her so many times, that whenever Henry thought of it during the remainder of that day, he felt positively envious and furious.

"Hold, Rafferty!" he cried. "There, if you please—that will do. Confound your impudence!"

"Oh, don't mention it," said Rafferty, "and so you're come back again, dear Mabel, have you, after all the trouble I've had

about you, darling? But where's the rosy color that used to sit upon the cheeks of you?"

"That will soon come again, Rafferty, when I am in my happy home once more."

"Hurrah! hurrah!"

"But you forget, Rafferty," said the captain, "that this is the first time you have seen Mabel since you so unhandsomely got into a tree where she was in danger, instead of protecting her."

"Do I forget, captain?" cried Rafferty. "Miss Mabel, you may have a shot at me if you like, and I'll forgive you. The captain has got a pair of dueling-pistols snug at home."

"Rafferty, I have no quarrel to make with you," said Mabel. "You did all for the best, and that is all that Heaven asks of its creatures, Rafferty, so I have no fault to find with you, had the consequences been ten times worse than they have been."

"Now, there you are wrong, Miss Mabel," said Rafferty; "I'll own to you, of course, that I did it all for the best. There's no manner of doubt about that; but it was mighty bad generalship for all that; and I haven't from that time to this known a happy hour."

"Well, Rafferty," said Henry, "you see that with all your cleverness we have beaten you, and succeeded in finding out Mabel first."

"Oh! be aisy," said Rafferty; "I shouldn't wonder after all, that you just heard of her by some accident, which can't be called finding her out. How was it now, Master Henry? You may as well tell the truth, you know, just for once in a way."

"For once in a way! Why, Rafferty, do you think I am like you?"

"Like me, sir! Oh, bedad, not like me. It's a proud man you'd be if you was. Why, the paving-stones in the street wouldn't be good enough to hould you up, if you thought you was like me. Conceit would get the better of you entirely, and you'd be put in some lunacy asylum, you would."

"Henry," said Captain Morton, "I think you will find yourself no match for Rafferty, so you had better let him have the last word at once."

"True for you, sir," said Rafferty; "an' if you never say a bigger lie than that, sir, you'll do well."

"Agreed, agreed!" cried Henry. "And now all is forgotten and all forgiven, and I am sure no one can entertain a more lively sense of all that we owe to you, Rafferty, than I do; but for you both Mabel and my brother would have perished on the field of Waterloo."

"Oh, botheration!" said Rafferty. "That's all such a mighty long time ago, that it ain't now worth remembering at all at all. But where's the ould gentleman?"

"What does he mean?" said Mabel.

"He alludes to a circumstance, dear Mabel," said the captain, "of which we have as yet said nothing to you, because you have really not been with us long enough to enable us to do so; but now, at once, I will tell you that we have another most agreeable surprise for you."

"What! don't she know all about that?" said Rafferty.

"Indeed she does not."

Mabel turned pale, as she said. in anxious tones:

"Do not tell it to me, if it be any news that in its results may have the effect of taking me from you. If it be any news concerning my real birth, keep it secret still, and let me rather be the unknown child of the battle-field, and the object of your kind bounty. I do not wish now to make new friends or new associations. My heart is already as full of affection as it can be."

These were delightful words for Henry to hear, but he took up the subject, as the captain was silent, and said:

"Mabel, do you suppose that I could look so joyous as I look now, if I were in possession of any intelligence which would have the effect of taking you from us? Oh, no! The news that we have to tell you is of no such character, although it is information that clears up every mystery connected with your birth."

"Be composed," said the captain. "Henry, tell our dear Mabel all."

Mabel sat down, and Henry by her side, and he, as rapidly and concisely as he could, related to her all the story connected with old Monsieur Rouselli. She listened to him with the most absorbed attention; and when he had concluded her eyes filled with tears, as she said,

"My poor, poor father! and my mother, too! Oh! what cruel, cruel misfortunes. I cannot even on this joyous day refrain from tears."

"They are natural tears, dear Mabel," said Henry, "and such as honor those who shed them. You must make no excuses to us, who know your kindly heart so well, for any such emotions."

"Don't be after crying, Miss Mabel," said Rafferty; "you don't see me crying, do you? Your father died as a soldier should—on the battle-field—and that's, to my thinking, a mighty deal easier and pleasanter than being laid up in a bed for the Lord knows how long, with some of the machinery in your inside wrong, and, at last, dying by quarters of an inch at a time."

In a short time Mabel recovered from this flush of emotion that had come over her, and she was confirmed in her wish to see old Monsieur Rouselli. A carriage was procured, and they all, including Rafferty, who would sit on the coach-box, and the hostler, too, who had remained domestic in the captain's lodgings, went together.

The captain thought it quite as necessary that old Monsieur Rouselli should not be subjected to the shock of seeing Mabel, and being told who she was, as that she should have been gradually prepared, as she was, by the officer's wife, for an introduction to those dear friends from whom she had been so long separated, and whom she so earnestly desired again to see.

With this intent he left Mabel and Henry in the coach below together, while he went up to the old man and gently told him of the joy he now could bring him.

This was an arrangement which Henry by no means objected

to, inasmuch as it left him with Mabel, and gave him an opportunity of saying things to her which he only intended for herself.

To be sure he made a slight error of judgment in this instance, and did not calculate his chances, for after making a speech of the most affectionate character to Mabel, and in which there was some highly poetical language, Rafferty, who was upon the coach, rapped his knuckles against the front glass of the carriage, and said:

"Mighty fine! Master Henry, mighty fine! only some of it wants putting into English, for, by the holy, I can't make out above half of it. Is that what you call making love? For shame! Master Henry, why don't you spake your mother tongue, and not put any of your French and Latin nonsense along with it. I wouldn't have thought so of the likes of you."

"You villain!" cried Henry.

Mabel blushed and laughed as she said, "You see. Henry, I warned you to pause, and now you have made a confidant, unwittingly, of Rafferty."

While this little incident was proceeding below, the captain had drawn a chair close to the other side of the table at which Monsieur Rouselli sat, and affectionately inquired after his health since last they had met.

"Oh," said the old man, "I have tried, but all in vain, to withdraw my mind from viewing my domestic affairs in the most gloomy light, and I feel that I shall know no joy, and not even an hour's serenity, until that dear child of my son's is restored to my heart."

"Which we all expect will be soon."

"It will need to be soon if am now to see her with mortal eyes."

"Now, monsieur, cannot you guess that, since I have been in town, I have striven in every possible way to discover her? Cannot you suppose that I have set every means at work in such a cause?"

"Yes, and all in vain."

"Not so."

"Not in vain—not—not—you have heard something?"

"I have; and expect that the clew which I have obtained will be one followed very shortly by the pleasure of again having her in our possession."

"Oh, tell me so again. The very thought of such joyful intelligence takes a load of years off me. I am better now."

"You may, from what I know, Monsieur Rouselli, hope for the best, and that more speedily, too, than you at all imagine."

The old man rose and advanced toward the captain. He laid both his hands upon his breast, and looked him earnestly and scrutinizingly in the face. Then, with a cry of joy, he tottered back to his seat again, as he exclaimed:

"I see it all—I see it all. You have found her—you have found the dear child! it was kind of you to spare the old man

too sudden an accession of joy. But you cannot deceive me; you have found her."

"Be composed, my dear sir—be composed. You are right; be calm. She shall come to you."

"Now, now—at once. A moment lost is much to me, for I am old. Oh, fetch her to me—fetch her to me. My own beautiful child, sole relic of my dear son, where is she?—where is she? Sir, do not trifle with my feelings; fetch her to me; oh, let me clasp her in my arms. I am as one lingering only for a brief space on the grave's brink, and before I sink into its recesses, let me, I implore you, once look upon her!"

"You shall, sir—you shall indeed."

"Now, now."

"Control your feelings for a short time. I will bring her to you. She is close at hand, sir. You, doubtless, heard a carriage stop in the street below. I will now make no disguises with you. We have found her, and she is as anxious to come to your arms as you can be to receive her."

As he spoke these words, Captain Morton rose and left the room. He made good speed down to the door, and looking into the carriage, he said;

"Mabel, your grandfather is prepared to see you."

"I come—I come," said Mabel, as by the assistance of the captain she sprung lightly from the vehicle, being closely followed by Henry.

"Oh, sir," said Rafferty, "it's a murdering shame."

"What, Rafferty—what?"

"Why, sir, there was as nice a bit of colloguing, sir, going on as you'd wish to hear of, sir, in the carriage, sir; a kind of courting, your honor. I'll tell you all about it another time. It's Master Henry, sir, it is."

Captain Morton shook his head at Rafferty, but made no reply to what he insinuated. He knew quite sufficient of the state of Henry's affections to make him receive Rafferty's information as anything but doubtful, and one of the hopes nearest to his heart was, that Mabel would be induced to become, by a marriage with Henry, really one of the family of which she was, in all love and tenderness that could be bestowed upon her, already one of the most cherished members.

They reached the room, and Mabel springing forward prevented the old man from rising; but, sinking to his feet, she looked up in his face as she said:

"Dear grandfather, will you love me?"

Sobs of joy choked his utterance. He folded his arms about her, and pressed her to his breast. He kissed tenderly that beautiful brow, and when he could sufficiently command his feelings to allow him to speak, he said:

"Will I love you, my own dear child? Can you ask, when the old man's heart is all yours? You—you have your father's eyes, dear Mabel. God's blessings on you. I—I never thought to see such a happy moment as this. My beautiful Mabel, I should ask you, rather, will you love this old, withered form so near the grave?"

"Yes," she said. "Oh, yes; are you not the only being to whom I can claim affinity, dear grandfather? I feel now that I am not a nameless thing, thrown upon the kindness of those who, God knows, have been dear friends to me, but yet who know me not."

"Yes, my Mabel, you are now known; you are the daughter of a brave and honorable man, one who has left you a name of which you need never be ashamed; a name recognized in the annals of his country, and which he has left to you free and spotless."

"Yes, yes."

"Young man," he then said to Henry; "you have many times said kind and gentle words to me, and I have delighted in your society, but I never could think of how to return you some favor for those you have bestowed."

"Oh, sir," said Henry, "I want no thanks."

"No, grandfather, Henry was only too happy," said Mabel, "to give you any pleasure."

"Mabel, you have only, I may say," continued the old man, "been mine a few short minutes, and yet I am about to cast you away again."

"Cast me away, grandfather?"

"Yes; what can you desire to cling to an old man for, who is already familiar with the aspect of approaching death? I shall make you a present, as the most valuable of my possessions, to Henry Morton, if he does not despise the gift."

"Despise!" cried Henry; "oh, joy!"

"And if my dear girl does not object to being so disposed of, and think it unkind of the old man to get rid of her so soon."

Mabel said nothing, but she stretched out one hand to Henry, and he held it in his grasp, as he said, "Sir, the world contains not so precious a gift."

"But she does not agree to it," he added.

"Yes, yes," said Mabel. "That is—I mean—no! no!"

"Oh, that will do; go, my children, and be happy; and may the blessing of God be upon you, Mabel."

"A—min!" said Rafferty, putting his head in at the door. "By the powers of Pat Mulligan, the Irish giant, I thought what it would come to."

"And you have been listening," said the captain.

"To be sure I have; it's not much news of what was going on I'd have had, if I had not listened; nobody had the civility to say, 'Rafferty, walk up, sir, if you please; so I just invited myself as far as the keyhole. Master Henry, a word with you, sir."

"Well, what is it?"

"I claim the first kiss of the bride, sir, and for fear some other blackguard should try to get it, I think I'll have it now, sir, if it's all the same to you."

"No, you won't," said Henry, "and it is not all the same to me, so go about your business, Master Rafferty, and leave the bride alone."

"Och, murder, the jealousy of some people, now only to think."

CHAPTER XLVI.

AND now that Mabel was duly restored to those dear friends who had grieved so much for her absence, and who would have given all the world's wealth to hold her again to their hearts, we will turn our attention to that villain who had caused so much mischief, but who now, in consequence of Rafferty's singular adventure, was consigned to the durance he so richly merited. Foiled and disappointed in all his hopes, one can well imagine the desperate state of feeling into which that man was thrown, now that, for the second time, the law had him in its grasp, and he could entertain no hope of being so fortunate as again to escape its clutches. He was too well watched by the authorities to permit of such a thing occurring, and in the absence of all means of self-destruction, he was compelled to endure, as best he might, the load of vexation and despair that had come upon him.

It was some days before the mendicant was in a state to be brought before a magistrate, for he refused at first to take any nourishment, and it was only when, at length, so pressed by hunger that his resolution gave way and he ate something, that it was considered expedient to make him undergo an examination.

In order as much as possible to spare the feelings of Mabel, and repress the rush of public curiosity, the proceedings were commenced at an early hour, and the desperate and wretched man was placed at the bar to be accused of divers crimes and misdemeanors.

Mabel was there, for she had been brought by the captain and Henry, both of whom had taken great pains to prepare her, as well as possible, for the disagreeable hour or two that was to come.

"You ought to remember, Mabel," was the correct argument that Captain Morton used; "you ought to remember that it is not in revenge for any personal wrongs of your own that you are supposed to appear against this man, but simply as a member of society, cognizant of an offense committed against the laws which bind that society together."

"I understand that now," she replied, "and will state all that I know concerning him, although I shall dread the task."

"And I," said Henry, "wish it were in my power to state anything about him that would put a rope round his neck, the scoundrel! He has made me suffer more in anxiety than he can now be made to suffer."

"All I wish, Mr. Henry," remarked Rafferty, "is that, if they don't hang him, they'd let him go altogether; because in that case we would have a mighty good opportunity of catching him somewhere, and doing that piece of work for him."

Old Monsieur Rouselli was persuaded as much as possible, by Mabel and the captain, not to trouble himself to come to the ex-

amination of a man who had heaped for a time such misery upon Mabel, but he begged that they would cease to combat his desire to be present, saying:

"I own that by going I may only inflame the passionate feelings that already, as regards that man, have found a home in my heart; but I wish to see him, and want to know if he is like what I have in my mind's eye pictured him."

Of course, after this, the Mortons made no further opposition to his going; and as Rafferty went, whether he was wanted or not, the whole party was assembled at the police office.

The captain had had a long conversation with the hostler of the village inn, who was so strongly of opinion that this same man would unquestionably turn out to be tbe murderer of the young traveler, of which murder he had himself been so wrongfully accused, and the last words which had passed between them on that subject, had been to the effect that he, Captain Morton, should say nothing upon that subject until be saw him, the late hostler, again.

"I will post down to the village, captain," he said, "and get up all the evidence I can as to the identity of the supposed murderer; and I hope I shall be back in time to be present at the examination before the police magistrate, which is about to take place. But if I cannot, he is not at all likely to be discharged from custody."

"Not at all. I will take care of that."

"Tben I sball go with perfect confidence, sir."

"Are you certain, now, that you have sufficient means of your own to prosecute the necessary inquiries?"

"Quite, sir," said the hostler, with a smile; "various circumstances which, some day when we have all gone back again to the village, for there I shall fix my habitation, I will relate to you, placed me in the position of life in which you first knew me, but all that is changed now."

"I am extremely glad to hear it."

"Of that I am certain; and now I will be off at once, witb the hope of getting back quickly."

Tbe only circumstance whicb at all annoyed Captain Morton as regarded this business of the murder at the village inn, was that the whole affair would bave now, with all its painful and aggravating circumstances, to be told to old Monsieur Rouselli, and so he would have the pang of knowing that one whom he had esteemed had, in consequence of placing himself in a position of danger for him, come to a cruel and terrible death.

When, tberefore, so unexpectedly, the hostler had made his appearance, and all the circumstances concurrent upon that appearance had taken place, Captain Morton felt that it would be no longer possible to keep from Monsieur Rouselli a knowledge of the fate of bis young friend and relative. But still there was no necessity to take time by the forelock, so Captain Morton made up his mind not to disturb the serenity of Monsieur Rouselli with the new narration of the murder, until the hostler should return, and it became impossible any longer to keep that affair a secret.

To Mabel he spoke of it as well as to Henry, so that with the exception of the old man, all were prepared for some denouement of a description that would relieve Mabel from the pain and annoyance of prosecuting the mendicant, by involving him in a charge of so much more serious a character, that it would take precedence of the one which she could bring against him.

And now, by half-past nine in the morning, according to appointment with the magistrate, who had fixed that early hour in order that there should not be sufficient time for a crowd of persons to collect, Mabel and her friends had arrived at the police office.

Very few persons were admitted besides those actually interested, so that there was none of that inconvenient pressure which is so commonly the case, when the cases involving any serious points in the details or their results are likely to come on.

So far as regarded the feelings of the Morton family and of Mabel all was well, and now the magistrate gave orders that the prisoner should be brought before him.

There was a slight bustle at the door of the court, and then, held by two officers, that most desperate character was ushered into the place usually set apart for criminals. The eyes of all present were immediately fixed upon him. He was frightfully pale, and from the neglected state of his beard and apparel, it was evident that he had been in a desponding condition of mind. He looked like a man thoroughly beaten by fate—a man who had nothing to hope for—nothing now to do with the world, and who cared not how soon he left it.

At first he did not seem to have any notion that the Morton family was present, but after a few moments of haggard glancing at the magistrate, he glanced round the court, and then he saw them all. There was a faint flush upon his countenance as he looked upon Mabel, and saw that she was now again, despite all his exertions, surrounded by her best and dearest friends. Then his eyes lit up with a savage sort of ferocity and he exclaimed in a voice louder than one would have supposed, to look at him, he would have been capable of assuming:

"On what charge am I thus ignominiously brought here? Is a man criminal because he escapes from a jail in which he is confined for an alleged crime only, and of which he knows his own innocence?"

"The charge against you," said the magistrate, "is for the abduction of a young lady from the hands of her friends."

"If you allude to my daughter, it does seem somewhat strange to me that she should make such a charge against me."

"Your daughter?"

"Yes, that young girl, toward whom you look now, is my daughter. She is now under age; I claim not only my own discharge from custody, but I claim the legal guardianship of her."

"Yes, sir," said a spare man, advancing, "I have the honor to appear here for the much injured prisoner at the bar."

"Oh, you are Mr. Meadows, the solicitor," said the magistrate, "and have advised him to make the statement."

"I have advised him to state the truth, and I will now relate to your worship the grounds upon which he substantiates his claim to this young person. Your worship must know then that my client's name is Leroux, and that he was in the French army at the period of the battle of Waterloo. He is a German, but was naturalized in France, and obtained a colonelcy in a regiment which fought in that great engagement. My client was severely wounded, and lay upon the field of slaughter, when his deeply attached wife sought him, carrying in her arms their only infant. So deeply affected was she at observing the husband of her affections apparently in the agony of death, that she fainted at his side, and he, believing that she was no more, crawled to a British officer with the child in his arms, and implored him to protect it. That officer has been ascertained to be Captain Morton. The child is now the young lady who, with all the natural feeling of a father, my client strove to obtain the society of."

"Pray be silent," said the magistrate, as he saw that Captain Morton was about to speak; "pray be silent, and allow things to proceed regularly, if you please."

"Prisoner, I have heard this statement which has been volunteered by you on this occasion, and now I shall proceed with the case. Will you come forward, madam, and give your evidence?"

