ZANTHON

ZANTHON

ZANTHON

A NOVEL

JAMES DORAN

SAN FRANCISCO
THE BANCROFT COMPANY, PUBLISHERS
1891

COPYRIGHT, 1891
BY JAMES DORAN

All Rights Reserved

ZANTHON

*

CHAPTER I.

A MYSTERIOUS PERSON.

MORE than half a century ago there lived a remarkable peasant in one of the western countries of Europe celebrated for the beauty of its physical features and mild climate. The notoriety of this man had been acquired through a display of knowledge very uncommon, if not actually unbecoming in a person of such poor surroundings.

In an enlightened community he would have been recognized as a man of superior mental attainment; but with his neighbors, who were superstitious and uneducated, he was regarded as being at least equal to one of the wonders of creation. Some of these persons, indeed, believed he possessed superhuman power, and not a few hinted darkly at the probability of his relationship with evil spirits.

The range of his knowledge was very extensive, although but little could be done to prove its power, seeing how he was circumscribed by ignorance, poverty and illiberal legislation. However, there was one branch of science whose illustration came naturally into his daily life, namely—the application of the properties of herbs as a relief to the distressed condition of mankind.

The fields were to him a book in which he saw vast wonders. He was acquainted with the efficacy of foxglove, tansy, yellow dock, hazel and a long list of other plants growing in the neighborhood.

He knew that green weed, or Dyer's broom, was useful in hydrophobia, oak bark in intermittent fever and hemlock in cancer, applied externally.

The red oil extracted from the witches' herb recommended by Dioscorides, a Greek physician, in the army of Rome and by Galen, who served with the Emperor Aurelius, was known to him. His researches went further still. He not only controlled the powers of the Spanish fly, but found those residing in the bedbug, the cockroach and the common housefly. It was said that when urged to action by the entreaties of a woman weeping for the loss of her daughter, a girl twelve years of age, that he restored her to life, although she was supposed to have been dead at least an hour. He held to the belief that a certain percentage of those who die could be restored to life if medical science were advanced some degrees further than its condition in his time.

As superstition was distributed around him to an alarming extent, he learned to use it occasionally to cover his real operations, instead of endeavoring to remove it altogether, a process indeed beyond the capacity of his powers to achieve. Hence, he was obliged to practice secretiveness in all transactions with the people, so as to pander to their opinions, as well as to keep the essence of knowledge to himself. On this account he was reputed to be skilled in "black art" and to be able to use it successfully as a weapon against witchcraft, which prevailed largely in that country.

If a woman, for instance, aided by witches, succeeded in drawing off the butter from the milk of her neighbor's cows—and many a fine roll of it was purloined in this manner—he

could not only bring it back, but institute a safeguard that would prevent a recurrence of such misfortune.

The subtile power invoked to do this appeared to be subject to his wishes after he had written a sentence in a foreign language on a sheet of paper and rewritten the same sentence across the former writing, at right angles. The document should then be folded in a triangular shape and placed under the churn, where the milk designed to be saved from spoliation was deposited. It is singular, this was never known to fail.

Children, who became sick from having been gazed upon by a person with an evil eye, were restored to health after drinking of his decoction of roots, gathered from a rare plant which was said to have the power of keeping off fire from any house on which it grew spontaneously.

A child whose humors were designedly congregated or forced to tend toward the same point, so as to form a dangerous swelling, was always relieved by the cure of the nine irons! This consisted of a particular method of applying nine irons to the affected part. It was supposed that iron possessed a peculiar power over the spirits concerned in the affliction of the child, which, when used, in combination with the charms under the command of the operator, removed the influence of the tormentors and restored the patient to health.

If the time and place did not forbid a plebian to interfere in the methods whereby prosperity might be brought to the people, his knowledge of agriculture could be utilized to advantage. Knowing, however, how jealously the civil authorities viewed the very mention of social progress, he gave no instruction on the subject.

To the illiterate minds around him, what he did exhibit included mostly everything worth knowing; but he went still further into the details of real science and revealed the time

of the coming of eclipses, storms, high tides and other extraordinary phenomena.