Mabel stepped to the magistrate's table, and was sworn.

"What is your name?" he said.

"Mabel Rouselli," she replied, in a calm voice.

The effect upon the prisoner was instantaneous and terrific. He stretched out his arms, and his whole countenance became convulsed with passion, as he cried,—

"No, no, not Rouselli. Who gave you that name? what fiend whispered to you such a name as that? No, no, it is a wild and desperate guess to drive me mad. I have not heard that name for many a day, Rouselli—Rouselli; who said Rouselli?"

"If you are not silent, prisoner," said the magistrate, "I shall be compelled to have you removed, and to carry on this investigation without you. Miss Rouselli, can you state to me who your father was, and with whom you are now residing?"

"My father was a colonel in the French army of the empire, and I am now under the protection of my grandfather, Monsieur Rouselli."

"'Tis false, false," cried the mendicant—"all false; a plot to deprive me of my only defense. She is mine—mine, I tell you. There is no Colonel Rouselli. There never was such an one. She belongs to me."

"I can swear," said Captain Morton, "the prisoner's not the man who gave into my charge the child on the field of Waterloo."

"And so can I, your honor," shouted Rafferty.

"Really," said the magistrate, "this is most irregular. You will please to go on with your evidence, Miss Rouselli; no one, of course, for a moment can be deceived by the impudent fabrications of the prisoner."

"I beg your pardon," said the attorney. "I think your worship is a little premature in coming to such a decision. We have proofs. I have a witness here—a French soldier, who was on the field of Waterloo, and saw the whole of this transaction. He has now been settled in this country for some years; but he lay wounded on the field of battle, and he happened to see all that passed, and can swear that the prisoner at the bar was the person who gave the child to Captain Morton, and that he is what he represents himself to be, namely, an officer in the French army, or at least was such at the date of these transactions."

An old, weather-beaten man, tanned by age, stepped forward, and bowed to the magistrate, who, after a moment's consideration, said,—

"I will swear you and take your evidence, but not now. When the prisoner in regular course is called upon for his defense, you can be produced."

"And in the mean time I do hope," said the attorney, "that the Morton family will not attempt to interfere with this witness."

Captain Morton, who felt his honor touched at this speech, would have made an angry reply, but the magistrate checked him, saying—

"Never mind, never mind, Captain Morton. You must let these sort of speeches go in at one ear and out at the other in a police court."

Mabel then related clearly and distinctly the manner of her abduction from home by the mendicant, and how he had forcibly kept her a prisoner for a long time until she made her escape with great difficulty from him.

Rafferty was then called, to his great chagrin; for he had to give an account of how remarkably clever he tried to be, and succeeded only in falling into the lake. His testimony, however, was an important corroboration of Mabel's because it fixed the identity of the prisoner.

Captain Morton then deposed to the prisoner being the same man who had previously called upon him, and offered to take money to forego a claim upon Mabel of relationship.

"This is a clear enough offense," said the magistrate. "Now, prisoner, what have you to say in reply to all this?"

"This is my daughter. This is my witness."

"'Tis false, sir; it is false," said old Monsieur Rouselli, stepping forward and confronting the French witness. "She is my dear grandchild; blessings on her. It was my son who gave her into the care of Captain Morton. My only brave and gallant son, who died upon that blood-stained field."

The old French soldier, who had come forward again at the call of the mendicant, shrank back from before the gaze of Monsieur Rouselli, and uttered the words "Mon Dieu!"

The magistrate observed his emotion, and had him immediately sworn; after which he said to him in a solemn voice:

"Now, tell your version of the story; and remember, that you have sworn in the name of Heaven to tell the truth."

"And he will tell the truth," said the attorney. "I am willing to stake my professional reputation upon the honor of this brave old soldier."

In a low voice the witness began:

"I was wounded, but not badly, at Waterloo. I lay upon the field close to an English officer and some soldiers, although a gun carriage that had been upset hid me from their observation, while it did not prevent me from observing all that passed. They, if present, will admit that I was there, when I state that I saw one who would have robbed the dead, and murdered the living, shot by a sergeant."

"That's me, any how!" cried Rafferty.

"Yes," said the old French soldier, fixing his eyes upon Rafferty, "you are the man. I know you by the tone of your voice. I was tolerably well acquainted with the French officers in my division of the army, and among them was a Colonel Leroux. There was, likewise, unquestionably, a Colonel Rouselli. I knew both these officers well, and was present when the circumstance alluded to to-day took place. This gentleman, who told me he was a lawyer, found me out yesterday, and brought me to give my evidence. As I lay upon the field, I saw a French officer in the uniform of a colonel crawl, as well as the state of his wounds would permit, toward an English officer, who was likewise wounded. With many recommendations to his kindness, he placed an infant in the Englishman's arms. The Englishman promised to take charge of the child, and the French officer called down upon him the blessing of Heaven."

"Could you identify the parties?" said the magistrate. "That is the grand question."

"I can! I know them all."

"Then distinctly state, if you can see in this court the English officer to whom the child was given in charge."

"Yes," said the Frenchman, pointing to Captain Morton, "it is years ago, but that is the man."

"You are right," said the captain.

And now what," added the magistrate, "was the name of the French officer in the colonel's uniform who gave the child to Captain Morton?"

The Frenchman paused and took an old, miserable-looking snuff-box from his pocket, and raising the lid, he handed to the magistrate a small folded piece of paper.

"Why," said the latter, when he had unfolded it, "what has this to do with it? This is one half of a twenty-pound note."

"It is. That gentleman," pointing to the lawyer, "gave it to me yesterday, with the promise of the other half to-day, if my evidence was satisfactory; and I am only anxious to request you, sir, as I am a poor man, and the money is of consequence to me, to see that I get it from him."

"Fool!" whispered the lawyer, "you should not have said anything about that," and then he added, aloud, "at all events, your worship, I presume we may pay our witnesses what we like for their time and attention."

"I have nothing to do with all this," said the magistrate,

"whatever may be my private opinion. Witness, will you answer the question I have asked of you?"

"I will, sir: the French officer who handed the infant to Captain Morton, was, to my certain knowledge, Colonel Rouselli!"

"Thank God!" cried Captain Morton, "the truth has triumphed."

"No, no!" shouted the solicitor; "you mean Colonel Leroux. Think again."

"Colonel Leroux was not there at all. He belonged to Grouchy's division—that was not on the field of battle."

"And that man now at the bar—who is he?"

"He is not Colonel Leroux."

The attorney gave a groan, and the prisoner turned perfectly livid as he clutched the front of the bar for support.

"Who is he?" added the magistrate.

"He is a Prussian by birth, and his name is Sternholde."

When the French witness uttered the name of Sternholde, the whole party of the Mortons started in amazement, for that name brought back the most terrible ideas to them, connected as it was with so much of the terrific, as had been recorded of him by the grandfather of Mabel. At once they seemed to see before them, not only the persecutor of the beautiful girl, but the unrelenting foe of her parents—the man who had earned so dreadful and so unenviable a notoriety by the most atrocious actions that could disgrace human nature. They had suspected him of the murder of the traveler at the Morton Arms, but the truth is, they had not suspected him of the dreadful reputation which he really enjoyed. They all continued gazing upon him for some moments in silence, for there was no exclamation which the human language was capable of, which would have been sufficiently strong to convey their detestation of one, concerning whom they had heard so much, and who, for the honor of human nature, they did hope was no longer in the land of the living.

The magistrate saw with wonder the effect which the mere pronunciation of the name of Sternholde had upon the persons present, for it was an entirely new name to him, and as unconnected as possible with any previous ideas.

But if, upon the prisoner's accusers the pronunciation of his name had so marked an effect, it had, if possible, a much stronger one upon himself, for from the moment that he heard it declared who he was, he appeared to consider that all further attempt to disguise his real character was perfectly useless, and that the most desirable thing would be to glory in the dreadful reputation he had achieved.

He drew himself proudly up, and no longer seemed at all anxious to avoid the glances of those around him. The attempted subornation of a witness had failed completely, and since he could not escape the worst consequences of being known for what he really was, he appeared to derive a gloomy satisfaction, in showing that he was really, and to the full, as fearful a char-

acter as he was represented to be by all who had heard of his ruinous and desperate career.

"Yes," he said, and his voice sounded hoarsely and discordantly, far above its ordinary tones. "Yes, I am Sternholde, and I care not who knows it. I am Sternholde, and I have one other name, which is, the Battle Fiend! I glory in both appellations, but most do I glory in the latter, because it is that name which has grown out of my revenge."

"What is the meaning of all this?" said the magistrate. "I must confess that I really cannot comprehend it."

Then, before any one could reply to this observation, there stepped up to the prisoner old Monsieur Rouselli, and while his head shook with emotion, and his white locks were scattered in the air, that waved them as though they had been shreds of flossy silk, he looked him steadily in the face.

The old man did not speak, but he did not withdraw his eyes for a moment from the countenance of the man who had worked him so much woe. And Sternholde made a faint effort to look steadily in the countenance of Monsieur Rouselli. For a time—but a short time only—he did succeed, and then he began to falter; gradually he drooped and trembled—cowering beneath the gaze of the old man, as if it had brought with it some withering blight which it was not in human nature to withstand. It was quite clear that no word need be spoken. The villain was subdued by that steady, uncompromising gaze alone. And then, indeed, did he exhibit all the power over the physical frame of an evil conscience, for while he shook like one in an ague, he turned his head aside, saying:

"Enough! enough! I have nothing to say to you."

"Murderer!" said the old man. "Can you breathe in my presence, and yet know the amount of misery you have brought upon me?"

"Away! away!" said Sternholde, for so we may now as well call him. "Away! away, old man, I have no words for you."

"Will some one," said the magistrate, "explain to me the cause of this most remarkable change in the manner of the prisoner?"

"I can do so, sir," said Captain Morton; "but as the details will occupy some time, and as they cannot be said to apply to affairs recognizable in the jurisdiction of the English laws, I will, in private, communicate to you who and what this desperate man really is; I have only now to pray that you will remand him, for I expect I can produce evidence, so as to prove him guilty of a crime which the English law can take full cognizance of; I shall be able to prove him a murderer."

"'Tis false!" cried Sternholde. "I have done nothing here, and being not an English subject, all acts that may be laid to my charge in other countries have nothing to do with the magistracy of this."

"I shall grant the remand," said the magistrate, "upon your oath, Captain Morton, that you believe you will be able to produce evidence of this man's guilt of a higher crime than the abduction of this young lady."

"I did not abduct her," said Sternholde. "I had as much right to the custody of her as they who arrogate such a duty to themselves."

"You are remarkably incorrect there," said the magistrate. "Captain Morton, by the laws of this country—and I expect, for the proposition is really too reasonable a one to entertain a doubt upon, by the laws of every other European state—became the natural guardian of Mabel Rouselli. The dying request of her father, that he would accept such a trust, and his ready acceptance of it, were amply sufficient."

"I know well," said Sternholde, "that every point will be strained against me. This is the country of all others, in which the poor and friendless have no chance against the rich and powerful. But do your worst. I defy you all, and may thwart you yet."

"For how long would you like the prisoner remanded?" asked the magistrate of Captain Morton.

"In one week," said the captain, "I am confident that I shall have all the evidence which it is in my power to procure. The murder of which I accuse him was perpetrated at an inn in the country, called the Morton Arms."

Sternholde looked at Captain Morton with such a savage expression of countenance, that it was quite evident he would have gloried in inflicting upon him some injury; and no doubt his powerless condition, which so effectually prevented him from doing so, was no small aggravation of what he suffered. He was about to say something else; but as the first few words were those of invective, the magistrate would not hear him, but ordered that he should be immediately removed; at the same time, he directed the officers to look most specially to his safe custody, for there was all the appearance about him of one brewing mischief. This the officers were pretty sure to do, for their own sakes; and they were quite sufficiently acquainted with such characters to deal with them properly.

Captain Morton made an appointment with the magistrate, in order that he might relate to him the whole particulars of the career of Sternholde, and how he had rendered his name so extremely obnoxious to the Rouselli family.

They then left the police office, and soon perceived that the proceedings had had a most prejudicial effect upon old Monsieur Rouselli. He had supported himself firmly while there, and in the presence of the man who may be said to have brought upon him almost all the distress he had suffered, and he got home tolerably; but when there his firmness forsook him, and he fainted in the arms of Henry Morton.

All was confusion for some moments among the Mortons; for the state into which the old man fell so strongly resembled death, that for some time they feared that either it had arrived, or was about to do so.

They, with all the tenderest solicitude, had him conveyed to bed, and a physician of eminence was immediately sent for, who looked upon the case rather seriously.

"The mental shock," he said, "which in a younger subject

would pass away. leaving behind it no bad effects permanently, may prove fatal here. I do not say that it will, because the vital energies may rally; but all I have is a hope that way."

This was saying quite as much as any medical man could be expected to say of a very bad case, the chance of which ending favorably was very remote indeed.

The Mortons consulted together whether they should let Mabel know the worst, or keep her in ignorance of it, until something of a more decided character occurred to prevent them from being able to do so with effect.

"Tell her all," was what Henry said. "Mabel is not a child. She has a heart full of the best and dearest affections: but yet she has a mind which it would be an insult not to inform of anything which nearly concerns her."

"I of course yield to you," said the captain. "You have, Henry, a right to dictate our conduct to Mabel."

Henry was pleased to hear this recognition of his engagement to Mabel from his brother's lips, and he took upon himself the task of breaking to her the adverse opinion of the medical man regarding her grandfather. Tears gushed from Mabel's eyes, and for a time she seemed completely to gainsay the expressed opinions of Henry, that she had mind enough to govern any affliction. The affections alone seemed to dictate to her.

"Alas! alas!" she said. This will be a cruel blow to me. I shall then lose the only being to whom I can claim kindred, and I shall be alone in the world!"

"Alone, Mabel!" said Henry, reproachfully; "is this kind to me? or I may go so far as to ask, is this just to me, who have loved you well and constantly? Oh, Mabel, Mabel, I did not think to have heard such words from your lips!"

"Forgive me, Henry," she said imploringly, as she placed both her hands in his; "forgive me, that for one brief moment I forgot your love."

"It is I, dear Mabel," said Henry, "who ought to ask you to forgive me for uttering the shadow of a reproach to you at such a time as this. But love such as mine is foolishly sensitive, and feels even a fancied slight worse than a wound."

"I will go at once to the chamber of my grandfather," she said. "Who but I should watch by his couch?"

"No, Mabel,—no, Mabel. Let me implore you not to do so. I know the kindly and noble feelings of affection that prompt you, but strangers, such strangers, I mean, as can form a full and intimate knowledge of them, and can be relied upon, are ever the best to attend upon the sick; I know that in saying this much, I am saying what is adverse to general opinion, but yet I think that I am right."

Mabel answered that he might be right, but still it did not influence her, and in a few minutes more she had taken up her station by the bedside of her grandfather, and commenced her task of attending him with all the solicitude of a daughter. He remained for many hours in a strange apathetic sort of state, but then suddenly all his faculties seemed to return to him, and, turning his eyes upon Mabel, he pronounced her

name. She heard him utter that word, Mabel, with a revived hope that he might yet baffle the enemy, death, which showed so strong a disposition to assail him, and to conquer him. She leaned over him, and looked long and wistfully in his face.

"Speak again, dear grandfather," she said. "You are better than you were, and you can now speak again to your own Mabel. Oh! let me hear your voice once more."

He turned his eyes upon her, and was for some moments silent. Then he made an effort to utter some articulate sound, but it was evidently a painful one, and his voice was sadly and strangely altered from its usual tones.

"Mabel, my Mabel," he said, "do you not regret that I am going from you? The old, withered tree, once the strongest of the forest, must, in time, make a place for the young sapling that shoots up so green and verdant, and full of youthful vigor by its side."

"Oh! grandfather, do not speak thus. You will stay with us long yet—I know you will. You will stay with us to bless us. It would be hard, indeed, to part with you so soon!"

"But, my Mabel, you are young and beautiful, and I know that you are surrounded by those who love you well—those who will never let a cold world frown on you again, but encircling you in their arms, will save you from all the frowns of fortune. You will be happy, my beautiful Mabel, you will be very happy."

Sobs came from Mabel's heart, for she felt a conviction creeping over her that could not be resisted, to the effect that these words she was listening to from those revered lips were the last the old man would utter in this world.

She knew, at least she had been told, that, at his age, the shock he had received from so suddenly confronting the man who had been such a foe to his happiness, was one not likely for him to recover from; but still she had entertained, until now, a hope, at least, that the prediction might not be verified. But when she marked the altered voice, when she looked upon the face so strangely changed, she could no longer cherish the idea that this last one of her race would be long spared to her, and she already, in imagination, mourned him as gone from her.

After he had uttered the few words we have recorded, the old man's strength seemed to be fast failing him, and he closed his eyes, lapsing into a deep slumber.

Being assured that he slept, Mabel stole into the next apartment, to weep alone, and there she was found by Henry Morton, who did all that one who loved truly could do to assuage her griefs. He reasoned with her on the fact of the approaching death of old Monsieur Rouselli, a fact which he did not attempt, indeed, for one moment to dispute.

"I can feel all the truth of what you say," sobbed Mabel; "I know it all and can dispute no proposition that comes from your lips. It is as you say; but time, and time only, can assuage the sorrow that now oppresses me. That will be the only remedial agent to my griefs. But come with me into the chamber; I

have already far too long, for a friend, left it. Come with me, and we can talk in whispers there without the fear of disturbing him. He was sleeping soundly."

Henry accompanied Mabel to the old man's chamber, and at the first glance of his face that they took it would almost seem that he was dead, so death-like did the countenance look. The eyes were only partially closed, and the portion of them that were visible had that strange opaque appearance which only ensues when the spirit has quitted, or is very shortly about to quit, its earthly abiding place. The cheeks, too, had strangely fallen. There were all the indications of the hand of the destroyer, and Mabel uttered a sound of alarm as she looked upon what at that moment she believed to be the corpse of her grandfather.

But such was not the case. He spoke again, and his voice was, strange to say, nearer now to its natural tone than it had heen when last she heard it; hut too soon she found that although the tones were more like a happier state, the mind was gone. What he now said had no method in it. All was disjointed and variable.

Mabel could not speak for weeping; and he seemed to hear the deep sobs that came from her lips.

"Hush, hush!" he said; "who is that who—I cannot see—who weeps for the old man? Mabel! Mabel! my child's child; Mabel, come to my arms."

He stretched out his arms, and clasped her for a moment to his hreast.

"Happy!" he said; "quite happy now, May God's choicest blessings light upon you—upon all—Mabel!"

The hands relaxed their hold, and with a sigh he fell hack upon the pillow, from which he had partially raised himself.

"He will sleep again," said Mabel, as she dashed the tears from her eyes. "He will sleep again, and I will still watch hy him."

Henry gently led her from the bed, as he whispered to her,—

"There is no need of watching. He does sleep, my Mabel, but it is the sleep which knows no waking—it is the sleep of death."

CHAPTER XLVII.

MABEL'S grief for the death of her grandfather was at first of such a character as to be beyond all control. It was the first time she had ever felt such a bereavement so as to feel conscious of the time and the mode at which it occurred; for although death had taken from her those near and dear ties which should have helped to make up the joy of her existence, yet she had not personally witnessed the disseverment of any of these holy ties which bind human nature together. It took her indeed some days before she could look upon the whole matter as a reality. But by then the affectionate solicitude of the Mortons had taught her to feel that although death had robbed her of one loving, gentle heart, which beamed upon her with affection.

there were others yet left to whom she owed the debt of grateful feeling. Her grief subsided into a gentler form of melancholy, and, to the great relief of Henry, she began to talk, without the sudden gush of anguish that had marked all allusion to him, of her grandfather, with a feeling approaching to serenity.

The only thing that now detained the Mortons in London was the approaching trial of Sternholde for the murder of the young French traveler at the Morton Arms, and that the law compelled them to stay for; although they would all gladly have left him to take what fate might be meted out to him without their assistance.

The exultation of the late hostler of the Morton Arms, now that he was able, by fixing the onus of guilt upon the real criminal, to free himself from the censure even of the most censorious of the inhabitants of the village, was, of course, of an abounding character. He took good care of Troubled Tom, whom he provided with a lodging, with an understanding that he was to sleep as long as he liked of a morning, and all day long, if he pleased.

On the day before the trial of Sternholde, Captain Morton put Jem in mind that he had hinted still at some mystery connected with his fortunes, and hoped that he would consider them, the Mortons, as quite sufficiently his friends to warrant him in bestowing upon them his utmost confidence; to which he replied, in a voice that showed how deeply he appreciated the kind manner in which the question was put.—

"There is a mystery, Captain Morton, and it all concerns a testamentary paper, which cannot be found, and the non-production of which keeps me in constant jeopardy, because it prevents me from really proving that I was the eldest son of my father."

"Indeed! That must be looked to for you."

"My father was," began the hostler, "a retired tradesman. He had been a respectable man, and a thriving man for many years, before he committed matrimony; and when he found himself succeeding in life, he indulged himself in the luxury of a wife. This, however, was a step that entailed some extra expense and some loss of time; but he met each by increased exertions and labor; the consequence was he lost nothing by the determined manner in which he met all new calls upon him. I was his first child, and on this occasion there was a little display of finery and expense; but that was to be expected; he was expected to do so by all, and such was the thought of my mother, and she would have been much mortified if he had not done so. The result of all his care and punctuality in business was he throve well, and acquired a comfortable independence; and when I was about four years old, he determined upon retiring from business, and living a small distance from London, and there enjoy himself. About this time my mother died and left me, at an early age, in the care of my father, who was unused to children; and though he had every disposition to do what was right, he was not fit to have the charge of a boy of my age. It was altogether a thing he had not been used to,

that he was out of his element. This caused him to send me to school much earlier than I otherwise should have gone; but at the same time, I think, it was the making of me; for instead of making a fool of me, I soon became a clever lad. I was his first, and he never forgot it. But he soon grew weary of a single life; he had no sort of home—no place where he could retire to and enjoy himself; and he resolved upon marrying a second time. One day, accident introduced him to the woman he afterward married. He was riding in a gig, when his horse shied and kicked when whipped; and then upset him into a ditch, where he was dragged out by the servant of a family residing close at hand. His distress was seen, and he was on the point of perishing from suffocation in the mud in the ditch—the vehicle being thrown over on the top of him.

"With some trouble and difficulty, he was got out, and carried in-doors, and taken care of by the inmates, who had seen the occurrence, and came out to his assistance.

"My father was, I believe, insensible, and was, after some trouble, brought round to himself, having been stunned, or nearly so, for a short time; and now he became perfectly conscious of what had happened; and yet he could not tell where he was. He looked around, but saw none upon whom he could rest his gaze with any signs of recognition. 'Where am I?' he inquired; 'where am I?' 'In safety,' replied a voice close beside him; and the curtains of the bed were, at the same time, drawn by a light hand, and the form of a young female was immediately present to his sight. 'And whom have I to thank for so much care?' he inquired, as he surveyed her; 'who was it that saved me, and placed me here? Tell me to whom am I indebted for this?' 'I was seated at the window,' she replied, 'and heard something like a noise with the horse, and was just in time to see you thrown, and the servants did all the rest.' 'I am your debtor,' he replied, 'nevertheless. What was done was done at your bidding. You are my savior.' 'You say more than I ought to hear upon that point, but, if you think I have done you any service, you will remain here quiet a few hours till you have rested, and slept a natural sleep for a few hours, and, then, if you are able, you shall rise and leave, if you desire to do so."

"'You are kind—very kind. I will be guided by you,' he replied; 'I am your prisoner.' The result was, my father was induced to remain there for all that afternoon, and the next day too. He was well pleased with the people; and the young lady, who was about four-or six-and-twenty, he took an especial liking to. He explained to her friends who and what he was; that he had one child—that is, myself: but that was no possible objection to the lady, who was fond of children and who declared she should love me as if I had been her own. This was very satisfactory, and promised a very good prospect. My father was happy. the lady seemed amiable and handsome, and they loved each other. They married. He was not to blame. He could not know anything but what came under the cognizance of his senses, and he took his wife home to him. Things went on very

well for some time. When my vacation occurred I was brought home and presented to my mother-in-law, who received me very graciously; but I thought there was more show than real feeling in her manner. I was resolved, young as I then was, that I would never treat her as if she had my entire confidence, but that I would be reserved and never trust her. My vacation over, I returned to school, without either sorrow or regret at having to leave home, though I had certainly no reason why I should desire to go back to school. Time flew by and I returned home, and there found my father had increased his family; he had another son by his second wife, and I soon found out that there was a change in the house as well as an increase of its inmates.

"My mother-in-law seemed to have taken a fancy that I was an impediment to her plans, and to remove me from my father's sight was her great object. If she could get me out of the way, that would enable her to have a complete command over him; do that and she would be satisfied. She did all she could to succeed; all things were in her favor; my father was fond of her and of the child. I do not quarrel with him for that—it was perfectly natural he should; but it blinded him to some of my mother-in-law's faults; she had acquired a sort of command over him, and he got, at length, in the habit of surrendering his will to hers, and his inclinations were rather curbed, or they were entirely suppressed, as she appeared to oppose them more or less energetically than before. She used to show her ill-will to me by informing him, upon every possible occasion, of the little peccadillos of which I had been guilty, and especially commenting upon them. At length my father grew so weary of my enormities, and the trouble and the long lectures they brought with them, that I believe he began to imagine that I was born especially for the purpose of tormenting him. This, I have no doubt, was the cause of his permitting me to do as I pleased, and allowing my mother-in-law the full power of disposing of me to save himself the trouble of having anything to do with an unruly boy; he was somewhat of an indolent disposition, and averse to any contention whatever.

"It was a plan of my mother-in-law's that I should be sent away; she wished me to go to sea, and I had an objection to that; I was, moreover, too young for that, which my father said himself, and he thought I might do elsewhere.

"'Do elsewhere!' I remember her very words; 'do elsewhere! he never will do anywhere; you had better send him to sea than let him stay here to be hanged.'

"'But he did not do so badly at school,' said my father; 'he's not old enough to take away from school yet, and he was never complained of by them, but has had a very good character; he is bad here; well, let it be so; all children are worse at home than they are when they are out.'

"'Then send him out, if that be true,' said my mother-in-law; 'send him out.'

"'Very well, he shall go,' said my father, who was by no

means pleased, yet he knew not how to oppose it after he had been thus nailed, as it were, to an assertion of his own.

"'What will you do with him?' inquired my mother-in-law; 'what do you think he will learn?'

"'I will consider about that: I can't at this moment tell what he is best fit for, but I think school is the best place, after all; however, I will think of it.'

"'He may remain all his life at school—all his life, and what would he be fit for when he left it?'

"However, it never came to a choice of my father's; for he died, and I was still at home. This event happened suddenly. My father died, I believe, of apoplexy—very suddenly, at all events; and I was then left at the mercy of my mother-in-law, who was now a widow, and possessor of everything. My father had not died without a will; but I knew nothing of that at that time—I was a mere child, and did as I was desired. My mother-in-law immediately put me into some situation—a mere menial capacity of some sort or other—where I was compelled to knock about in a manner never contemplated by my poor father; and I verily believe she hoped I should die, and then there would be no one who could dispute the possession of the property with her. The widow would never permit me to come home if she could avoid it; and it was only at stated times that she could do so; and then I had to come as one soliciting a favor. My half-brother in the meanwhile grew up healthy and strong; he was not a bad kind of youth to look at; but he had a bad and vicious temper, which she appeared to foster.

"Time wore on, and I grew up; my half-brother grew up too, and he was a strong hearty youth, and always at home, living in idleness, whilst I worked hard for a scanty living. This was a puzzle. Whatever she had, must come from my father; and if so, was I not entitled, at least, to a share of it? Why should I not be as well off as my half-brother? I determined to see about this; and, having consulted a few of my acquaintances, I found they were of my opinion. I had some rights; and they said it was no more than proper that she should restore them to me. Upon this I determined to question her at once, and ascertain if she had any property. I went and saw her. I inquired how it was she contrived to live as she did. She opened her eyes and stared at me.

"'You insolent puppy!' she exclaimed; 'do you come thus far to annoy me and my son? What do you mean by such a question? Do you want to know what money I have got, that you may break into the place and rob me?'

"'No,' said I, 'I don't. I want to know what my father left, because I have as good a right to it as he or you,' said I boldly. 'He stops at home with you, and is kept in idleness. What more is there in him than in me, that he should be so much favored?'

"'Because his father wished, and I chose he should. But you were the death of your father; your conduct has been so very bad—most infamous. I have nothing but what is my own, and you are entitled to nothing, because you are not the eldest son.'

"'I am,' I replied.

"'You are not, for you were not born in wedlock; you are a nobody.

"I was so enraged and so far forgot myself that I struck her hard in the face, and struck her down; the imputation upon my mother was too great and gross for me to bear; for though I could recollect little or nothing of my mother, yet I had heard her spoken of, and knew well this was a falsehood.

"'Where is my father's will?'

"'Leave the house,' she exclaimed—'leave the house, and never enter it again; if so, you shall be transported for an attempt at murder and robbery, you scoundrel.'

"So violent and so strong was her paroxysm of passion, that I was completely amazed, and could hardly believe my senses. But I left the house, quite convinced that my father had property, but that it was safe in her hands, and that I must first find out what it was, and where placed, before I could do any good. Again I must ascertain if any will had been proved; but to do all this required money, and I had none to spare. I had scarce enough to enable me to secure a decent living. 'Well,' thought I, 'time and attention will do something; if not, she shall not have the gratification of seeing that I want anything. She will glory in my misery and misfortunes, and my half-brother will do no less than endeavor to make my situation worse than it is.' It was strange to say that he had taken a dislike to me, and appeared to hate me in proportion as his mother did. She hated me, I knew, and he derided all my wishes for independence. He dresssed like a gentleman and rode his horse, while I had to attend one; there was all the difference between us that there is between master and groom. We were not in actual contact; he kept clear of that. But I heard he had run through a good deal of money, and he treated her, his mother, very badly. I got away from all the places I had formerly frequented, and endeavored to settle somewhere where I was not known, until time or some circumstances should happen that would make my return to society probable. I often heard of my mother-in-law. She palmed off her own son as the eldest son of my father, and got some friends to avow it; they believed what they said. I had been kept out of the way, and was unknown to most of our family friends. The mother wanted to marry the son well, and then secure a good fortune; but he was perverse. He ran about the town committing great extravagancies, and flagrant acts of dissipation and debauchery. I am assured that his mother did all she could to prevent this; she was an unscrupulous and ambitious woman, and desired to see her son settled in life without any loss of time, because she knew, though she might succeed in keeping me from my own, yet she could not reckon upon any transfer of property; or, at all events, when people stand over a mine, they are always in dread lest it may blow up. This was her state, I am sure, but she had unruly material to act with; she could not bring her son to do what she desired. She had so indulged him, and permitted him to have his own way when he

was younger, he had not now learned to curb his own will, to conform to that of others. Frequent were the calls upon her purse, and she used to lecture every time she was compelled to replenish his exhausted finances; his extravagance knew no bounds, and, while money lasted, there was no means of staying his course. Often did his wily mother instill, or endeavor to instill, into his mind the necessity there existed for a wealthy alliance; she could not tell him all, she could not explain to him her fears or her wishes. She was compelled to keep all to herself, and she had no confidant. All this, of course, did not occur in a day. I had withdrawn myself from them for some time. I had resolved I would see neither, nor would I; and I was, moreover, certain, in my own mind, that something would happen some day that would put me in possession of my own, for such I was sure I was entitled to, for she must have, secreted about her, my father's property, or have a schedule of what it consisted in, though it could not be found. Moreover, my father had papers which were of importance, and without which his heir could not take possession of his property. Well, my mother-in-law was still at her work. Incessantly did she endeavor to induce him to marry, but he would not; and his demands for money became more and more pressing, until there was, I fancy, some terrible disturbance between the mother and son, from which time I have not seen him. But I at length obtained some papers, and I gave them into the hands of a solicitor, who had some dealings with my father, and who knew something about him. I had so much difficulty in convincing them as to where I was; but I succeeded. at length, in doing so; the papers which I possessed somewhat reassured them. They had all heard that my father had a child by his first wife; and his second wife, now his widow, had all along insisted that the other was the child—that there was now no other. Thus he had been palmed off upon the friends of the family, and had taken my place, and my absence had aided the deception; however, there was no help for it now, and my personal efforts were of no avail. It was a long affair; but my claim was good. and apparently I was entitled to some heavy sums of money; I was, in fact, heir to a good property, but the litigation was still to be lengthened. and after some conversation, I have allowed me two hundred a year, until this matter is settled."

"Then," said Captain Morton, "you are, after all, pretty sure of your cause, since you have so great an allowance."

"Yes, I suppose so; and yet I am in continual danger of being unable to prove that I am the eldest son of my father, as well as the will that I feel convinced he left. However, I must now wait until the events turn up, and place me in a yet better position than I now occupy; one great thing to me is, it will place me beyond any fear of a reverse—that is what I should most dread."

"It would be most to be feared, certainly," said Captain Morton; "and contentment with a small certainty, is far preferable to uncertain wealth of any description."

"But suppose we take a walk through the streets, and so change the scene for a time; what do you say, Henry?"

"I am well pleased," said Henry; "but where is this young fellow now?"

"Somewhere about town. I believe he has ill-used his mother very badly, as indeed, he would anybody who gave him a chance of doing so—he's a complete ingrate."

They all now sallied out, and walked through the streets, conversing upon a variety of matters, which happened to become of interest at the moment, the while they were filled with pleasing emotions as they walked and talked. Suddenly they were startled by the sound of some one groaning, and on looking about them, they could discover nothing but what appeared a bundle beneath the doorway of a deserted house.

"What can be the meaning of all this?" exclaimed the captain. "I thought I heard some one moaning, as if in distress or pain; surely it cannot come from yonder heap of rags."

"Indeed; we had better go over and look at it; surely it must be a woman," said Henry Morton.

They all three crossed over the road, and walked toward the doorway, where the object they perceived was now rocking herself to and fro, as though in great pain.

"What is the matter, my good woman?" inquired Captain Morton in a kind tone of her; "what is the matter with you?"

"Oh! God!—oh, God! I am dying!" exclaimed the woman, in despairing accents; "I—I, who have done so much wrong!"

"You! you! who and what are you?" inquired Henry Morton; "what is it that ails you?"

"I am dying!—dying!"

"Well, what can be done?" inquired Henry, turning round. "She is evidently dying from disease. We cannot aid her here at all; she must be carried away to the hospital; we had better get some men to carry her."

"No, no; I'm dying!—I'm dying!" said the woman; "it's no use—it's no use moving me, I am dying! I cannot recover! Ah! I would I could see one whom I have so much injured."

The unfortunate woman gasped for a moment, as she tried to get breath and speak, and then she mentioned the name of the village from which they had all come.

"Good Heaven!" said Jem, the hostler, as he stepped forward, "'tis Dame Strangeways, the mysterious woman that lived in the cottage in the village. How, in the name of Heaven, came you up here?"

"Here?" echoed the woman, "here!—oh, God! I came to find one who is no longer to be found;—but how came you here, Jem? is it, indeed, you?"

"Yes; and that is Captain Morton, and this, Mr. Henry Morton, if you have anything to confess."

"I have much—I cannot die until I do so! My life is now ebbing, but yet I linger to tell the truths I have come to tell. I have sought him, and have not found him."

"Found who?"

"My step-son."

There was a pause of some moments, as if each were considering what was best to be done, when Jem said:

"Where shall we take you—and what shall we do? You had better go to the hospital."

"You had better seek the aid of a chemist—there is one over the way," said Henry Morton.

"I think we had better carry her over there," said Captain Morton, "for we can have the use of the surgery, I dare say, to sit and listen to her confession.

"Yes, yes," muttered the almost unconscious object of their attention; "put me anywhere, but be quick, and hear what I have to say. Let me say all, and then I can die. But now my head is like the hell you speak of—the whirl of phantoms that crowd my brain will drive me mad."

No more was said, but the whole party immediately lifted her up as gently as they could, and walked with her to the doctor's shop, on the other side of the way, into which they introduced themselves and the patient.

"She is dying," said Captain Morton; "but can you not give her some little stimulant? She has something on her mind, which she wishes to confess; and it may be of importance to some one."

The chemist poured out some liquids, which he gave her; after which her eye seemed to look brighter, and her pulsation quickened.

"I feel already better," she said; "I feel stronger. Oh! that my step-son were here, that I might do him justice!"

"Who?"

"My step-son; he whom I have so much injured—he who is now suffering undeserved poverty through my machinations—through my frauds—and all to serve one who has turned out ungrateful for all the sacrifices that I have made. He scorned my advice, and even raised his hand against me. He is worthless and abandoned; but could I expect other treatment? I ought not to have done so."

"Who was your step-son?"

"He was——" replied the old woman, in an audible tone, that was heard by all present; and the eyes of all were turned upon Jem, whose eyes were fixed upon the form of the old woman in speechless amazement, and at length he said,—

"It cannot be!—impossible!—you are not, you cannot be her whom I have looked upon as my bitterest enemy—the woman that my father took as a second wife?"

"What do I hear?" exclaimed the woman, starting up with an almost frightful energy; "you the son of——"

"The same," said Jem; "but have you anything to say that concerns me? If so, say it at once, and let me know if Heaven has decreed that justice shall be done."

The old woman paused, and muttered unintelligibly to herself for some moments, and then, fixing her eyes upon Jem, she said,—

"And is it he? I never saw the least trace—I never looked for it, and now I can see the likeness strong enough and plain enough. I must have been blind—idiotically blind; but no matter—it shall be done—he shall know all."