In person, our peasant philosopher, whose name was Fairside Marlband, was comely. He stood a little above the medium height, having pale features exquisitely cut, possessing more of a Grecian than a Roman type ; dark hair and eyes. Strongly made in all parts of the body, yet capable of quickness in action. Calm ordinarily, but high-tempered when the requirements of the occasion called it forth. Generous to friends and foes. Fearless in danger. Resolute in the pursuit of good. A man!

The part of the country where we now find him was remote from the civilization of cities and towns. It was situated between a chain of low mountains on the east and the ocean on the west; being about thirty miles in width. This irregular plain was diversified by green hills and valleys, rivers, lakes and woods.

With a good system of government the place could be made an earthly paradise, so elaborately had nature distributed her gifts through every portion of the domain; but the poverty of the great bulk of the inhabitants detracted from the natural advantages, by obliging them to give up all their attention to the terrible struggle for existence.

While some localities supported the handsome residences of the owners of the soil, other places were disfigured by the miserable hovels of the poor.

What prevailed there appeared to be a remnant of the old feudal system, where the master was absolute ruler and the tenant not only a dependent, but also a thorough slave.

Great wealth on the one hand and great poverty on the other.

There was a class of petty landlords, or middlemen, between the great and small, as if specially destined to separate them. These secondary rulers were speculators. They leased one or two hundred acres of land each from the great landowners, di-

viding the tracts into small farms of five or six acres, which they let to yearly tenants or tenants at will. The small farmers endeavored to procure from the soil all it could possibly yield, with the least expenditure. The middleman watched with the utmost vigilance every opportunity of increasing his rents without actually destroying the lives of his tenants, while the chief landed proprietor exacted at his annual settlement every dollar he could possibly force the petty landlord to pay within business lines.

Thus the burden of raising the wealth derived from the entire district came upon the shoulders of the poor, without any assistance from other sources, such as manufacturing industries or commerce.

This state of things begot woful poverty and ignorance dark as midnight. The inactivity of the place indeed might be said to portend some terrible incursion from without, or a calamity such as would shake the foundations of the earth, in order to show the displeasure, as it were, of the unknown powers at the unmitigating severity of the rich against the poor.

The difference existing between classes, viewed from a social standpoint, was marked with careful distinctness. The aristocratic or upper class considered it a point of etiquette to ignore the others so completely as to have no association with them on any pretense whatsoever.

In harmony with these ideas the homes of the rich were surrounded by high walls of solid masonry, resembling a fortification. In some places these defensive works were twelve or fourteen feet high and five or six miles in circumference. The entrance in each case was secured by means of a massive iron gate bolted and locked. At one side of this gate stood the residence of the keeper, whose duty consisted in opening the same whenever a member of the family wanted to pass through, then rebolt and relock it as before, so as to exclude the people and be always ready to repel an attack.

There was also in each enclosure a man armed with a shot-gun, who traversed the grounds daily to see that the place was clear of intruders.

All business transactions with the people were executed for the great men by agents and lackeys. The masters and their families came out in close carriages; and, except while visiting persons of their own class, rarely left them until they returned. Thus one might live a lifetime as a peasant and be unknown to the master; or, on the other hand, could be a resident within the walls of the master's house without the peasantry knowing anything concerning it.

It was a singular spectacle: A people whose interests were so closely united as to depend on each other irrevocably, yet as much apart personally as if divided by the ocean. All these peculiarities were the results of a long period of hostility, which was forever encouraged by the sameness of enmity preserved on both sides.

In one of the congregation of huts, which necessity obliges us to designate a village, inhabited by the very poorest of the poor, in the district already mentioned, lived Fairside Marlband.

His house stood apart, however, from five or six others about the distance of a gunshot and on the east side of a mountain stream, the village proper being on the west side. To reach his dwelling the neighbors were obliged to cross the river on stepping-stones, one of the primitive substitutes for a bridge then in use. But this seemed no inconvenience, as the waters were shallow and custom made the act free from difficulty.

Notwithstanding its insignificance, the village had a name. It was called Footford. Half buried at the base of a piece of upland, a cloud of its own smoke sometimes settled above it, completely obliterating all traces of its outline from view. On such occasions a stranger was liable to stumble over the tops of the houses before he became conscious of his danger.

It was as obscure and unimportant a spot as any other with a name on the face of the earth. The dwellings were little better than holes in the ground; without windows or other ordinary conveniences. Each house consisted for the most part of four walls nine feet high built of cobblestones, inclosing an apartment twenty by fifteen feet; an earthen floor and a roof covered with thatch or straw.

It would be difficult to determine of what material the door was composed, when there was one, so dark and unsightly did it appear through age and exposure to rain and smoke.

In each of these hovels an entire family resided. The principal bed stood in one corner, close to the fire-place; and one or more of the other corners contained the most serviceable substitute for a couch procurable; a bundle of straw and an old quilt. For additional furniture there were rude seats, a long form taking the place of a table, and a few articles employed for culinary purposes.

As a mark of distinction, one of the residents of Footford had a house larger than the others; that is to say, there were two apartments in it instead of one. This made the occupants to be regarded in the light of persons enjoying an exalted position, although in other respects they were as poor as their neighbors. It may be easily conceived with this state of wretchedness, but few visitors would be attracted to the place. Indeed, the inhabitants had been peculiarly fortunate or unfortunate on this head; for not even the petty landlord made his appearance, excepting at rare intervals; the tenants invariably carrying their rents to his residence when it became due.

In order to connect certain incidents in the past with the time when our story opens, we must refer back about twenty years to a special period, and describe the first appearance of Marlband in the village where he now resided.

While Footford lay in the deepest silence and inactivity one Sunday afternoon, in the beginning of summer, there came

over the upland above it, from a westerly direction, a stranger with an unusually fair appearance.

He paused a moment on the brow of the elevation to examine the prospect before him. His comely features were impressed with sadness, mingled with a kind of stern resolution, which an ignorant man would be incapable of producing. Although his clothing appeared to be of the same material which peasants wore, yet on *him* it looked refined and magnificent. A good deal of this was due to his shapely limbs and the style or cut of the clothing in question. A silk handkerchief of bright colors around his neck made the flashes of his eye exceedingly attractive.

He was light of foot, too; a quality not often seen associated with men accustomed to labor.

After his glance had swept all points of the horizon as well as intermediate places, he turned it on Footford. At sight of the village, an expression of surprise escaped him, probably on account of the unexpected appearance of misery or poverty which it presented. Instead of turning in another direction, however, he moved quickly towards the place, and presently engaged in conversation with a man standing at the end of one of the houses who had been observing his movements from the time he first appeared on the hill.

The stranger introduced himself. He gave his name, Fairside Marlband, and intimated he had come to seek employment.

As the season of haymaking was near at hand, where laborers from remote districts wandered over the country, like our tramps, but unlike them working one day here and another there for food, Marlband's representation was accepted in good faith.

As a matter of course he was conducted into the house containing the two apartments; being, as before stated, the finest in the village; and on that account the one best adapted for

the reception of visitors. Here he was kindly received by the family residing in it.

The news of his arrival spread rapidly from house to house, as if the hamlet had been provided with the most improved system of telephone; and in a short time the entire population, in all about forty souls, stood around him, utterly at a loss to reconcile the beauty of such a man with the dull aspect of the place.

Never was there such excitement in Footford!

Some of the women, questioning the person who saw him when he arrived, inquired if he had not seen the stranger come *out* of the hill, and not over it, as first reported. The man replied, in effect, that if he were put to his oath he could not determine which way he did come; for when first seen he, the stranger, was above him on the upland, and might, for all he knew to the contrary, have just landed there from the clouds. This testimony was offered to support the marvelous nature of the ideas ventilated by his companions.

After considerable consultation as to what could be done towards giving him employment, it was determined he might live for three days in the community, working for his food as tramps were accustomed to do; and in the mean time he would be provided with a bed in one of the corners of his host's house.