She again paused, as if to recollect something, and then she began the thread of her narrative,—

"When I married your father you were to me a stumbling-block. I will confess the whole truth to you. It is my wish now to do justice. I cared not how soon you could be got rid of, but took no steps for some time; but endeavored to destroy your father's affection for you. This was a difficult task, and I never entirely succeeded: but he became for long periods, indifferent, and would willingly consent to my demands so long as he enjoyed peace and quietness in return. I got you away from home, and my own child took your place, and, in time became acknowledged by all to be the heir of your father; in fact, you were utterly forgotten by all, and I question, then, if your father was hardly aware of the fact. He never mentioned you for months at a time, save when you came home; and then, as there were words about it, he used to be glad when you were gone away again. He died while you were young, and he left, I found, a will, in your favor, and a schedule of his property, as well as some other papers that would place you in possession of the property. My first impulse was to destroy them; but I altered my mind; I carefully secreted them where I knew they were safe, and I determined that, come what would, I would retain them. I wished my son to be the heir of all your father's property. I thought that if I could secure all that to him, I should forever retain his gratitude, and should have an ample share, too; and should have, in fact, a splendid house, and the complete control of his house. This was my ambition; but I little thought of the untoward disposition I should have to deal with in my son, who was obstinate and self-willed, and who grew up reckless and untoward. I was constantly in fear, lest something or other should turn up to deprive me of my property, or rather that which I had possession of; and I urged him to settle himself—to get married into a wealthy family, as I was sure he could do so, for there were several young ladies of good fortune who would have had him. This was an especially easy matter to him; for every one believed him to be the heir of large property, and he would have had no difficulty in thus securing himself forever an independence, if not a handsome fortune, which he could have done. Well, I thought all this was enough; but it only required one element, and that was willingness to do what I pointed out; but he was obdurate and obstinate. I had not calculated upon his opposition; and, moreover, I had never anticipated his extreme extravagance; profligacy was a matter I had never anticipated. He seemed to have picked up all the profligate and low habits a man could pick up, with extravagance and a brutal disposition. He hunted me for money; I administered to his wants, which I found were without end, and, in consequence, began to limit the supplies of money. Then it was I found out his ingratitude—I then reaped what I had sown. Money, money, was his constant cry; nothing but money was of any use to him, and that he spent in the worst debaucheries. He cared for nothing, and, while the means lasted, for weeks together I should not see him at all. At length I determined

to make one effort more to save him from the infamy into which he was about to sink, and for that purpose I determined to appeal to his sense, and when he next sought me for money, I told him the whole truth—that he was entitled to a bare subsistence, and that one day or other he would be deprived of even that.

"'Why not,' said I, 'endeavor to secure yourself from the destruction which is more imminent in your case than you seem to imagine possible. I tell you what it is—if you do not reform and obtain the hand of some one in marriage, you are lost.'

"I shall never forget his look as he spoke to me.

"'Fool,' said he, 'give me all the deeds, and I'll raise more money than you can get in twenty years. I'll have some signature that will make them all right, and I will live a roaring life.'

"I refused to give him the papers and he struck me down with a blow that laid me insensible. When I recovered, I found myself covered with blood. I wrung my hands with sorrow and in tears. 'This, then,' I said, 'is the reward of my crimes; I have deserved it, but he shall not go unpunished; he shall be stripped of all that I have heaped upon him; I will do an act of justice.' My repentance was bitter and sincere, and I resolved that I would spend my time in finding out my step-son, and restore to him what I had so unjustly detained from him. I would return to him his father's inheritance. I did attempt to find you, but I could not succeed; and then, my passion cooling against my son, I determined to hide myself from him altogether, and give him a chance of repentance and amendment; in the course of years he might do so. I should, at any time, have it in my power to restore the deeds by a dying declaration, which I was resolved I would make, if my son showed any signs of amendment. I was compelled to hide myself from him; for, could he have found me out, he would have gone the length of murder, to compel me to give him money, so that I feared him. After some time, I found my way to this place, where you found me; and I came here to make some attempt to discover you; but my end was approaching, and I could do no more; but should have sunk in the open streets, but for the providential meeting."

"Where are the documents?" inquired the captain.

"Here," answered the old woman, as she presented a small packet, sealed up, to her step-son; "here they are; he for whom I have done so much is unworthy."

"But," said Jem, "you showed me a child under the floor of the cottage. You have never explained."

"Oh, my God! my God! name not that now. That child," she said, after she had somewhat abated in her terror and excitement; "that child I had before I was married to your father, but not very long—a twelvemonth."

"Heavens! but he knew it not?" said the late hostler.

"No, no, he knew it not; but I murdered it—ay, I murdered it, because he should never know it; for I had my eye upon him, and had made up my mind that I would be his wife; therefore

I murdered the child, and fearing to put it anywhere or bury it, I had it always about me—that is to say, concealed somewhere in the house."

"That child was somewhere in the house with my father?"

"The whole time he lived. I had it under the attic stairs, and I wished to have buried it; but yet feared to do so, lest I should cause a discovery in consequence."

The old woman had been speaking very quickly—she appeared to speak in a hurry, as though she had but a little time to say much in. Suddenly, however, she stopped, gave a convulsive struggle or two, and made one or two ineffectual attempts to speak, but could utter no articulate sound, but fell back in the chair, the rattles were loud in her throat, and in a minute she was no more.

"She is dead," said the chemist. "I did not think she would have gone off so suddenly."

"Nor I; but what can be done with her now she is dead?"

"Send her to the workhouse."

"Will you send a messenger? I will pay all expenses," said Captain Morton, "you may be put to. There is my card."

"Very well, sir," said the chemist, who immediately sent his assistant to the nearest workhouse for people to come and fetch her away.

Captain Morton and his brother Henry, in company with the late hostler, Jem, left the chemist's shop with food for contemplation sufficient for the present, as well as for congratulation for the recovery of the papers which were of so much importance to the latter, and which he had before so distant a chance of ever recovering, and that alone made the tenure of his fortune so insecure.

"It is a fortunate occurrence," said Captain Morton, "for you and for the old woman; for had she not died as she did, I don't see what kind of death or end she could have hoped for; it is far better as it is."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

AND now the day appointed for the trial of Sternholde came, and the most intense interest was excited among all classes, to hear what should transpire concerning one whose name, at one time or another, had been heard by every English officer who had been engaged in the great continental campaign, which terminated at the battle of Waterloo.

Of course, the newspapers had been from the first day of the apprehension of Sternholde busy in catering for the amusement of their readers by finding out particulars of the life and adventures of a man, who from a feeling of private revenge, had, no doubt, committed a greater amount of absolute cold-blooded murders than any other human being actually in existence.

His conduct since his committal to prison, had been gloomy and taciturn, except when he fancied he was observed, and then he was seen occasionally to smile to himself, while a bitter and spiteful expression would cross his countenance, as if he yet

should be able to do something to inflict more pain and anguish upon those whom he had already doomed to so much.

On the morning of the trial he appeared anxious and excited, muttering to himself something continually, which they could not make out, although they made great efforts so to do. He scarcely ate anything; and to the efforts of the chaplain to get him into a serene state of mind, he replied now by downright rudeness.

It was a most uncomfortable thought for Mabel, that she would have to come into a court of justice, and confront Sternholde. But she was told that it could not be avoided; for although what he was placed upon his trial for was the murder of the young traveler at the inn, of which she knew nothing, yet it was considered desirable she should identify the prisoner, as the man who had been evidently lurking about the neighborhood, and who had stopped her in the plantation close to the lake near Morton Hall.

This evidence, combined with that of Brolickbones, and that of the late hostler, and last, although far from least, that of sleepy and troubled Tom, it was considered, formed a circumstantial presumption of the guilt of Sternholde, which would be extremely difficult for him to get over.

The avenues to the court were crowded to the greatest excess some hours before the trial took place; so much so, indeed, that it was only by the assistance of the police, and they had to make the greatest possible exertions to accomplish so much, that Captain Morton and his little party could find a way into the body of the court.

It was filled completely, notwithstanding all the efforts of the door-keepers, in the course of a few moments, and then the people who were within shut and barred the door themselves against the pressure from without, exerted by their less fortunate brethren.

A number of prisoners were placed at the bar, and pleaded to different indictments; after which the name of Sternholde was mentioned. At this there was an unusual movement of curiosity among the people. They all turned their heads toward the dock to get a sight of the malefactor.

In about a minute he made his appearance, and the sinister aspect of his countenance struck every one present. He had all the stern, dogged looks of a man whom one would suppose to be capable of almost any crime. He advanced, with a firm step, toward the front of the bar, and then, sweeping off with an impetuous gesture, some of the herbs which were there placed before him, he glanced fearlessly about him. His dress was plain, but somehow, during his imprisonment, he had contrived to attire himself well enough; and he had got rid of much of the abundance of hair which used to disfigure his visage, so that, with the exception of a large pair of mustaches, he presented no striking peculiarity of appearance beyond that of a man with a very forbidding expression of face.

The formalities of the court, as regards the reading of the in-

dictment, etc., against the prisoner, we must not at all trouble our readers with.

Suffice it that he was arraigned for the murder of the young traveler at the Morton Arms, and that when asked to plead, he said, in a loud, clear voice:

"Not guilty."

Then, and not till then, he looked to where the Mortons were all seated, and his eye met Mabel's. Probably he did not expect that her presence would have been at all necessary, but certain it is, that the sight of her was the first circumstance that seemed at all capable of moving him. He avoided, after that one glance, which let him know where she was sitting in the court, looking in that direction, but, with a moody appearance, he leaned upon the bar in front of him.

The prosecuting counsel rose.

"My lord," he said. "and you, gentlemen of the jury,—the statement which it is my painful duty to make to you this day, will, I am inclined to believe, be as decisive as it will be short. The prisoner at the bar can be identified as a man of the name of Sternholde, a Prussian by birth, and one who, from a train of peculiar circumstances, it will be shown to you was just the individual to commit the crime which is laid to his charge. It is necessary that I should briefly, in order that you should be able to come to a just decision upon this most singular and mysterious case, relate to you some circumstances which occurred a considerable time since. From feelings of jealousy, the prisoner Sternholde vowed vengeance, somewhere about the year 1812, against a colonel in the French army, named Rouselli, and it appears—all of which, if it is necessary, I can prove to you in evidence — that he made several attempts upon Colonel Rouselli's life. But not only did he conceive this mortal hatred against Colonel Rouselli, gentlemen of the jury, but, by some most diabolical obliquity of intellect, he carried it out toward all Frenchmen, because one had injured him: and the dastardly and cowardly manner in which he conducted his revenge, was to follow the French army during the continental campaigns, and, after an engagement, slaughter the wounded. Yes, gentlemen of the jury, that was the dreadful, and detestable as dreadful, occupation of the prisoner at the bar. He has been so repeatedly seen by wounded men on the field of slaughter, who have only escaped him by feigning to be actually dead, that he got the name of the 'Battle Fiend,' and many of the soldiers considered him as something more than mortal. It so happened that the battle of Waterloo, as you all know, put an end to the long war, which, for so many years, with so little intermission, had raged on the continent; and, after that contest, the occupation of the assassin was gone. At that battle Colonel Rouselli received a mortal wound. His wife sought him on the battle-field, with an infant in her arms; she fainted, and he, believing her dead, crawled some short distance to where he had heard an English officer speaking, and solemnly intrusted the child to his keeping. There can be no doubt then, whatever, but that Colonel Rouselli died of his wounds. The English offi-

cer was a Captain Morton, and he at once accepted the trust reposed in him, and, like an honorable man, fulfilled it to the very letter, as well as to the spirit. He brought the child to England with him, and in all respects educated it, and had it tended as if it had been one of his own."

"Faith, then," cried Rafferty, when the counsel had gone thus far, "faith, then, you are right there, any way, and the devil a word of a lie. You can go on now, sir, and it's a mighty illigant speech you are making."

"Who is that?" said the judge.

"Is it me you mane, sir? I'm Rafferty Brolickhones, and saw it with my own eyes, sir."

"If you cannot be quiet, Mr. Brolickhones, I shall be under the necessity of having you turned out of court."

"Be quiet," whispered Captain Morton. "How dare you interrupt the court, Rafferty?"

"Oh, bedad, I don't want to interrupt the court. You may go on, all of you."

"Gentlemen of the jury," continued the counsel, taking no notice whatever of Rafferty's interruption, "the family of Colonel Rouselli had no difficulty in hearing of his death on the field of battle, but, to them, the fate of his wife and child was an impenetrable mystery. Captain Morton had no means of knowing that the child had any friends more attached to it than he became himself, and so years passed on, until this infant, which had been committed to his care at that dreadful field of slaughter, became a beautiful girl, admired and beloved by all who knew her. She resided at Morton Hall, with the family of Captain Morton, a residence which is in the immediate vicinity of the village of Morton, which was the scene of the murder which we have this day met to investigate. On the evening immediately preceding the night on which the murder at the Morton Arms was committed, a man, travel-worn, and meanly looking, and attired in rags, presenting all the appearance of being wretchedly poor, made his appearance at the Morton Arms. Neither his looks nor his manners were relished by the landlord; and he was told to take himself away, which, however, he did not do, until he had made an attempt to steal the saddle of the stranger's horse, who was murdered that night at the inn. This man, I have witnesses who can swear to you, was the prisoner at the bar. The gentleman who put up at the inn that night asked some questions of the landlord concerning the Morton family, and although then he and his object were alike unknown, it has been since ascertained that he was sent by the Rouselli family, on a mission to endeavor to discover the lost child of Colonel Rouselli, who they at length heard was taken care of by an English officer, of the name of Morton, or something resembling that name. Gentlemen of the jury, this young emissary of the Rouselli family was brutally murdered that night at the inn, and by a combination of circumstances, which have since been all explained, consistently with innocence, the hostler of the Morton Arms was, at first, suspected of the murder; and it was clear that the actual crim-

inal took some pains to shift the onus of his guilt on to the shoulders of an innocent man, a proceeding always received with the greatest abhorrence and detestation by every Englishman who deserves the title. An investigation took place, ending in the exculpation of the falsely accused man, and the expression of a determination, upon his part, to leave no spot unsearched for the real author of the murder, who, it was strongly suspected, was still lurking in the neighborhood. Several times did this hostler of the inn catch a sight of the man, so that he was in a condition to swear to his identity with the prisoner at the bar, whose object, in the commission of that cold-blooded and diabolical murder seems to have been to possess himself of the documents which the young stranger had with him—documents which proved the name and paternity of Mabel Morton, as she was then called, but whose real name was Mabel Rouselli. Then, gentlemen of the jury, the young lady herself, Mabel Rouselli, was accosted by this very man in a kind of wood, which skirts the estate of Captain Morton, and is consequently likewise able to swear that about that time he was there. She was only saved from some rudeness on his part by the courage of a dog. Then, again, as showing to you, gentlemen, clearly that the game this fellow was playing was to get either possession of Mabel Rouselli, or a large sum of money from Captain Morton, to be allowed to retain her, he actually had the unparalleled assurance to go to Morton Hall, procure an interview with the captain, and offer, by the production of the documents he had committed a murder to possess himself of, that he was the father of Mabel. On that occasion he made his escape, although the captain made an effort to detain him, and then, finding that he could not extort money so easily as he imagined, he adopted the plan of awakening in the mind of the young lady herself all that natural desire which she was sure to feel, to know really who and what she was, and he prevailed upon her to meet him, on the pretext that he could, and would, reveal to her such information. That unhappy meeting through a train of circumstances which I need not detail to you, ended in this young and beautiful girl being carried off by the villain Sternholde and a comrade of his, whom there is every reason to believe he afterward murdered, in consequence of finding him troublesome. From that time nothing was heard of him for a considerable period, and the affair of the murder remained without any further elucidation, because no tidings could be got, either of who the murdered man was, or of his supposed murderer. It has, however, been since ascertained that his name is Adolph Ford, and the man at the bar of this court stands accused of his murder, a charge which it is now my duty to bring witnesses forward to substantiate."

The counsel sat down, and after a slight pause, he directed that our old friend, the landord of the Morton Arms, should be called, and he accordingly, after struggling to get out of the crowd, into which he was fast wedged, made his appearance in the witness-box, looking much as he did when last presented to the reader.

"You are the landlord of the Morton Arms?" said the counsel.

"Yes, sir, I were, and, in a manner of speaking, my lord, and gentlemen of the jury, at this here blessed moment, I may take upon myself all for to say that, leastways——"

"Good God, when are you going to stop?" cried the counsel. "Will you be so good as to answer plain yes or no to the questions which I shall put to you?"

"Well, then, as I was a saying——"

"Witness," said the judge, "pray understand me. I shall be under the disagreeable necessity of at once committing you to prison, if you do not answer, in a plain and straightforward manner, the questions which counsel may consider it to be their duty to put to you. Do you comprehend that?"

"Why, yes, my lord, I——"

"There, that will do."

"Do you remember what guests you had," continued the counsel, "at the Morton Arms on the day named in the indictment?"

"Oh, dear, yes."

"Now, really, could not you say yes, without prefacing it with 'oh, dear'?"

"Oh, bless you, certainly."

"The witness is incorrigible," said the judge. "I see no plan but that of letting him have his own way."

"State, then, whom you had as a visitor at the Morton Arms on the night in question."

"Toward evening there came as ill a looking fellow as I ever saw, and wanted something to drink. He was about as saucy as he could be, because I did not half like to serve him."

"Very well. Now look at the prisoner at the bar, and, upon your oath tell the jury if that is the person, or not, to whom you allude."

The landlord had no doubt in the world that Sternholde was the man, but he considered that under the circumstances, it would be very wrong of him to say so all at once, so he turned and looked at him fixedly, as if only then he had seen him for the first time; then he shaded his eyes with his hands, and shook his head cunningly, from side to side, as he said:

"That's the man."

"You swear that to be the man who came to the Morton Arms on the same night that the young traveler was murdered?"

"Oh, yes, of course I do. I should know him among a thousand. He left, as I thought, and then I saw him again. When the young gentleman came on horseback, he wanted to carry the saddle somehow for him, but he was prevented, and then he had a sort of a row with Hostler Jem."

"Did you have any conversation with the young traveler?"

"Oh, Lord, yes. He told me he had come a long way, and asked me who lived in the neighborhood; and when I told him about the Mortons, he seemed quite pleased, as if he had heard of them before."

"And that night this gentleman was murdered in the house?"

"Yes, he was; all the world knew that. But mind you, Jem,

though he was took up, no more did the murder than I did; I can tell you that."

"I have done with you; your recognition of the prisoner at the bar as the man who made himself officious about the stranger's saddle, is quite sufficient."

"Thank you, sir; if ever you come our way I——"

"Will you attend to me, sir?" roared the counsel for the defense, who was a bully of the first water, and bent upon confusing the witness by violence of manner. "Will you attend to us, sir?"

"Yes; I cannot help it, and should say, by your bellowing out so loud, that all the parish is forced to attend to you."

There was a laugh, in which the judge himself could hardly refrain from joining.

"Come, come," said the counsel, "we don't want any of your remarks. Now answer us, sir. Do any beggars come begging to the Morton Arms?"

"I should think so; of course they do."

"Will you swear that in twelve months as many as one hundred beggars come to the Morton Arms?"

"Well, perhaps they may; that's only two a week."

"Will you swear that two a day do not come?

"The jury will see what the testimony of the witness is worth. He has completely failed in identifying the prisoner, as the intelligent jury will perceive in a moment."

"I haven't done no such thing."

"You have, sir," roared the counsel. "Go down directly."

"Oh, go down yourself, d——d fool."

There was another laugh, and the crier called the hostler, who deposed to having had a fracas with the prisoner at the bar, whom he recognized at once. He likewise fully identified him as the man he had tried in vain to capture in the churchyard.