Brief as was the period prescribed, it proved to be a time for jubilee to the simple people residing there. When the labors of each day were concluded, and the evening meal disposed of, Marlband made a display of some of his powers for the entertainment of his friends. Besides being a speaker, whose voice was rich in melodious sounds and fascinating to young and old, he sang very pleasantly, told stories of ghosts and fairies, as well as of wonderful scenes in distant lands. To accommodate him, while still further exhibiting his accomplishments, the door was taken off its hinges and placed upon the

earthen floor. Then the stranger with the gracefulness of a rope-dancer, stepped lightly on it and danced a hornpipe accompanied by extra touches of foot and limb never before witnessed.

On the third evening amusements began over the upland in the genial atmosphere. Marlband not only danced singly, but instructed many of the young people to do likewise, which caused universal enjoyment. When the time for his departure arrived, it was seriously contemplated by a few of the younger men to ask him to remain permanently in Footford. Indeed, the two sons of the farmer in whose house he was sheltered actually spoke to him on the subject. He received the proposition favorably, and added that after he had examined the villages near the base of the mountain range, he would again visit them. Three months later, when he came a second time, he might have got anything he pleased to seek in the village, so glad were the people to see him.

For some cause, not then known, he determined on making Footford his headquarters, and paying visits periodically like other tramps to distant localities, for the purpose of contributing towards his support.

It was not long after this, however, until the secret attraction which bound him to the place became known. He was in love with the only daughter of his host, a modest and stately girl of twenty summers, whose good sense, in Marlband's estimation, was the most powerful qualification she possessed. Being a practical man and fully alive to the seriousness of the step contemplated, for at this time he was thirty years of age, he made a proposal of marriage to her.

His matrimonial overtures were accepted without cavil by her friends ; and in due time the nuptials took place, in the midst of a popular demonstration such as was never before witnessed in the village ; for the powers of men and beasts were employed on the occasion to make it a great success.

In our age and country we would be apt to regard the individual who subscribed to a contract of marriage without money or means as unwise and showing few signs of the cleverness of a responsible man; but circumstances, it must be remembered, always alter cases.

To be a peasant, like those who resided in Footford, one must marry and live in destitute ways a lifetime; nor ever think of uttering a complaint against so hard a fate.

When it became definitely settled that Marlband meant to become a permanent resident of the village, the decision was hailed with the utmost delight by the entire community. It was an indication that in his judgment, at least, the place presented superior features to others which he must have seen in his travels. They little imagined that he had selected it on account of its obscurity.

The petty landlord was importuned in the stranger's behalf for a strip of land which fortunately was available in the neighborhood. Being situated on the other side of the river, it was proposed to build his house in the village; but he preferred to have it erected on the property on account of the convenience it would afford. The holding, as it was called, consisted of five acres of good land, and about two acres adjoining the river unfit for tillage, as it was composed principally of gravel and sand left there by floods.

The residence was built just above high-water mark. Like the others, it was constructed of stones gathered from several sources in the vicinity. The interior of the walls was supplied with mortar, the outside left unplastered.

The labor expended on it was given gratis. When all hands went to work it was not long before the design became an accomplished fact. Thus by assisting each other the necessity for money in most cases was obviated.

As an advancement in architectural design, this last structure was made to contain two apartments, one window in each

about twelve inches square, and a back door opposite the front one. The wife's dower consisted of a few articles of furniture, bedding, benches, a table and cooking utensils; but no money. No one but the landlord received money from the people of Footford. In fact, it was held to be of no other use than to pay rent; even the holy man, or conductor of religious ceremonies, living three miles distant, used to be paid in sheaves of oats and bushels of potatoes.

It is wonderful how pecuniary difficulties induce the exercise of genius. The peasants who assisted Marlband built their own houses, manufactured cloth to suit their requirements, raised all the produce essential to their wants, and appeared to be as satisfied with life as rich people.

Besides the traveling laborers we have described, there were other visitors at stated periods — tinkers, tailors and cobblers —who lived a roving life and seemed to be happy.

In his new home Marlband became very popular. He received the people kindly on all occasions; and finally it became a custom to have his house filled with visitors almost every night.

At these meetings there prevailed conversations such as suited the intelligence of the visitors, singing and occasionally dancing. Except when specially consulted, he did not voluntarily give instruction. It could be seen that he purposely avoided making any improvements in or around his house. He seemed to fear, and indeed with good reasons, that any changes in this direction would attract attention from without and cause trouble. Many a time did he resolve on executing some well-planned scheme of cultivation, whose results would indicate superior skill; but as often did he desist from carrying them into effect, on reflecting how disastrous they might prove to the interests of his family.

A man in the village, bolder than the rest, raised some flowers and fragrant shrubs at Marlband's suggestions; but as

the petty landlord on hearing of them sent messengers demanding that these luxuries be forwarded to him forthwith, the experiment was not repeated.

Besides amusements indoors, he instituted others equally attractive, namely, a series of field sports. On the upland, back of the village, the people collected together and practiced various sports under his directions on holiday evenings and frequently during the summer. This system diverted their attention from the hardships of their lives, and was productive of a vast amount of good.

On this account also Marlband's fame went abroad through the villages of that whole section of country; and he was frequently informed how powerful he could become if he undertook the organization of the men of the period into a party for the purpose of recovering national independence, which had been lost centuries before. Whenever the latter proposition came up he always shook his head to signify his dissent from it and allowed the subject to drop without comment. Nevertheless, it could be seen on those occasions that he became inwardly disturbed as if by the struggle of conflicting ideas which he could not control. Nothing could move him from his purpose of living a quiet life. Beyond the cultivation of his patch of land, fishing occasionally in mountain streams, and hunting in places not reserved for game, he would do nothing further, excepting what resulted in immediate good to the people as before stated.

Instead of popularity he really courted seclusion. In the midst of the uproar of merriment he was known to wear an expression of sadness on his countenance. Nay, he presided at public feasts, such as they were, where drinking was freely indulged by all parties, yet *he* was always sober, as if he meant to be eternally on guard over the deep mystery of his earlier years.

During the time of his sojourn amid the rural scenes we have been describing many changes occurred, such as are common to human life in all places. A numerous family grew up to him. There were deaths, births, marriages and emigration of young people to other points. But the village of Footford itself was about the same now as when Marlband first saw it twenty years before. It was darker, to be sure; more decrepit, and appeared as if it had sunk a couple of feet still further into the ground.

The relations of his wife were among those affected by the changes wrought by time. The father and mother were dead. The elder of her brothers succeeded to the farm and was married, while the other boy had left the country to seek his fortune in places better qualified to yield one than at home.

Nothing in the memory of the people appeared so remarkable as the persistent manner of Marlband's adhesion to the life of a poor peasat, although endowed with intellectual gifts capable of making him a useful member of any society. As a matter of course the mystery surrounding him gave rise to suppositions or conjectures of various kinds, which were frequently neutralized by his affability and kindness until this year, when his demeanor exceeded all reasonable bounds and obliged his neighbors to imagine he was afflicted with insanity.

In the spring of the year, at the time selected by us for the opening of our story, Marlband had grown exceedingly morose. This unfortunate symptom of trouble appeared in him suddenly. It was about the middle of May, when physical nature decks herself in robes of loveliness. The seeds for the fall crops were in the ground, and people had time to move around leisurely a good deal. Contrary to custom, Marlband turned away from them. He adopted a lofty air, a light step and walked abroad with nature alone. He could be observed on the highest peak of the hills in the midst of a storm, through the depths of lonely valleys, in the solitude of woods and on

the banks of rivers looking into the distance as if he expected to behold something wonderful approach ; or, in a meditative mood, with his gaze fixed upon the ground.

Sometimes he gesticulated with his hands and called aloud to imaginary beings ; nay, he was heard to laugh in several of these situations as if an unseen spirit answered his voice by a mirthful sally.

In the opinion of witnesses to some of these awful doings derangement had taken possession of his faculties. It was the more distressing to contemplate because he who had heretofore been a physician to others would now have none to prescribe for himself.