This witness's evidence was given in so straightforward a manner that the counsel for the defense did not endeavor to shake it further than by saying:

"You were, yourself, accused of the murder of the young traveler at the inn, I believe?"

"I was so."

"And you feel still that, in the minds of some persons, your character may suffer, unless the deed be brought home to another?"

"It is possible."

"You will see, gentlemen of the jury, that this witness is largely interested in procuring a conviction of the prisoner at the bar. You may go down."

"Before I go down," said the quondam hostler, "no power on earth shall prevent me from hurling back in your teeth, with indignation, the base assumption you have given utterance to. The man who, like you, for a few paltry guineas will come forward with all the wicked effrontery of which his nature is capable, to oppress the innocent and screen the guilty, is alone capable of giving utterance to such a diabolical falsehood."

"Go down, witness," said the judge; "the court cannot listen to such remarks."

But the court had listened, and a huzz of applause greeted the hostler as he stepped from the witness-hox.

The next witness called was our old friend, Trouhled Tom, and in vain was his name shouted by the crier within the court, and the officers without it. He could not be found, and the counsel for the prosecution looked ahout him despairingly until he received a note from the hostler, and after perusing it he said:

"If there he any one asleep in any corner of the court, it is probahly the witness, who has a great aptitude to pass his time in that way."

"Please, here's a boy in this corner has been leaning on my back, and snoring this half-hour," said a voice.

"That's our man," said the counsel.

With some difficulty Trouhled Tom was aroused to the necessity of putting in an appearance in the witness-box; and, when he got there, he rubhed his eyes and winked a great many times before he was awake enough to know what he was ahout.

"Now," said the counsel for the prosecution, "do you know where you are, my man? I ask you, because I wish the jury to be convinced that you are wide awake."

"Oh, ah! it's a good deal of trouble."

"Come, come; you have been brought to London to give evidence, and have just taken an oath that what you shall say shall he the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Do you rememher, on the night named in the indictment, being in the farm-yard at the back of the Morton Arms?"

"I believe you. How should you like your stomach trod upon?"

"Stop a hit; we shall come to that in due time. What time did you go there?"

"Oh! I felt a little sleepy, cos I hadn't had anything like a rest for ever so long; people is always, somehow or another, disturbing o' me, so, just about dark, I thought I'd go there, and have a little sleep."

"What happened to you?"

"Why, somebody put his foot on the outside o' my inside, and that rather waked me up, you see. Then I seed a jolly row."

"Should you know the person again?"

"Oh! yes; I never forgets nobody—not I. I should know him —a ugly fellow with a knife in his hand."

"Look at the prisoner at the bar, and tell the jury if that is the man."

Trouhled Tom looked, and then nodded his head, as he said,

"Oh! they've caught you, have they? It sarves you right. You won't tread on people's outsides again when they is trying all for to get a wink o' sleep. You know you killed the young man while he was trying to get a wink o' sleep, and you killed the dog 'cos he was a-trying to rest himself a little. I wouldn't

trust a man with a bad farden as was a enemy to sleeping—that I wouldn't. Oh, Lor'! what a trouble all this here is, to be sure!"

"You can swear, then, distinctly, that the prisoner at the bar is the man who aroused you from your sleep on the night in question?"

"I believe you; only ask him. He knows it well enough. Ask him: he can't deny it. Only look at him. Ain't he jolly ugly?"

"You gave evidence, I believe, before the local magistracy upon this subject?"

"Yes; oh! yes. Isn't that all? I am so precious sleepy, I am. Haven't you done? You know he did it; what's the use o' bothering any more about it? Oh! dear, what a trouble."

"I'm afraid my learned friend for the defense will trouble you more than I have. I have no more questions to ask you."

"Well, sir," said the counsel for the defense, "don't you think that sleep is one of the first things in the world?"

"Of course I do; any fool knows that."

"But I suppose, now, you dream sometimes, eh? I do—all sorts of comical dreams."

"Ah! ah! so—don't I."

"You don't? You mean to tell me you don't dream?"

"No, I couldn't think of taking so much trouble, all for nothing. You may dream, though, if you like. My not liking it ain't no rule, you know."

"Come—come; now you are only joking. You do dream sometimes. You know we all dream, occasionally. Why, no human being sleeps always without dreaming."

"I ain't going to argufy with you; it's too much trouble. Besides, you seem rather a stupid-head, you do."

"On your oath, sir," cried the counsel, in a loud tone, "on your oath, were you asleep or awake on the night in question, when you say you saw the prisoner at the bar?"

"I didn't see the prisoner at the bar."

"You did not?"

"No; I seed him in the piggery at the Morton Arms."

"Come—come; don't prevaricate, sir. On your oath, I say, were you awake or asleep?"

"Neither."

"Oh! neither. Come—come, I thought we should have it. You hear, gentlemen of the jury, that the witness upon whom the prosecution most relies admits that he was neither asleep nor awake."

"What a crammer you are telling," said Tom. "You wouldn't let me go on. You asked me if I was asleep or awake upon my oath, and I said neither, 'cos I wasn't on my oath at all, but on a blessed bundle of straw! I tell you I seed him, so don't bother any more. You don't know what to say, so you'd better go to sleep, and let me go to sleep, too."

"You have been well tutored, I presume. I am inclined to think that you are more knave than fool."

"Well, I don't think you is; for I never come a-nigh such a

jolly old *hass* in all my life. What do you want? Haven't I told you I seed him? haven't I told you he trod *scrunch* on my blessed stomach? haven't I told you he had the knife? Bother you, can't you make yourself comfortable, and go to sleep like a Christian, and let other Christians do so as well?"

The counsel saw that nothing whatever was to be made of Troubled Tom, and thought that the best part of valor was discretion, so he sat down, amid the stifled laughter of every one in court.

The further progress of the trial consisted in the production of papers found upon the person of Sternholde, which were of such a nature as proved they must have belonged to the young traveler at the inn. They related to the history of Colonel Rouselli, and contained the written instructions of the old Monsieur Rouselli, in order to enable his young relative to trace out the abode of Mabel.

Thus a train of circumstantial evidence against him was produced, which was as perfect as any case depending upon circumstantial evidence could be, and every one felt, when the counsel for the defense rose, that he would, indeed, have a difficult task to perform, if he thought he could do away with the strong impression of Sternholde's guilt, which was in the minds of the jury.

The whole conduct of the prisoner was incompatible with an idea of innocence, and it would be a matter of impossibility to strain the circumstances that had been sworn to, into a presumption otherwise than unfavorable to him.

But still, difficult as was the task, counsel was bound to essay it, and, accordingly, with an assumption of confidence and cheerfulness which only deceives the most ignorant spectators of legal proceedings, the already much discomfited counsel for the defense rose to speak in favor of Sternholde, the murderer.

Perhaps curiosity to know what he would say as much influenced all present to preserve the deathlike stillness that they did, as any other feeling; for upon the real question, as regarded the guilt or innocence of the prisoner, no unprejudiced mind entertained a doubt.

The learned person seemed fully aware of the bad impression he had created by the utter failure of the cross-examination to which he had subjected the witnesses for the prosecution, and his first efforts were evidently devoted to the task of doing away as much as he could with that unfavorable impression.

"My lord and gentlemen of the jury," he commenced, "I cannot but be aware that there are great difficulties in the way of an advocate, who rises to defend an individual so painfully situated as is the prisoner now at the bar. I am fully aware, gentlemen, how strong a circumstantial case has been made out against the man who awaits, at your hands, that decision which shall restore himself to the world, or withdraw him forever from it by means of a dreadful and a violent death. But, gentlemen of the jury, it has been held as a principle by our most correct legal authorities, that the more conclusive a case of circumstan-

tial evidence against a man may be, the more careful we should be in arriving at a decision. in order to discover if some of the circumstances which appear to make out so excellent a case, be not accidental. It must be borne in mind that the history of criminal jurisprudence in this country furnishes us with some most dreadful and most melancholy examples of innocent persons being condemned, because some one accidental circumstance has appeared to connect together a host of others, which, without that one, would be disjointed and inconclusive. This, gentlemen of the jury, is the case of my client, who does not attempt to deny that a murder was committed on the night in question at the Morton Arms. We do not attempt, for one half moment, to deny that the murder was a cold-blooded and atrocious deed, but what we do deny is, that the prisoner at the bar was the perpetrator of it. Gentlemen. far be it from me to hint, for one moment, that any of the witnesses for the prosecution are forsworn. No, gentlemen, I do believe and have great pleasure from the fact that I am able to believe so, that those witnesses have stated what they think was the truth. But we know well how fallible is human judgment; we know how amongst the most devoted persons, how amongst persons of the most pious and the most logical intellects, differences will arise with regard to the most simple facts. Gentlemen, my client, the prisoner at the bar, is mistaken for another. He is mistaken for another who was, at the time of the murder, very similarly attired to himself; another who, from the state of poverty to which he was reduced, and the state of rags which he exhibited, might very easily be mistaken for the prisoner at the bar, who was in a similar condition. Now, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, it is rather a remarkable circumstance that the learned counsel for the defense has not thought proper to call a witness who could have proved that, in connection with all these circumstances that are related by the various witnesses, in order to fix guilt upon the prisoner at the bar, there was another individual who appeared, but who has not yet been mentioned. Now, gentlemen of the jury, I am quite sure I need not call your attention to the fact that the character of the prisoner at the bar—that what he is, or what he is not, or what he has been, has nothing to do with the charge, to answer which he this day appears before you. The simple question for your consideration is, and the only question is, did he, or did he not, commit this murder at the Morton Arms? The case, as no doubt the learned judge who sits on the bench will tell you, narrows itself, so that in the end we have no right, whatever, to take into our consideration, whether such and such a man was likely to commit such and such a crime. Did he do it? is the sole question for you. Have you such proof that he did it, that, without any doubt, you can conscientiously condemn him to death? Now, my lord, and gentlemen of the jury. I shall relate to you, without disguise or reservation, the real facts of this most unhappy case. The prisoner at the bar did. certainly, in early life, receive some of the most cruel and unprovoked injuries from the Rouselli family that any man could receive. All the

angry passions of a jealous man were aroused at the object of his fondest attachment being taken from him by a fop of a French officer, who then sneaked away without having the courage to give Sternholde that satisfaction to which he was entitled. Disappointed in all his expectations of happiness in this world, Sternholde did follow the French army, and possibly he may have fought against all Frenchmen, for it is no uncommon thing for a man to take a dislike to a whole nation, because some one individual belonging to it may have inflicted upon him some serious injury. Gentlemen of the jury, my client admits that he did arrive at the Morton Arms on the day named in the indictment. He admits that he came to that neighborhood, to try and possess himself of Mabel Rouselli, in order to better his fortunes by making terms with her friends for her restoration. Years had elapsed, and the revengeful feeling that he had at all times cherished was all gone. He was poor, and was not scrupulous as to the means of gaining a livelihood. Well, gentlemen, he did recognize the young traveler at the inn as a messenger of the Rouselli family. He did, from the care which he saw that young traveler bestowed upon the saddle of his horse, suspect that it contained documents of importance, and he did, he has to me admitted, seek to possess himself of it. He failed, gentlemen of the jury, in doing so; and then after that failure he left the inn, and at that point his connection with the whole of the circumstances that followed really ceased. He made the only attempt he chose to make, or considered it safe to make, to obtain possession of the documents, which he fully believed were in the possession of the young traveler at the Morton Arms. And so, gentlemen of the jury, the unhappy individual who now stands before you, accused of so very serious a crime, was actually making his way from the scene of that crime's commission, and would have escaped all the consequences of his present situation, but for an unfortunate accident over which he had no possible control. That accident, gentlemen of the jury, was the meeting with an old and valuable acquaintance, valued more on account of many scenes which they had passed together, than for any real merits which he, as an individual, might possess. To this man he stated frankly the circumstances in which he was placed, how he was anxious to obtain possession of the papers which he knew to be in the possession of the young traveler, how he had failed to obtain possession of them by fair means, and how disliking the adoption of foul ones, he was wandering away from the spot the same beggar he came to it. This, gentlemen of the jury, is the real state of the case, and such, as I can pledge my professional reputation to you, is the truth. This old acquaintance, however, whom the prisoner at the bar met, at once exclaimed against the folly of leaving such an enterprise unaccomplished. He told the prisoner at the bar that he could procure the papers for him—that he would do so without the commission of any violence, and that if he retraced his steps, and waited for him in the village churchyard, he would most assuredly bring to him the docu-

ments he wanted. Gentlemen of the jury, it is awful to contemplate such an amount of criminality for so poor an object; but there can be no doubt that this individual, not having the fear of retribution in this world, or in the next, before his eyes, did actually, and *de facto*, commit the murder with which the prisoner at the bar now stands charged. And now, gentlemen, I shall proceed to call to you the only witness who can prove to you that, engaged in these infamous transactions, there were two persons of similar appearance as regards costume, and outward appearance of absolute want. Two persons, either of whom might be mistaken for the other, by those who might not pay marked and particular attention to their appearance; and here, gentlemen, it unfortunately happens that the crime is of so serious a character, it is not likely, even if this acquaintance of the prisoner at the bar was in existence, he would come forward to take upon himself the punishment of death to screen another. We cannot expect, gentlemen of the jury, such heroism of virtue, and if we did, we should not get it, for the individual unfortunately is dead. Now, gentlemen of the jury, I consider that I have thrown sufficient doubt upon the guilt of the prisoner, to make you pause before you think of convicting him. You will reflect how truly dreadful a circumstance it would become to yourselves, if, in the course of years, such an amount of doubt was to arise in your minds concerning his guilt, as to make you regret your judgment against him. To spare yourselves from such a possible, perhaps I ought to say, probable anguish of mind, I call upon you to acquit the prisoner upon the ground that I have presented to you. I shall now proceed to call Mabel Rouselli, and you will bear in mind, that although that lady has it in her power to accuse the prisoner at the bar of another offense, namely, her abduction from those who had legal custody of her, that has nothing to do with the charge of murder now brought against him."

The counsel considered that this was a point, and so having had his say, like a man of discretion he sat down, leaving certainly behind him a sort of bewildering impression on the minds of the jury, that what he had said might be true, and probably a great dread of convicting an innocent man.

We before stated that Mabel had been subpœnaed on this trial by both sides, so that the counsel for the prosecution, considering that she could prove nothing but what he had it fully in his power to prove from other sources, declined harassing her by legal examination.

He had not the least idea, of course, of the nature of the defense to be set up; but still, if Mabel now were called, it gave him an opportunity, if he thought proper, of putting any questions to her, as well as commenting upon her evidence.

"Courage, Mabel," whispered Captain Morton to her, as he felt her small hand tremble in his, when she heard the announcement that she was to be dragged forward to take part in the criminal proceedings. "Courage, dear Mabel; you can have no

difficulty in stating that which you know, whether it work for or against the unhappy man at the bar."

"I will not shrink," she said, "I will not shrink—no one should under such circumstances; I will do my duty."

"That is no more than I expected from you," he returned, encouragingly. "Now, Mabel, now—you're expected."

The name of Mabel Rouselli resounded through the court, and when she stepped into the witness-box, and the oath was administered to her, her exquisite beauty attracted the attention of all who saw her. She was pale—very pale for a few moments; but then, as her color gradually returned, there was not a heart in court that did not feel a reluctance at the idea of one who was so young and so beautiful, having to go through so uncomfortable an ordeal.

"I will detain you," said the counsel, "Miss Rouselli, as short a time as possible: but it has become absolutely necessary, for the furtherance of the ends of public justice, that you should occupy the position you now do."

The counsel paused, as if expecting a reply; but Mabel merely inclined her head, and he then proceeded.

"Were you at the period of the commission of this murder, which is now the subject of judicial investigation, at Morton Hall?"

"I was."

"And it was soon after that circumstance that the occurrence took place, which forced you from the care of Captain Morton and his family, to place you under the doubtful guardianship of others in whom you had no confidence—the prisoner at the bar, in fact, I believe by a stratagem, took you from your home?"

"He did."

"Was he alone in that adventure? and, if not, will you explain, as nearly as you can, to the court and to the jury, the kind of associate or associates he had in it?"

"He had one associate—a desperate man, like himself of strange appearance, and ruffianly manners."

"And this man, I presume, in costume presented no flourishing appearance; in fact, I suppose he assimilated somewhat to the ragged aspect of the prisoner at the bar, when first you saw him?"

"He certainly did so."

"I have no further questions to ask of you; perhaps my learned friend for the prosecution may be anxious to say something."

"Not in the least," said the other counsel. "I'm quite content to let you assume all the advantage you can from this circumstance, and have no comment to make. The case is over, unless you have more witnesses to call."

"None—none—there must be an acquittal."

The judge proceeded now to sum up, and spoke nearly as follows:

"The prisoner at the bar stands charged with willful murder —the evidence against him is purely of a circumstantial nature. But where it happens that a positive crime has been committed,

and it follows that it must have been committed by one of a certain number of persons, such a train of evidence as will fix it upon one of this number. although what may be called circumstantial, is quite admissible. It is proved by the prosecutor, and admitted by the defense, that the prisoner at the bar was at the Morton Arms on the evening of the murder. Witnesses likewise, whose testimony I do not see any circumstances to induce us to cast a reasonable doubt upon, swear unhesitatingly to the identity of the prisoner at the bar with the man who must have committed the deed, unless we can jump to the extravagant conclusion that some individual, not the prisoner at the bar, must have taken great pains to surround himself with all the insignia of guilt, yet in reality being guiltless. The story of the counsel for the defense is not corroborated. even in any of the minutest details, and I cannot see how the calling forward a witness to prove that the prisoner, Sternholde, was connected with another in the perpetration of a serious, but yet a minor offense, in any way invalidates the testimony which makes him guilty of a more serious and a major one. Gentlemen of the jury, I shall leave the case in your hands, merely saying, that if you have any rational doubt upon the guilt of the prisoner at the bar, that it will be your pleasure, as much as it will be your duty, to give him the full benefit of such doubt; but. at the same time, gentlemen of the jury, if you feel that the defense set up says more for the ingenuity of counsel than for the majesty of truth—if you feel that such a story as is told by the learned gentleman who has so ably conducted the defense is entirely and totally without the corroboration of evidence, and that it would have been quite possible for the learned gentleman to have concocted that story with the assistance of the prisoner at the bar —it will be necessary for you, unflinchingly, to return a verdict of guilty. Gentlemen of the jury, with these few observations, I leave the case entirely to your decision."

This was so strong a summing-up against the prisoner, that no one in the court could entertain any doubt as to the result. There was that look upon the judge's face, too, when he had finished, which showed that he considered an awful duty would soon devolve upon him. and that he would be quickly obliged to condemn a fellow-creature to a painful and an ignominious death.

The jury looked as solemn and stupid as juries usually do, and the fattest man, who was, of course, elected foreman, shook his head as if there were really something in it.

They turned round in the box to consult, and during that brief period the agitation of Sternholde was most excessive. He clutched the front of the bar till his finger-nails cracked again, and a death-like pallor overspread his countenance.

Then the jury turned round and looked more solemn than before, and the foreman having a great bald head, wiped it with a flaming yellow silk handkerchief, and looked very hard at the clerk of the arraigns, as he said:

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you decided upon a verdict? Do you find the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty!"