If his conduct did not fully establish the presence in him of insanity it indicated the coming of a crisis of some kind. No doubt intricate problems had to be studied in this connection, and, perhaps, when the conclusions were reached, they so astounded the examiner as to bring him on the brink of mental ruin.

Like a lion, who, after some extensive foray, remained at rest a longer period than usual, again sallies forth with fierce energy in quest of new adventures, so Marlband considered, no doubt, he had had a sufficient amount of peaceful times at Footford to justify his preparing for a more exciting career, whatever the opportunity might be which he supposed was now about to present itself.

CHAPTER II.

A REVELATION

THE most remarkable object in the neighborhood of Marlband's residence was the remains of an old fort. It stood about one fourth of a mile east in the center of a cultivated plain. The military features of this ancient stronghold had been replaced by prominent green slopes and a corona of trees making it very unlike an instrument of war. Indeed, the peasantry were in total ignorance of its origin, and only knew that it was reserved from spoliation because of its supposed devotion to the uses of mysterious beings of the spirit world, who held awful councils there at stated periods.

There were natural beauties attached to it also, very inviting. Wild flowers and fragrant shrubs abounded there. It commanded an extensive view of the surrounding country. The voice of the cuckoo was heard coming from it in the early spring; and the blackbird piped his clear, bold notes in the summer from the tallest trees above its crest. It was a beautiful spot, such as might fascinate the most fastidious taste, and Marlband was not slow to perceive its attractions.

With his altered condition came the additional intelligence to his acquaintances that he now, more than ever, visited the fort, especially at unseasonable times, in the gloom of the evening, for instance, as if he were actually in consort with the spirits who every one heretofore knew resided within its sacred precincts.

Marlband, while he understood its true history, never attempted to disabuse the minds of his neighbors of the prevailing belief regarding it; for he saw that this belief served a purpose: it prevented ignorance laying violent hands on a land-mark which helped to adorn the landscape. Then there was another advantage also; he might now meditate within the halo of its beauty continuously, without interruption. Recently boys fearing to come near, watched him standing between the trees in his favorite rendezvous, gazing intently into the distance. He appeared, in their estimation, to be like one amazed at the approach of a great cavalcade, so immovable was his person and steadfast his look. Continuing their observations, they could see him remain in such position until the rich glow of the evening died out, leaving an impression on the mind like that created by the appearance of a celestial vision, and the moon appeared with the soft mellow light peculiar to her when the atmosphere is calm. Then they would see his shadow mingle with those of the trees, and imagine there were other figures there flitting about, doubtless, as they supposed, engaged in the performance of some hideous dance.

These details exaggerated in conformity with that well-known credence in the marvelous possessed by youth, increased local superstition concerning him and the fears of his friends lest they indicated the rapid approach of his dissolution.

Heretofore his wife made no effort to investigate his views on abstruse subjects, not only on account of her inability to comprehend their purport, but also because she was fully engaged in the affairs of her humble home. Marlband had instructed her in various useful industries, explained complications as they came into their every-day life, and gradually induced her to adopt an improved method of speaking over the one in common use ; if for no other causes than these, she felt her situation superior to other women ; but in addition, when

the reflection of her husband's fame was spread around her, it made her often giddy with pride. As an offset to this, however, there were moments when the sunshine in her heart became overshadowed by the darkness which eclipsed his early life. No one ever heard him mention his parents, or name the place of his birth. In former times she considered this reticence trivial, notwithstanding the qualms it produced in her secret thoughts. Now, when despondency, or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say, the eccentricity of her husband became so conspicuous as to awaken general comment, she resolved to examine into everything. She would question him, no matter whether the answers involved intricate subjects or not.

When the happiness of the whole family was at stake, she must do her utmost to preserve it. She did not think as others did, that Marlband was afflicted with any species of insanity. It was her opinion his present trouble resulted from some act performed previous to his coming to Footford; or if it were not due to this, then to the memory of some one related to him. Had she not perceived through all the years since their marriage that beneath his jovial appearance there lay some deep-seated uneasiness he could not wholly conceal!

Fully intent on unraveling so much of the mysteries of the past and present connected with him as might serve to quiet her fears, she drew the corner of her apron over her head, one evening, and proceeded to the old fort where Marlband had gone but a short time before.

The sun's last rays were filling the spaces between the trees with yellow light, the air was thick with perfume, and the distant mountains appeared purple from base to summit as husband and wife met in this sacred receptacle of nature.

Marlband divined her purpose, seeing the expression on her pale features, and smiled good naturedly so as to show he would not discourage her efforts to obtain information on the present

occasion. As both stood an instant gazing at the beauty of the scene, they could hear various familiar sounds from the plain; the lowing of cattle, the bleating of sheep, and occasionally the hoarse call of some peasant clearly distinguishable above all others.

Presently Marlband began to speak. He said: —

"I have felt recently, after the sun goes down, a peculiar odor in the air as if a new principle had come into it."

"Is it this that has disturbed you so much?" asked the woman sharply. "A trifle of that kind ought not to bring you into the eyes of the people as if there was something wrong with your mind."

"The principle may not be trifling by any means," replied the man, noticing only the scientific part of his wife's words with the courtesy peculiar to a true scholar.

"I have been investigating it for some time," he continued, "and what I first supposed it to be I have verified."

"Perhaps it is the perfume arising from the earth-apple. There are large quantities of it here," said the woman.

The man resumed: —

"It is very faint; indeed, not perceptible to the senses, except at certain places where its development is promoted by contact with other principles on the earth. See here!"

He displayed the part of a plant he had plucked in one of the fields on his way to the fort.

"Why this is the leaf of a potato-stalk!" said the woman, taking the proffered object. "It is soft and green."

The man took from his pocket a small instrument; a magnifying glass about the size of a ten cent piece.

"Look through this glass at the leaf," he said, "and tell me what you see that does not naturally belong to it."

The woman bent down and examined it as directed.

"There are two dark-brown spots upon it; one at the center and the other near the edge," she replied.

"If this leaf had been left on its stalk for two months more, these spots would have grown so large as to cover at least one third of its surface," continued the man.

"Well?" said the wife.

"This reveals a fact more threatening to the welfare of the people than if the sounds of war were heard upon the hills."

He spoke with prophetic earnestness. The woman in the meantime smiled, thinking the derangement of her husband would assert itself positively if he continued in this strain.

"Maybe they are fairy marks," she resumed.

"They are nature's impressions, surely, and the lessons they teach never deceive," he replied.

"What do they signify?"

"A scourge. A misfortune."

"What will it do?"

"It will erase old land-marks, extinguish the fires on the hearths of the poor, depopulate their villages, and destroy human lives by the thousand."

The woman was visibly disturbed by these remarks. She reflected that her husband's sayings heretofore were true, and it did not appear to her now as if he would willfully speak falsely. Besides, what did *she* know compared with *him?*

She stood nearer to him while she continued: —

"Is it a storm that you believe is coming?"

"No."

"An earthquake?"

"No."

"War?"

"No."

"What is it then?"

"It will trouble your mind if I tell you. I hold it right when a condition of peace is gained on earth we should not remove it if possible. I have refrained from speaking of this

to you and the children in order to ward off the distress arising from it to the last moment."

"But it will come in any case?"

"It will."

"Then I want to know what it is. It may be one thing as well as another. I have been troubled about a different affair, believing in my foolishness you were changing your ways on account of something that happened before you came to Footford."

"Whatever happened *then* is secondary to the occurrences about to come forth *now*. At least to you. *My* troubles are my own. It would be unjust to burden you with them. Therefore I kept them to myself."

"Whatever they were I would be content to bear them," said the woman feelingly.

The man resumed: —

"The spots on the leaf indicate that all plants of that kind will be marked in a similar manner; because, as I have said, the atmosphere above them is charged with a principle designed to do this."

"I understand."

"The stalks will transmit the vicious substance to the tubers beneath the soil."

"To the potatoes?"