Sternholde drew in his breath with a strange, rigorous sort of sound, and the judge put the black cap upon his head, briefly pronouncing sentence of death upon the unhappy man, whose career of crime seemed at last about to be brought to a close by his death upon a scaffold.

CHAPTER XLIX.

In another half hour, Sternholde occupied one of the condemned cells of Newgate. The rapid alternation of adventure that had taken place, was now likely to be brought to an end by one of those awful catastrophes which terminate the career of all great criminals, however long may have been their eareer of crime; and few could boast of a much greater or longer career than the condemned man, and none more deserving of his doom.

Sternholde sat dumb and motionless. He seemed stunned, and yet he was not the man to be bowed down by difficulties of any kind. Danger of the most imminent character he had faced, and even then he was not the man to sink in weak repinings and tearful repentances; he could not do that. He sat for some time thinking of the past, and revolving in his mind what prospect there was of escaping the doom that awaited him so very nearly. He sat, and his dark thoughts were revolving in his mind.

He looked around the cell, and saw the bare walls and the small barred windows. There was nothing in the whole place that gave any hopes; and then he looked at his fetters, as if in utter despair at what seemed insurmountable difficulties.

Sternholde heard the steps of the jailer as he neared the cell for some purpose or other. He doubted not but that he was coming there to him for the purpose of inquiring what he wanted.

He guessed rightly—it was the turnkey. He came to the door, and he could hear the key placed in the lock—the heavy bolts turned, and then the door opened softly upon its hinges, and the turnkey entered.

"Well," said the turnkey, "do you want anything?"

"Nothing." said Sternholde.

"I come to tell you our chaplain will be here in a few minutes to do what he can for you."

Sternholde took no notice of the communication whatever, but sat on the bench, with his eyes fixed upon the stone walls of his prison; and the turnkey, after a few moments, which he spent gazing at the prisoner, retraced his steps muttering as he shut the door:

"He seems rather stunned—but that is nothing new—they are often so, and he is no exception. A St. Anthony's tippet don't agree with his courage or his constitution."

Sternholde, again left to himself, appeared to be no better or different than he was before. He still fixed his eyes upon the wall, and looked long and steadfastly there, but it was evident

he saw nothing; his eye was fixed, but his mind was far away and engaged on other matters; he was absent.

Again the lock turned and the door opened. There were two persons this time, and one said:

"You'll find him in there, sir."

An elderly man entered, and it was evident, from his garb, that he was a clergyman—the prison chaplain.

"My friend," said the clergyman, advancing toward Sternholde, "is there anything that I can do for you? your awful state requires some preparation. Permit me to give you such consolation as a man can receive, who stands upon the brink of eternity."

"I don't want any," said Sternholde. "I am a Catholic."

"Cannot at this moment the distinction of creed be forgotten, and cannot you receive the consolation of the dying from the hands of a fellow Christian? The blessings of God flow upon all alike, Protestant as well as Catholic. Cannot——"

"You can do nothing, sir. My creed forbids me to hold any religious communication with you, else I would; but if you would do me a favor—if you would afford religious consolation to a dying man, do it through one of my own persuasion."

"What do you wish?" inquired the chaplain.

"A priest."

The chaplain paused a moment, and it seemed as if he considered in his own mind the possibility of effecting a change in the prisoner's mind; but apparently he considered the matter hopeless, for he said:

"I will send the governor to you, and to him you must make your request; you will have every facility given you for such a visitor, I am convinced."

"Thank you, sir; I am beholden to you."

"Nay, it is your right. I would I could have granted more, but your position binds my hands. Farewell; and may Heaven show you its mercy."

The chaplain left the cell, and Sternholde was again alone, and then he resumed his former immovable position for some time. But in about half an hour's time the cell door was once more opened, and, on this occasion, the governor himself appeared.

"I came to see you," he said. "I understand you have a request to make respecting a confessor or a priest."

"Yes," said Sternholde, "I am a Catholic, and, as such, if any religious consolation be afforded me, I can only receive it through the hands of a priest."

"Have you any priest in particular whom you desire to see?"

"I have."

"Here is an order; now write the name of your priest upon the back of it, and I will have it conveyed to him by special messenger, so that no time may be lost."

"It is as I wished," said Sternholde; "if you will allow the priest to have instant access to me, I shall be glad, for I have much to say and to communicate to him."

"It shall be done," said the governor, "and anything you require, compatible with the prison regulations, shall at once be awarded to you."

"I thank you; your kindness will be remembered by me. I can but thank you."

The governor disappeared, and shortly after a priest entered the cell. The day was fast declining, and the hour for clearing the prison was at hand; but the priest could not be affected by the general orders. He had the sheriff's order, which admitted him at all hours that the prisoner desired it, save at such hours as people are all left asleep.

"My son," said the priest, "I have come at your sending, to give you such consolation as the state of your soul may require, and be permitted by Heaven."

"You are a Jesuit, are you not?"

"I am an humble follower of the holy order of Jesus," said the priest; "but what of that, my son? Down upon your knees and confess your sins, that I may——"

"Brother," said Sternholde, "I am a Jesuit, too."

"You? And where were you educated?"

"In the Jesuit College at Gottingen. I was there received into the holy order, and made one of yourselves."

"Convince me of this."

"I will. At that time when I speak of, Father Gregory ruled the College, and he and some more proposed that so many of the order should have dispensations to throw off all their vows, save those which bound them to their order, so that they should mix in society the same as other men, to enable them to propagate the doctrines, and to increase the power and prosperity of the order."

"I am one of those monks. I have followed it forward: I have carried my way onward; I have done what I could for the support of the order, even in military circles, where you know they had less power than anywhere else."

"I do know it, brother."

"And, moreover, I have been engaged in military affairs as well; and it is well known among the few at Gottingen that I have advanced the order in a manner that could not be done by other means; and, moreover, I have sown seeds that will in the future produce the more lasting results, because they are slower of growth, in the same manner that the hardest wood is longest of growth."

"True, brother—true; but I must hear some of the secret signs of our order before I can give my entire credence to what you say."

"You are hard of belief."

"It is the rule of our order not lightly to betray our confidence to any one; give me the word——"

"I will do more; incline your ear, for even stone walls of a condemned cell may not hear what I have to say."

The monk inclined his ear toward Sternholde, and the latter bowed toward him, and uttered some words, in a low tone, in

his ear; he paused a moment, and then said something more. The monk started, and looked pale.

"Are you convinced?" inquired Sternholde.

"I am—I am—quite."

"I am your brother in the college, and you are bound by your vow to aid me in my great object; you see it is not yet completed. I call upon you to assist me."

"In what can I advantage you?"

"In providing me the means of escaping from this place. If I once get outside the walls, and unencumbered by these fetters, I will insure you that I will get clear of them. I know this city too well."

"What do you require?"

"Saws and files—the best and most portable you can find."

"I will go and seek them."

"Then hasten, brother, hasten."

The Jesuit arose, and, knocking for the turnkey, left the cell, after the other had seen it was all right, and then secured the prisoner.

"I shall be back again to visit him in an hour," said Father Andrea to the turnkey; "I have a dying penitent to whom I must pay some attention, for our people require our aid at such a time more than any other, for they are pleased to see the face of the priest at such moments; it is a sign that Heaven smiles upon them."

The turnkey said nothing, for he had nothing to say, merely to have expressed his notion of a Catholic, which was, that it was all mere sheer gammon—mere humbug.

The priest returned in less time than he had said, and was again conducted to the cell, and, when about to leave them, the turnkey said to him,—

"I will call you, sir, when the time is up."

"You may call me, and I will tell you if I can leave my penitent; if not, you must not disturb the confession of this man. I will tell you if we are ready—I will come; but woe to you if you disturb me in the performance of my ministry."

"Oh! bless my soul," said the turnkey, "nobody is a going to disturb you; only I sha'n't be within call, and then you will not like to be left all night with the prisoner, I suppose?"

The priest entered the cell, and the door was opened and closed upon him, and when the footsteps of the turnkey were heard to die away, the whole scene was changed.

The priest was busily engaged in filing off the fetters of the prisoner, who held out his hands, while the other worked with good will to get them off. In less than ten minutes they were off.

"Now," said Sternholde, "my hands and feet are free."

"But how will you get out of this place?"

"Through that window. I will saw the bar, and, when that is done, I can get through anything that may interpose itself as a barrier."

"And, as to myself, I shall be detained!"

"You can seize him by the throat and knock his brains out,

before he can make any noise, or give any alarm, and you have only to present yourself at the gates, and you will be permitted to go out at your pleasure."

"Yes, that will, indeed, be the case," said the priest; "therefore, hasten, and I will retard the discovery as much as I can."

There was no time for words; the mendicant, or Sternholde, as we will call him, aided by the priest, soon removed the bars, and then he got through into a kind of narrow yard, near which was fixed a ladder. In an instant he ascended, and after much danger he got to the roof.

Workmen had been making repairs, and thus the ladder had been left, but it was believed in a secure position.

In the meantime, Sternholde had scarcely got out of the cell before the turnkey came and knocked at the door, saying:

"Time is up; are you ready, Mr. Andrea What's-your-name? are you ready to leave?"

"Not yet," replied the monk, who sat muttering some prayers, which the turnkey thought was giving absolution, and listening to catch the words, but, finding that he could not, he went away without having his curiosity gratified, and left Sternholde to escape, if he could.

He met with greater difficulties than he had anticipated, and more than once he gave it up as a bad job, and thought of returning, or of throwing himself from the summit, and thus put an end to the life struggle he was undergoing.

The turnkey came again and again, for the third time, when he became impatient, and entered the cell, and before he could express his surprise at the disappearance of the prisoner, he was seized by the throat, and the monk, grappling with him, endeavored to throw him back upon his head and stun him; but the first surprise over, the turnkey, in his turn, grappled with his antagonist, and being the stronger man, the priest was thrown down, and then an alarm was given.

Several turnkeys came running in, and the priest was quickly secured in irons; the whole prison was alarmed, and a search was commenced in a very short time.

It was surprising how quickly they detected the route of the mendicant, and in a few minutes more they were beside him before he was aware of it, for all his faculties were concentrated upon the means of getting safely out of a position of the most imminent peril, which he had got into in his endeavors to escape.

He was quickly seized and thrown down and secured afresh with irons, despite his most vehement and desperate struggles.

"We have you safely enough now," said one of the turnkeys, "and it's quite useless to attempt to struggle; you had better take it quietly, like a man."

Then came the fierce reply; the denunciation of the whole human race, the frantic attempts at self-destruction, the shout and laughter and the exultation in the admission that he had killed hundreds of men; that he had baffled them all for years,

and that they could not count more days in their lives than he could count lives he had taken.

The men were all astonished at the occurrence, and the governor ordered him to be taken and placed in a strong room, with extra irons, and two men with him.

His ravings were terrific, and men did not believe in the horrible tale he told of his own criminality, but looked upon it as a species of frenzy or madness, during the continuance of which, visions of all that was dreadful visited him, and he believed himself a monster of crime even greater than they took him to be.

CHAPTER L.

CAPTAIN MORTON thought it prudent, as, indeed, it was, to take Mabel away as quickly as he could from London, and spare her all the unpleasantness that was likely to arise from the knowledge that any man, however well deserving he might have been of his fate, should suffer the extreme penalty, in whose apprehension and punishment she had even been forced into becoming the cause. This, Captain Morton rightly judged, would give her great pain, and a shock to her system that might take time to recover from.

He, however, resolved to travel slowly, and taking his own time in doing so, so that the fatigue should not he felt, either by himself or Mabel, whose trouhles and adventures had already given her a severe shock, as well as to render her mind susceptible of any sudden emotion of alarm, and moreover it would give time to send Rafferty Brolickbones onward and prepare the Hall for their reception, and to acquaint Mrs. Morton with their coming.

What a change had taken place since last they were all assembled in the Hall; how much had been done, endured, and discovered since that time! What an epoch had it been! There were events enough to fill volumes, crowded into so short a space that the mind has scarcely time to take cognizance of them. But now they were likely to end, and the even tenor of their former life was likely to return, and the happiness was like to be continued, which had heen so suddenly and rudely hroken in upon. The future was a smiling prospect, the past a darkened picture, in which were many dangers which were almost hidden, and from which escape was difficult.

Now, however, beside the captain, and in her altered position, she felt all the confidence and happiness she was capable of enjoying.

Rafferty Brolickbones was well pleased to travel afterward at his own pace, which, had it at all met his own desires, he should have flown home, he said, on the wings of a carrier-pigeon; hut Rafferty was not angelic enough to be treated with a pair of aerial flappers, and he couldn't fly; and, moreover, it was so incongruous, that it was difficult to imagine how he could, in a future state, even think of becoming a cherub or seraph.

However, Rafferty pushed forward with all the haste he could,

as if heaven and earth depended for their existence upon the speed with which he could reach Morton Hall. At length he did make the best of his way to the village. This was the last stage; and then after that he could hear no more delays, but he hastened on foot to the hall, and in an instant he rushed into the parlor, where Mrs. Morton was seated.

"Hurrah, ma'am—hurrah! The lost found! Oh, bedad, mistress, dear, have ye heard the news?"

Mrs. Morton looked up in amazement at the sound of the well-known voice of Rafferty Brolickbones; hut her surprise was by no means lessened when she beheld the heated face and the excited accents of the faithful serving man: for he was, as some of the servants afterward declared, like a harrel of yeast which had forced the hung out, and was working its way out of its place of confinement.

"Why, Rafferty, have you come?"

"Oh, hedad! haven't I; the captain, Mr. Henry, and Miss Mabel and all. Yes, here we are, or soon shall be, which is all the same, or next to it. Oh. bedad—hut——"

"Stop, Rafferty. Where is your master, and Mabel, and Henry—where are they all? Tell me that, Rafferty."

"Indeed, ma'am, they're all on the road; and I was sent forward to prepare you all against their coming. To get the old Hall in proper order; to get the people together; and won't we have eating, and drinking, and dancing, and shouting, and guns firing?"

"They are not likely to he here to-night?"

"Oh, no, ma'am—oh, no. They came down very slowly. They had been so fatigued and worn out in London, and Miss Mabel had been so ill-used, so locked up and put about, that I wonder she is a living sowl at this moment."

"Poor thing—poor, dear child! The captain wrote to me, and informed me of a great deal; hut he said there was much more to be told than he could possihly find time to write."

"Ay, indeed, he may say that. ma'am. He wouldn't get it all into a hible, if he were to try. I'm sure it'll take a blessed time to tell it. It'll go hack from Easter to Easter and a Whitsuntide over, I'll warrant."

"Well, well—you had better go and get some rest, and some refreshment, since you have nothing more to tell me, and, as I know they are well and coming, I must rest satisfied."

Rafferty, upon this, went into the servants' hall, where he became an object of great admiration. The servants collected around him in great numbers, to hear all he had to relate, which he did, never suppressing anything that came uppermost in his mind, which greatly increased their wonderment and admiration.

"Lor', Rafferty!" said one.

"Did you, indeed, Rafferty?" said another. "Why, you are a regular fire-eater, you are, to be sure."

"Ay, bedad, so I had need he, for there was no chance of getting away; it was hard work at such a time. Queer work it was over the top of the tiles, I tell you."

"Oh, ah! to be sure. Were you on the tiles, Rafferty? But that was very wrong, you know."

"Oh, you don't know that London, else you'd know it is a sea of tiles. Besides, an old soldier would follow an enemy anywhere, and there is no mistake about it. But come, we are going to have a feast. Get the people together—get them together. I've got the captain's orders. We'll have a cup to begin with; there's a barrel of ale on tap, we'll finish that now, and we'll have another to-morrow—one tapped on purpose."

There was a great shout given by the servants at this, and some others came in at that moment, and a scene of joyous riot and disorder ensued instanter.

The exuberance of Rafferty Brolickbones' spirits was so great, that when the beer was drunk out, he got upon the cask, and executed an Irish jig upon the end of it, with such right good will that he knocked the head of the barrel in, and he disappeared suddenly, to the great joy of the spectators, some of whom thought he had done it on purpose. However, he soon rose again, and convinced them it was quite an accident, for the edge of the barrel had taken the skin very cleanly off the end of both his nose and chin, as they disappeared in the barrel and close to its edge.

* * * * * * *

There was a beautiful arbor in the garden, and one that had been a great favorite with Mabel. It was impervious to the eyes, and was a cool, sequestered, and sweet retreat in summer.

But who are the occupants now? They are lovers—the volumes of unspoken love that beam from their eyes stamp them as the happiest of the happy. They seem to have given up the restraints of ceremony—they are accepted lovers. And who are they?

They are too well known to the readers. Harry Morton and Mabel. In a quiet moment he had followed her to her favorite bower, and there declared, fully and impassionedly, the love he felt. He knew she loved him—she admitted it; and, moreover, he had induced her to name the day, and, as he snatched a kiss from her lips, and as they rose to leave the bower, he said:

"Then, this day month, dearest Mabel, will see me one of the happiest men that the earth contains. Between this and then, how shall I not pray for the time to fly, and, after that, may it linger long—ay, longer than any impatient lover ever knew it to do so, when it stood between him and the object of his wishes."

CHAPTER LI.

The fate of the wretched but pre-eminently guilty Sternholde was fast drawing to a close. After the recent attempt to escape by means of the priest, double care and caution was observed. He was placed in another cell, and as his frantic efforts were directed against himself as well as others, he was secured

against any such attempts being made successful, and a strait-waistcoat was the result.

He would not submit to anything, save upon compulsion. The priest had been denied access to him; the chaplain of the prison endeavored to reason him into a better frame of mind than that in which he was then in, but it was useless; he refused all intercourse upon religious topics, save to scoff and laugh at them.

"Bring me none of your coffer-loving priests, or table-fed parsons, or your pensioned dignitaries, who league together to enchain the world, and to gather together the loaves and the fishes."

This language, of course, did little to appease the incensed prison authorities, and the chaplain was especially scandalized, and his calling entirely disgraced by such conduct.

However, he did all he could to reason with him; but it was unavailing, each new attempt being met by a corresponding increase of scorn and derision.

Thus would he turn away the endeavors of the good man with the utmost contempt; and yet there was a something of noise and boast in all this; he required to hear the sound of his own voice to assure him, and to cover his own weakness, and to aid in giving him that appearance of courage of which he boasted.

At length the day before the execution arrived, and the governor and the chaplain visited him.

"Sternholde," said the former, "there is no hope for you—you must die to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" echoed Sternholde.

"Yes; your time is now short. Consider well how you had best employ it, for opportunities now lost are irrecoverable. Time soon, with you, will cease to be."

"Away, away; you cannot take away my life—'tis charmed."

"If you can think so you are in a lamentable state of error," said the clergyman; "you cannot bear a life charmed against the penalty of the law; never was such a thing heard of, or dreamed of, depend upon it. You have your faith founded upon a rotten basis; be warned in time; the hours are few. Oh, repent; seek for that mercy which you seem never to have shown to man, and may you find Him more merciful than his creatures."

"When must I die?"

"To-morrow, at eight."

"So short a time?"

"It has been long; that is, quite as long as usual; and you must have known that there was no chance of mercy being shown you—you could have none to expect."

Sternholde said nothing, but leaned back against the cell, and seemed lost in thought. The clergyman thought he might be yet induced to change his mind, that the certainty of death, so near at hand, would work a change in that man's mind, and stood hopefully in expectation that some such occurrence would take place, and be indicated by some expression on his part.

But nothing but sullen silence and a wandering eye was observable in him. Then, after having awaited patiently for some time, the governor said to him, in a kindly tone:

"Can I do anything for you, Sternholde? Is there anything at this moment that can be done for you, or that you would desire?"

Sternholde shook himself, but answered not.

"Think," added the worthy chaplain, "think of the awful moment so near at hand; think upon the little time you have to make your supplications to the throne of grace—let me beseech you."

"Too late—too late," said Sternholde.

"Not too late for repentance. Be true; say but the word, and I will sit up with you all night. I will not leave you till that awful moment arrives when you quit the world forever."

"Away, away; none of your hated jugglery here. I am what I have been, and a change now would be impossible; but it will advantage me nothing, and I will not consent."

"But it would advantage you something hereafter."

"I'll have none of it."

"Wretched man! hour after hour will your courage fail; hour after hour will death seem more terrible and more fearful; and, without the consolation of repentance, and the promises of Heaven to aid you, your last moment will be one of bitterness and gall. Think again—think again, if there can be no hope of your repentance. Time is short—fearfully short; yet, to those who ask it with a contrite heart, the mercies of Heaven are surely promised."

"Ha, ha, ha! Leave me, I have heard enough of this. You may frighten timid hands, but I have had enough of your cloth; away, away, I have done—leave me to myself."

The chaplain and governor looked at each other with sorrow on their countenances; the former whispered:

"He is, I fear, a hardened sinner; but what an end!"

"His courage," said the governor, "is only assumed, and not real. I cannot believe he will be the man to hold out in this manner to the end—he is much too furious."

"He is, indeed, a wretched man, but I fear further offers would be unavailing; and yet it is dreadful to see him die thus; but there is no help for it."

"None," said the governor, as he quitted the cell, leaving the wretched Sternholde to all the horrors of his fate.

When alone, Sternholde looked around upon the cell in which he sat; not a single ray of hope beamed from any quarter: no possibility of escape presented itself, and, had there been plenty, he would have been unable to have taken advantage of it, since he was so secured that he could do nothing. His limbs were not at liberty, lest he should commit some act of self-destruction.

"I am indeed cooped up here, and there is no chance of getting out of this. I must stay and die. Die, eh? Well, I have had a long career; I have been successful in many things, but this has been fatal to me. I would I had never attempted it; and

yet it was a bold game, and, had it been successful, what a result!"

The wretched man endeavored to find consolation in the reflection that it would last him but a short time, for the knowledge that he must in a few hours die—it was a dreadful knowledge—kept forcing itself more strongly upon his mind, and the more dreadful did it seem.

However, the hours passed by, and the evening came. His meals were brought him, but though he drank, he ate but little. He seemed feverish, but not hungry. His eyes became red, and his whole appearance disordered.

At night the turnkey came in to sit up with him. It was the custom then to do so, and he felt this was an annoyance to him, for it forced the hateful knowledge upon his mind that he was compelled to die in a very few hours.

"What is the time now?" inquired Sternholde, suddenly speaking, for the first time, to the turnkey who had to sit up with him all night long.

"A little after six."

"And to-morrow at eight I am to die?"

"You are," replied the man. "There is scarce fourteen hours before you cease to live," said the man.

Sternholde felt himself weak; he knew not how it was, but a sudden weakness seized him; he felt a sinking at his heart, as if his strength was not enough to enable him to retain his seat. Indeed, it seemed as if he were about to sink through the earth, such a dreadful sense of his position now came over him.

He staggered, rather than walked, to his pallet, and there lay down; and as he did so he thought he heard some confused noise in the courtyard. He thought there was the sound of workmen—of hammers and hammering—and the dreadful truth flashed across him.

"What—what noise is that?" he inquired of the man who sat up with him during that night.

"They are erecting the scaffold," was the man's reply.

Sternholde felt a shudder creep over him, which he tried to suppress, and which he could no more stop than he could have carried himself suddenly away from that dreadful place.

Slowly passed the hours, and as they passed, decreased the short span of life that remained, and with it fled much of that courage or scorn of death that had served to support him during his previous career.

The sounds of the workmen became painfully distinct, and he could hear—nay, almost feel, every nail that was driven, and every beam that was raised. He could not bear to listen to these sounds, and yet his mind was chained down to them, and he could listen to nothing else—he could think of nothing else.

How painful it was, the sweat that bedewed his brow alone could testify. The man that sat up with him alone attempted once or twice to speak to him, but finding he was not inclined to talk, said no more, though now Sternholde wished he would speak to him, but he could not induce him to do so. He could

not speak himself--he could not utter a sound—his tongue clove unto his mouth, and he could not say one word to him.

He lay motionless—no sound was heard, save those made hy the workmen, and the solemn sound of St. Paul's Cathedral clock, and some of the neighboring church clocks which came at that dead hour of the night with awful distinctness upon his ear. Little did he do, save count the hours and the quarters as they chimed, and think how fast life was fleeting from him.

The hours came and went with frightful rapidity, and he found morning dawned long before he would have believed half the night could have been passed; hut he had counted the chimes and the strokes, and he knew it was now past five.

He yet lay on his pallet; he seemed to have no strength left, not even to rise. Could death be so near at hand—could he be going to die? Yes, it was too certain; there were all the busy preparations being made for his execution.

The noise of the workmen proceeded as their labors neared their termination. The morning, too, was cold and wet, the rain fell heavily, and London was enveloped in misty gloom.

The authorities in the prison now came and went; doors were opened and shut, and at length the chaplain and governor again entered the cell to see the wretched man.

"What can be done for you, Sternholde?" inquired the governor.

"Save me," said Sternholde.

"Nay, I cannot do that; no earthly power that can do so will be exerted for you. Let me beg of you to employ your last moments in endeavoring to make your peace with Heaven."

"The moments are few and short," said the chaplain; "make the most of them, and beseech the throne of mercy for pardon; do not die in this horrible state—seek mercy where mercy can be shown."

"You shall not frighten me," exclaimed Sternholde, "hy all your preparations, hy all your jugglery. I will have nothing to do with you; I will not acquiesce in one single act that goes toward aiding in my own death."

The governor and chaplain exchanged looks, and then quitted the cell. The time passed hy, and soon came the sheriffs and all the officers connected with the occasion.

A hreakfast was provided in the press-room; hut all that Sternholde could take was a cup of tea, and so great was his agony that he bit a piece out of the cup.

The ceremony of pinioning was about to be performed, and the irons knocked off, hut the moment they made the attempt to place the rope round his arms and hands, he threw himself on them, exclaiming, as he struggled with them,—

"I will not die this death; you shall not drag me to the scaffold; I will not tamely suhmit."

However, the men secured him, for his strength was too far gone to be ahle to maintain any struggle with them; hut he refused to stand; he could hardly do so, and he trembled excessively at the near approach of death, and talked incoherently and rapidly; but he was scarcely audible,

The moment arrived when the procession was about to be formed, when the various officers of the prison approached him; but he did not wish one of them farewell.

"I will not go," he muttered; "no, no, I will not go. You may drag me, hut you shall not take me to die if I can help it. I will resist; you may murder me, hut you shall not do it cheaply."

The wretched man was too far gone; he tremhled while he struggled, and at the same time the officials found but little difficulty in carrying him along the passages.

The chaplain began to read the burial service, and the procession moved forward; the sound of St. Sepulchre's church bell came heavily on the ear, and not a sound was lost; Sternholde was carried forward, faintly struggling in the arms of those who bore him along.

Abject cowardice seemed to have come over him, and he could not think of death with calmness. They now came upon the platform; Sternholde was supported to the drop.

It rained fast, hut there was a dense mass of people, who saluted him with a groan. He had pulled off the cap which had been drawn over his face, and he yet struggled with his supporters more violently, as the moments grew shorter, and the mob hooted and howled dreadfully; the rain came down heavily, the dismal tolling of the bell came more dreadful and more distinctly than ever.

The prenarations for the execution were complete, so far as the prisoner was concerned, and then the signal was given, and the wretched man, by some misplacement of the rope occasioned by his struggles, swung to and fro, horrihly convulsed, for the space of one or two minutes, notwithstanding the executioners hung to his legs, and thus added their weight to his.

After a short and sharp struggle he was no more, and the spirit of the wretched culprit was launched into the dread realm of eternity.

CHAPTER LII.

THERE was one subject of anxiety connected with Mabel's history, which her friends had kept from her, because thev feared no satisfactory solution to the mystery would be found.

This was as regarded the fate of her mother, and from all the authentic particulars which the Morton family could gather, although there was every presumption that Marie Rouselli was no more, yet no authentic record of her death could be ascertained.

They well knew that to doubt upon such a subject would be to produce in Mabel's mind a great amount of anguish, and therefore was it that, with a pardonable duplicity, the Mortons had never hinted to her a doubt but that her mother had expired upon the field of Waterloo.

Captain Morton, however, had made it his special business to see the chaplain as well as the governor of Newgate, and the sheriffs, in order to beg of them, if an opportunity should pre-

sent itself, to get from Sternholde some particulars with regard to the fate of her whom he had once pretended to love, and the fact of whose becoming the wife of another seemed to have awakened all those angry passions which he possessed, and which otherwise might not have made so violent an exhibition of themselves.

Captain Morton thought it possible that if he were watched closely, some moment would arise when a thought of the dreadful doom that awaited him might hanish some of the sullenness of his disposition, and make him communicate it.

The question was put to him on several occasions, and no douht he at once concluded that it was dictated hy the Morton family, against whom he entertained the most unextinguishahle hatred.

His reply was to the following effect:

' I do know the information which is sought. Spare my life, and I will tell it."

He was, of course, informed that that was impossible, and then he declined uttering another word upon the suhject.

A few days after his death, the governor of the prison was informed by one of the minor officers, to whom had been given in charge the garments of the culprit, that a small package of papers had heen found in a concealed pocket in the breast of his coat.

"Bring them to me," said the governor.

The papers were hrought, and the governor, remembering the request of Captain Morton relative to them, dispatched them at once to that gentleman hy post.

"Well," said Captain Morton, "we will see what these papers consist of, and whether they throw any light upon the fate of the unfortunate Rouselli."

So saying, he undid the bundle, and began to examine them one after another, but they were of an entirely fragmental character, and apparently written at moments when the writer had committed some deed of a more than usually diabolical character, which seemed to have excited a degree of pleasure that could have only been felt by one lost to all sense of humanity, and urged on by some deep-seated passion, which knew no satiety.

Captain Morton took the first of these papers, and so on, reading them one after another, lest he should miss any one that was important to the object he had in view. The first ran as follows:

It is done! My first act of retribution—nay, of vengeance, if you will—has been performed upon my French enemies. To no one of that hated race will I ever show mercy; hut pour out their hlood in all places, and under all circumstances, till as much blood shall be shed as would deluge the earth, and redden it till the day of judgment.

It was after my first battle, while fighting in the Russian service against the French, who have my immortal hatred, that I have done this, my initiative deed.

When darkness came over the field of battle, then I stole out, and wandered over the sanguinary spot, to see what French blood I might pour out upon the yet reeking plain. The first I met was a wounded officer.

"Save me!" he said. "I am an officer, and am rich, and can pay you well for your service. I am dying for help."

"What will you give me?"

"A thousand francs," he replied.

"Not enough—not enough."

"Two thousand."

"Not enough—not enough," I again replied, and was about to raise my sword to plunge it into his breast, when he screamed out:

"Five thousand—any sum I am possessed of! I give you my sacred honor that it shall be paid you. Oh, save me—save me! I see you will. Thank you—thank God!"

"Frenchman," I replied, "know that you have met the enemy of your race; one who hates you for your nation. I have received wrong at their hands, and all whom I meet I shall slay, destroy, and pour out their blood without remorse. Take your death from my hand."

As I spoke I plunged my sword into his breast. He gave a sudden, convulsive start, and then he sank back with an expression of agony on his countenance.

The same evening I destroyed no less than fifteen Frenchmen, who fell beneath the point of my sword—they fell to rise no more. They might have lived, had assistance been offered them; but I killed them. The French deserve this retribution; they are ruthless, and have no mercy themselves—let none be shown them.

The last man who fell was an officer of rank. I know their hated tongue well. I know how they place their watches and their guards—they are familiar to me.

The night was dark, pitchy dark, and I left our encampment and went over to the enemy, at the same time being acquainted with all that appertains to their mode of encampment; at the same time they would have let me pass, had I presented myself in the character of a deserter.

I stole into their camp, and stood by a tent that was but dimly lighted, and I heard two officers conversing together. I listened to them, and heard the following words pass,—

"Well, Lavolt, I am glad it is no worse. You will be well in a week or two at the furthest. I was afraid, when I saw you carried by, that you might have been mortally wounded."

"I thought I was done for," said Lavolt; "but I think I shall get over it, though my wound looks bad."

"The surgeon told me the reverse of all this. He said, for all he could tell to the contrary, you would be well enough to resume your duties in a fortnight."

"I hope I may, for the Lady Julia's sake."

"It was for her sake I made such particular inquiries concerning your wound. Had it been worse, I would have written to inform her brother."

"Thank you; but I now hope that I shall not be compelled to resort to such a proceeding. She will be quite affected when she hears that I have been wounded and have got over it."

"She will. I am sorry, too, Lavolt, that you ever entered the army. It is not the place for a man of your prospects, your hopes, and your wishes."

"You know the cause. But why should I not do as well in the army as any other, though I have ten thousand francs a year?"

"Because you are too fond of domestic happiness. You have not the ambition of a soldier."

"Do you doubt my courage?"

"No; if I did your conduct to-day would teach me to respect it. But I know you have not only courage, but capacity also. You have a home—a beautiful girl, and have every prospect of all the happiness you could wish."

"I have."

"And you entered the army in a fit of spleen."

"I did."

"And you think because you have done your duty that that will in time make you a general. Well, you will find that it will not; and though a lovers' quarrel can make a soldier, it cannot make a general of division."

"You are joking with me."

"Not I; but I must seek rest for myself. I have gone through much to-day. Good-bye. May you rest well. I will see you in the morning, and hope to find you better."

"Adieu!" said the wounded man.

The other came near the opening of the tent—I was standing close by it. The moment I saw him advance, I drew my sword, and passed it through his body, and he fell to the earth without a groan.

I stepped over the body, and entered the tent. The wounded man had turned in his bed, and lay with his back toward me. I stepped up to the bed.

"I thought you had gone," he said to me, without turning.

"I am just come in," I said.

My voice caused him to turn round. There was so much of bitterness that he seemed terror-stricken.

"Who are you?" he inquired, "and what do you want?"

"Do you see this weapon?" said I, as I held up the sword before his astonished eyes.

"I do—help!"

I permitted no other sound to pass his lips, for with one blow I cleaved his head in two. Voices were heard outside the tent—I put out the light, and ripping an opening in the tent with my good sword, I quitted it as others came in.

Again did the sun set upon another bloody field, over which lay the strewn corses of mangled men and beasts, who lay in confused masses—the wounded entangled with the dead.

It was here I had been seen fighting with all the spirit I could. It seemed to astonish our officers. The men looked at me in

awe—they all declared I had a charmed life, that many a Frenchman had leveled and fired, but they never hit me.

They rushed on to the attack with me, and many a Frenchman fell by my efforts. I hate the cursed nation to a man.

The evening is come, and my brother officers are all reposing after the cares of the day; but what are they to me? It is fine recreation—enjoyment—pleasure to kill Frenchmen; it is my delight. Nothing on earth can give a calmer feeling to my mind!

There lies a French officer—he has a broken limb, and yonder are the relief parties. He must never see them, save to feel in the moment of death how horrible is the pang of disappointment at such a moment as this.

"Yonder," said I to him, "come the relief parties."

"I see—I see—thank God! Oh! my leg—it is broken! What agony! But they are off?"

"No."

"Will you call, stranger? my throat is parched. I can hardly draw in breath! My mouth is incased with a crust."

"I am the destroyer of your race! Take your death from my hand!" and I plunged my sword's point through his body, just below the left breast.

On the same evening, as usual, I stole into the enemy's encampment, and made my way from tent to tent, destroying four or five, until I came to another, when I again heard the sound of voices as in deep conversation.

"You think our plan of operations to-day, then, not the best that could be adopted?"

"Certainly not."

"And what do you deem grounds sufficient to enable you to say so?" demanded the first.

"Because it has been a mere series of assaults, one mass of men thrown upon another, until they are projected forward and another being compelled to retire. Nothing but fresh men, fresh regiments—no matter what amount of human life may be sacrificed, the emperor thinks not of that."

"No; but we have gained a victory."

"We have, we have; but our laurels are dyed deeply in the gore of our own people."

"Granted, and so must all such victories."

"That is incontestible. But France must in time cease to pour out such countless numbers to fight her battles; the enemy has lost a battle, but they will be ready to fight again in a week. Each new victory appears to beget us new enemies, and we must go on increasing in strength, while, in point of fact, we are decreasing in each battle by the loss of our oldest and best soldiers."

"Well, well, I will say no more now; the time will come when you will be convinced of the fallacy of all these dismal forebodings and opinions. Adieu."

"Adieu; may you be preserved against the fate of many a friend of ours who has fallen this day."

"But covered with glory."

"Adieu; it is so."

The speaker, who was a staff officer, came out of the tent, and as he did so he faced me. He started, for I was in the Prussian uniform; he laid his hand on his sword.

"Sacre! whence came you?"

I pointed upward and said, while his teeth seemed to chatter, and his whole body shook with fear—

"I am the avenger; I hate your race."

As I spoke I thrust my sword through his body, just as his friend, hearing the words he had spoken, came up and caught him in his arms.

He stood still for a moment, and seeing his friend dead, threw the body down and drawing his own sword, and shouting to some one to aid him, he rushed on me.

This was needless, for my sword was drawn, and as he came on I transfixed him with my weapon just below the breast, and its point came out at the back-bone behind. He fell dead and never spoke, but hearing a disturbance, I walked into the tent, and there saw a Frenchwoman; she lay on a bed with an infant in her arms.

"Curse of mankind," I muttered, "and belonging to an accursed race, never will I spare French blood; you die as others have died before you. Curse! curse! curse you!"

The female looked up; but a feeling of horror came over her, and she could not speak. I raised my sword, a shriek came from her lips as I plunged it into her breast and the warm blood gushed up into my face.

I should have destroyed the child, but there was no time for that. I cut my way through the tent, and had scarcely got on the outside when others entered it on the other.

There was an alarm given, and parties were sent out everywhere. The death of the staff-officers in the midst of the camp, with the wife of one of them, was a matter they could not very well account for.

I escaped to my quarters, after destroying a few sentinels, upon whom I came unawares.

The day is over; many men lie slaughtered; the French are often beaten, but their officers preserve the appearance of victory. The indecision of ours often happens through the ill effects of councils of war, that limit the operations of men who should be free in their choice of alternatives, but which is not allowed them.

We were presumed to have had the worst, and yet our commanders are ready to fight to-morrow. We are encamped within a mile or two of the French, and I have walked over the field of battle. The French usually conceal their loss from people when they can; but it never reaches the papers, they are suppressed, and none know of it, save the officers, and they dare not speak out respecting it, even if they would.

This day had been a terrific one, and men fell by hundreds. I was among the thickest of the fight. I do not say so to gain applause, for who shall applaud me; and, moreover, who shall know aught of it, even should these papers fall into any one's

hands after my death? I leave them as memorials of my vengeance, and not as witnesses of my courage; that I care not for; but my revenge is sweet, and for that I live, and for that will I die.

This evening I walked over the field, and saw many wounded near, and they seemed to be able to read in my eyes that I showed no mercy; that I was, in fact, the bane of their race. They seldom asked help of me after they saw my visage, and when they did, the point of my sword gave the answer.

After having destroyed many Frenchmen, I came to a lonely part of the field. Here a charge of Prussian cavalry had done much execution among the French. I found a wounded officer, supported hy a youth of about fifteen or sixteen; they were anxiously awaiting the arrival of the relief parties.

"Are they coming, Theodore?" inquired the wounded man.

"I do not see them, father."

The wounded man groaned, and the boy looked anxiously around, and I stood in the shadow of a tree.

"Shall I go, or shout for assistance?"

"No, no, hoy; it is useless to do so; you would only miss your way, and you would not find me again. Wait with me—wait with me until you see them."

"I will—I will, father."

I left the spot where I stood concealed, and walked forward until I came close to them. I could see they were father and son, both serving in the same regiment.

"What do you desire?"

"Aid for a wounded officer," said the boy.

The man turned round, and gazed at me for a moment, and then at my uniform, saying:

"A Prussian—here, too; and yet we have the victory!"

"You have; and yet you see I am on the field; the French are every day weakening themselves with their victories."

"And their enemies also," said the officer.

"We shall see that; but your time is come. I never permit a Frenchman to live. I am the avenger. I have received great wrongs, and I spill French blood, meet it when I may."

"Will you draw your sword against a defenseless enemy?"

"Look at my sword. Is it not bloody? Are not the gouts of blood fresh and moist?"

"Yes, yes."

"Well, then, you see it is so, because it has let out the life of many a defenseless Frenchman."

"Cowardly wretch!" said the officer. "Theodore, draw your sword, boy, I cannot aid you. God be with you; defend yourself to the last. I see by his eye you have no mercy to obtain."

"Nor do I want any," said the youth, who drew his sword, and advanced upon me with the fury of a young tiger; and had I not been prepared, or had I been a less active swordsman, I might have been overcome; but the fight, though furious, was short; I plunged my sword, after a few thrusts, right through his heart.

I saw the officer turn pale as he saw the youth fall, and he turned his head, saying:

"May you die the death of a felon, dastard as you are! You cannot hurt me now; I wish to die."

"You shall have your wish," said I, as I thrust the point of my sword through the body of the wounded man, who died cursing me; but I laughed, and left the spot.

Many more Frenchmen fell beneath my sword; none could stand against me in single fight, and few ever escaped from me when in the front of battle. I was ever victorious.

Marie Rouselli! What is there in a name that causes so many emotions to arise in my brain? Why should I feel all the glow of anger and revenge? Why should I feel all the horror of a bursting but steeled heart? Away—away with such beginnings of a train of reflections, that even I cannot bear with calmness, nay, without madness.

She has come to a sad end. It might have been otherwise; but she could not be turned from her purpose; she could not avoid the consequences.

I have seen many ends, many lives lost, and have taken hundreds; yet I cannot pass by this one as I would some others. I cannot but remember that time was when even I was not what I am. I am, however, what I shall ever be to the end of my life.

Marie Rouselli went mad; yes, raving mad. She knew nobody, and nobody would befriend her. The loss of her child preyed so deeply on her mind, that, resolved to find it, she began to wander about in all the most unheard-of places that could be imagined, and her life was continually in danger.

She was taken to a mad-house. She died in Berlin; carefully tended, certainly, but under restraint; and yet she could not have been conscious of the fact, for she seemed to have no desire to leave the place. She was not violently mad.

"My child—my child!" was the cry all day long—in her dreams by night—until she became exhausted, and nature, unable to bear up, sank beneath affliction so deep and so continuous.

She remained there some years. She was always known by the name of the mad mother, and many used to wonder who she was; but I knew who she was and her family, and others would have given something to know it. But no matter, so long as I can inflict vengeance upon Frenchmen, it is all I care to do.

Her race is run; her pilgrimage is o'er, and she has become a mass of corruption. She is most truly no more.

My days of vengeance are not complete—the time is not yet run out; but should these wars continue, many a hundred Frenchmen will fall beneath my hand. Their fate will be bad; but Marie Rouselli's fate has been worse than any. To die in a mad-house is a fearful end—even I—I should shrink from that.

My days of vengeance will come round; there is no battle in which I do not take a part, or in which I do not attempt to become a volunteer, if I cannot obtain a post with any command;

but be it how it may, there are few of the fields that I do not walk over, and destroy many French lives.

"But here I must end for the present," said Captain Morton, "they seem all alike of the same sanguinary nature; but we have discovered the end of the unfortunate Marie Rouselli. She died in a mad-house, eh?"

CHAPTER LIII.

THE month of probation which Mabel had appointed for Henry Morton was soon expired, though it might seem long to the impatience of the lover, who counted the minutes which divided the present from the moment in which his future happiness was to be completed; when, in fact, there should be no longer time to intervene between the object of his love, where no doubt of the future could cross his mind.

This time was come; the morning of the marriage was come, and the old Hall looked gay; and there were not happier faces to be seen round the whole country than were to be seen at Morton Hall.

Rafferty Brolickbones was at the head of all the fun and blunders of the day—that is, up to the hour of the marriage ceremony. There was a peculiar life and oddity about Rafferty on this morning, that no one could understand. He appeared to be bursting with all sorts of fun, and every now and then he broke into loud expressions of mirth.

What was the cause of all this nobody could tell; but whenever Rafferty passed any one, he would look at them very hard, and burst into a fit of laughter; and when about to speak, would appear as if he were bolting his own words, and choking in the process.

"Well, Rafferty," one would say, "what ails you this morning? Are you unwell? You seem as if you had an earthquake in your stomach, and can't digest it."

"No," said Rafferty, "it isn't that, but it has been so long in coming; that's what I'm thinking about."

"What has been coming?"

"Ah! that's my affair; do you mind your own, as the bull said to the dog when he ate up the calf."

"Never heard of such a case in all my life—never knew that the creature would do so; but never mind; you haven't got over that ducking you have had in the lane."

"Do you mind your business."

"Oh! we haven't any business at all now, Rafferty, it's all pleasure—it is high treason in you, Rafferty, to talk about business on such a day as this."

"Well, well, who's got nothing to do? I'll soon give him something to do, if it's only to hold his tongue."

"That seems to me to be much like doing nothing."

"Oh! you don't know how hard it is to do so, sometimes, honey, or you would not say so," said Rafferty, with a knowing look.

"Well, I never thought so until I saw you this morning, walking about, a-boiling over with something or other."

Thus Rafferty was attacked by one or the other the whole morning; but when the hour for the marriage--which hour was an early one—came round, then all was bustle, and the party to the church was a numerous one.

Captain and Mrs. Morton went with them to the church, and then the happiness of both was completed, and they were now united to each other for life.

The whole party left the church—the village church where so many incidents had taken place—where the man Sternholde had more than once been seen to seek concealment, and from which he had been chased by the hostler of the Morton Arms.

The house—the hall—had been open the day or two previous to the calls of such as chose to go, who were in any way connected with the estate, and Rafferty, being the head man, had a controlling influence upon the character and extent of the proceedings that were exerted for the benefit of his patron, and the comfort of all who came there.

However, when the marriage was over—when the newly-married couple came home to the hall, Rafferty was nowhere to be seen. But Captain Morton remarked that Rafferty Brolickbones was somewhat eccentric in his notions, and, therefore, he thought nothing of that, though, on that occasion, it did somewhat surprise him.

No more was said at the time, and the bride's health was drunk round in some of the finest champagne, and that with the utmost good will. Many were the good and kind wishes that were, on that day, uttered toward the bride and bridegroom. They were both beloved by all who lived within the sphere of their influence.

"But where is Rafferty?" inquired the captain.

Nobody knew; he was called for everywhere, and search was made, but no Rafferty was forthcoming, and by dint of much inquiry, it was decided that he had disappeared suddenly and mysteriously, immediately after the ceremony had been performed that morning, and had not been seen since.

"And what can have become of him?" said Captain Morton. "I am anxious about him, because I am sure, had not something happened to him, he would have been present upon such an occasion."

"Arrah! and sure yer honor is right. I'fakes! where would Rafferty be if not at a wedding when a wedding was going on? But, carracovaky! here I am. I have been doing a little business on my own account."

As Rafferty spoke, he pushed the door open and stood on the mat—oh, ye gods! with as fine a specimen of female flesh as could be found in any county in the three kingdoms—namely, fair, fat, and forty.

The lady was indeed all these combined in one. She was very fair—very fair, indeed, her face being something more than the color of the "red, red rose," being a very red rose indeed that could match the vermilion of her cheek.

And as for "fat," goodness gracious! think of her and a five-mile walk in the dog-days, and think of Shakespeare's fat knight "larding the lean earth," and you have some notion of her condition.

And then for the "forty" part of the business,—gentle reader, excuse us, this is forbidden ground. A lady's age is a thing quite sacred, and men have no business with it. For my part, I never heard rightly the age of any of the feminine gender after fifteen; after that period it was always wrapped in mystery, and it is difficult to come to the truth when that is the case. So, for our parts, we never even believe in a tombstone when we see the age mentioned on it, being convinced what was difficult to learn while the object was living was more difficult and apocryphal when dead.

"Well, Rafferty, what have you to say for bringing this unfortunate friend of yours into trouble?"

"Arrah! sir—captain dear, I have been in trouble myself—that is, I may be before I die; but I have been doing a little in the matrimonial line myself."

"Eh, Rafferty?"

"I have been to the parish church, captain dear, and ladies and gentlemen, and this," continued Rafferty, taking the fat hand of the blushing Phœbe—"and this is the bride?"

"The bride, Rafferty—did you say the bride?"

"Bad cess to me, yer honor, if she's any less."

"Then you've got married, Rafferty?" exclaimed Captain Morton, in extreme and almost ludicrous astonishment.

"Arrah! an yer honor's just hit it; and why shouldn't an old soldier get married as well as another man?"

"Oh, certainly, Rafferty, certainly; no reason on earth why you should not get married, and I hope you will be happy with your choice. You shall not be without my good wishes, Rafferty."

"I am sure of that, yer honor."

"And of something more substantial too."

"Yer honor is always kind and generous," said Rafferty; and turning to Mr. Henry Morton and to Mabel, he continued—"May yer honor live long and happily; and as for Miss Mabel—arrah! I mane Mrs. Henry Morton—I can never forget. I nursed her when she was a child, and, though a poor body, I shall always think of her as if she were my own child. May she live to be as happy as I am sure Mister Henry will try to make her."

"You are right, my good Rafferty," said Henry Morton, who could not hear unmoved, nor any one else, the words of the honest Irishman—"you are right; she shall and will be happy if it be in my power to make her so; and allow me to wish you, my honest old friend, all the happiness you deserve, for your fidelity and courage have never been questioned."

"No," said Captain Morton, "they have not; and this last act of his in carrying away the presiding priestess of the bar at the Morton Arms, to my mind, required no little of that excellent quality. We will not keep you and your bride, Rafferty, to whom we will wish all joy, any longer. Go and make yourself

as merry as you please, and how you please; you have ample means below."

With this generous hint, Rafferty quitted the wedding party, and each retired, and the day passed off happily.

CHAPTER LIV.

And now let us imagine three months to have elapsed, and look again at the young and beautiful bride, to see if she is happy.

It is a pleasant evening, and the shadows of the tall trees that are in front of Morton Lodge are thrown far across the beautiful green sward, where, upon some rustic chairs, sit a happy party. We will look into the face of the young bride, and we shall see at a glance that it is beaming with contentment. There is a quiet, placid look of domestic happiness about the whole group, that is rarely seen; and most worthy would it have been of the pencil of some gifted lover of his art and of humanity, to paint that happy group, as there, in gentle converse, which, in the evening air, sounded scarce above a whisper, they passed a pleasant hour, ere the night closed in, and told them to seek the indoor enjoyments of the mansion.

Captain Morton and his wife were walking to and fro, conversing together; while Henry, as he leaned over the back of the chair on which Mabel sat, was bringing to her mind recollections of the past.

"Does it not seem, dear Mabel, long, long ago since we were separated, and the envious fates appeared forever to have conspired against us?"

"It does, indeed, Henry; and this season of joy and tranquillity which we have passed, appears to have cast something of the halo of its own beauty over those events which preceded it."

"It is so with myself, Mabel, and a happy thing is it that we forget suffering quicker than we forget joy. The reminiscences of happiness will cling to us when the remembrance of grief holds in the chambers of our brain but a dim and shadowy existence."

"It is so, Henry, it is so; and yet there are times even now, when I look back with something of a shudder, and wonder how I had the resolution and the courage to bear up against the trials that beset me."

"In many minds, dear Mabel—and I can well perceive yours to be one of them—there is a natural capacity to find sufficient energy to meet the occasion, and that strength, energy, and courage, comes but with the occasion. We cannot imagine its existence, although we may imagine the incident that would call it forth."

"I understand you, Henry; and thus it is we shudder at things which, when they happen, we meet gallantly and courageously."

"Yes, Mabel; imagination, as well as conscience, doth make cowards of us all."

Mabel was silent for a few moments, and then she said, gently:

"I would not dwell upon a painful reminiscence, or even awaken one, but what would I not give if old Mr. Rouselli could look upon a scene like this."

Mrs. Morton was near at hand, and heard the wish. She approached Mabel, and took her by the hand.

"My dear child," she said, "you utter that wish as if you were hopeless of its accomplishment."

"Its accomplishment!" said Mabel, with surprise.

"Yes, dear Mabel, its accomplishment. Do you not believe that one so good and excellent in all respects as your dear grandfather, enjoys all the happiness that can be promised in that world which is to come for all of us--that world in which there is no grief, no sorrow, no tears, Mabel, and from which it has ever been a favorite idea of mine, to think that it will be one of the choicest pleasures of the good and great who have gone before us to look down from their star-spangled home upon those they loved on earth?"

"Oh! it is a charming theory," said Mabel, "and I will cling to it."

"Do so, dearest; it is one that may be believed by the purest and the best. If it be a delusion, it is heaven-born, and pardonable for its beauty."

"You have awakened me to a better sense. I will no longer, dear mother" (Mabel still loved to call Mrs. Morton mother), "I will never again, dear mother, wish, with a sigh, that old Mr. Rouselli were here to look upon us in our happiness. But when the feeling comes across me, that we are more than usually happy, and I feel that heart-gushing tenderness toward all things that can scarcely express itself in words, I will not say I wish he saw us, but I will say he does see us."

Henry saw a tear trembling in the eyelid of his young wife, and he drew her arm gently in his as he said,—

"Come Mabel; let us walk on to yonder mount, and see the last of the setting sun."

"Who can this be?" said Captain Morton; "there's some man coming from the house with a stable-jacket on, whom I don't know."

"Why, good heavens! it's Rafferty," said Henry.

"Rafferty—impossible! he went and settled in the next town, twelve miles off, with his wife."

But it was Rafferty, who, when he came up to the party said,—

"Would you be afther having candles lighted in the dining-room, or are you going to set a light to the new chandeleree? A mighty dash it cuts, like a lot of broken glass bottles hanging from the ceiling."

"Why, good God, Rafferty!" said the captain, "you left my service three months ago, and got married, and went to live twelve miles off, and here you are in your old costume, asking us if we'd have candles in the dining-room, or the chandelier lighted."

"It's the dress, is it?" said Rafferty. "Faith, then, and I found that in my old room, on the same peg that I left it.

You see, sir, I've been in your sarvice a good while, so I thought I'd take you on again. Where's the wonder of that?"

"But where's your wife, Rafferty?" said Mrs. Morton. "I'm afraid we cannot have your wife."

"Afraid. marm—afraid you can't have her? Faith, and I'd be afraid if you could, marm."

"Well, hut, Rafferty, where is she?" said the captain.

"Atween you and me and the post, captain, it's not worth asking about. Here I am again—let by-gones be by-gones. Sorrow take the Christian as would throw a fellow's misfortunes in his face!"

"But you must tell us," said Henry: "we can't encourage men leaving their wives."

"You can't encourage, Mr. Henry? Nobody asked you, sir. It be a few, indeed, would be encouraged hy you, sir. I wish I'd had Miss Mabel myself instead of you. She couldn't have took to British brandy like Mrs. Rafferty, and fell down a trap-door and broke her neck!"

"Oh, that is it, is it?" said the captain; "then you are a widower, Rafferty?"

"Yes, sir; and what's happened is a what'-a-name to me—a great something:" but he added something about beer or ale, —"oh! I have it, sir, a great *morale* lesson. I've been through a campaign or two, captain, but this has been just the worst; so say no more about it."

They did respect Rafferty's feelings, now they really found what had happened, and Rafferty himself quietly slid into his ordinary employments again; and nothing could give him greater offense than any allusion to his brief sojourn in the realms matrimonial.

It was a great pleasure to Mabel, as well as to Henry, and, in fact, to all the Morton family, to provide for Troubled Tom; but the great difficulty was, *how* to provide for him; for, although they got him a great number of employments, he went to sleep so perpetually that he was really of no use to any one, and at last it became quite a puzzle among the family to know what to do with him; and then Troubled Tom, in an extraordinary fit of wakefulness, came out with a suggestion himself.

"Oh, dear," he said, "it's a great hore to have to say anything. I—I should like a little hit of sleep somewhere, only nobody'll let me have it. Now, I tells yer what——"

At this juncture Troubled Tom gave evident symptoms of leaving off and taking a nap; hut, after heing well shaken, he resumed, and actually proposed that a chair should he appropriated to him in any field, the produce of which was likely to be much attacked by birds, and there be allowed to fall asleep all day, doing the duty of an animated scare-crow.

This, of course, the Mortons would not agree to; so he lived at the Hall, and dozed away his time by the kitchen fire, alike insensible to the boiling over of pots and pans and the scolding of the cook.

* * * * * * *

Reader, we have brought our eventful history to a close, and

those who have followed our heroine through her many perilous adventures, know well how deserving she is of the bappiness that has certainly fallen upon her.

It will be seen, in the course of her eventful career, how, in the time of utmost need, friends will rise up for the unfortunate, so tbat none need despair, for what could have been a more destitute and pitiable object than a young infant upon the field of carnage, from wbence Mabel had been plucked, and whom death had bereft of one parent—despair of another?

Nor was the happiness we have depicted of short duration; but as years passed on, and she became a bappy mother, seeing the living images of herself and busband in the little prattlers tbat clustered round her knee, she would shed those tears of joy which come from the overflowing heart—tears so different from those which grief produces; and many a time she would tremble as she crept closer to her busband's heart, and whispered:

"Is it a sin to be so bappy?"

And he would smile, and, pointing to the blue heavens above, would tell her that that omniscient Being who preserved the Child of the Battle Field, preserved her to be what she now was—the happiest of the happy.

[THE END.]