"Yes. The potatoes will be stricken as if by lightning. The substance which has made them valuable and celebrated, will be blackened so as to be unfit to eat. This condition known as the *blight*, shall result in a great famine!"

The woman, now fully convinced of the truth of her husband's words, clasped her hands in an agony of despair. The announcement was so sudden and different from the subjects she had been brooding over, that her exclamation was heart-rending and spontaneous: —

"Oh, God! famine! What must *that* be when even our times of plenty are miserable!" she said.

The man resumed sorrowfully : —

"Ah ! it will be the night of a gloomy day. The end of a sad beginning. There may be the semblance of a struggle for life, only to make death come more swiftly. There does not seem to be any hope in view; even such as the most degenerate beings of the human race sometimes perceived. The evil will not be confined to the poor. The terrors of the times will appal the rich in the midst of their luxuries, for they then can behold how nature may strike when once incited to operate destructively, by the folly or mismanagement of mankind. It may be the starting point, however, of a movement calculated to destroy the power of the aristocracy and give some liberty to the people."

"Liberty will be no good to dead men," said the woman.

"Some will survive."

"How will it be with *us* ?"

"I cannot answer."

"Do you know ?"

"I do."

"Say it then. I have a right to learn the truth for the children's sake if not for my own."

"We shall share the common lot."

"Must we all perish ?" asked the woman in a high tone of grief.

"One may be saved ; perhaps two. I have been examining by what means our boy Clare can escape death by famine; but as yet I have not discovered it."

Clare was his favorite and the youngest of the family.

The woman began to weep silently. She had heard descriptions of a famine which visited the country on a former occasion, and this sudden announcement of an impending one smote her to the heart.

The tears of a good wife shed over misfortune are woful. In the catalogue of phases of sorrow they are, perhaps, the most bitter of all.

The state of the country would justify the coming of any calamity. The people depended wholly on their crop of potatoes for maintenance. The little grain that was raised being intended for the payment of rent and other expenses. Hence the readiness with which she understood the import of her husband's words when he intimated that the blight had attacked the potatoes.

"Why do you select Clare more than any of the others?" she asked. "Is not Orfa as good a boy?"

Orfa was her favorite.

"Nature will make the selection," replied the man evasively.

"I chose Clare because intuition told me he was the most likely one to live. Besides this, I love the boy."

"We might move to another part of the country," resumed the woman.

"The famine will prevail in all parts."

"There may be grain enough in this year's crop to carry the people over the hard times."

"The amount of grain," returned the man, "will be insufficient to yield support more than for a couple of months. Then at least eight months must be afterwards provided for before the return of a new crop."

"And then?" asked the wife.

"And then," reiterated the man, "it may be as rotten and deficient as this one. We might abandon the country altogether," he continued, "if we had means; yet even then the dangers incurred on the way might prove as menacing to the children as those we expect at home."

"I will never consent to leave the country," answered the woman.

"If we have to suffer let it be here where I have been born. The children would rather die than leave home, poor as it is."

"I shall do my best to meet the difficulties of the period," said the husband.

"We have been unfortunate in living in a country where the interests of the poor are considered the least of all; but in as much as *I* have chosen the situation, we must now endeavor to make the best of it without complaint."

"You surely had good cause for sorrow, with the whole of the troubles of the future joined to those of the present, without at all reckoning the past," said the wife. She continued as if meditatively. "I might have known I'd go wrong when I began to guess. Guessing is one thing and studying is another."

"You may have been right, even in your wild conjectures," returned the husband, as if desirous of relieving the painfulness of her reflections; but seriously too, for he thought of the past in that instant.

The sun had set and the moon in company with the evening star was shining over a beautiful prospect.

Husband and wife stood arm in arm gazing into the twilight evidently fascinated by the scene, yet saddened to an unusual extent. The solemn grandeur of approaching night but intensified the thoughts which their conversation had evoked and the mind of each went forth in silence to mingle with the great spirit of the hour.

It was a new birth into a mysterious realm that yet remained unfathomable.

The learning of the man and the ignorance of the woman had ample space for diversion. Both recognized beauty, divinity and power. The rest was dark.

The man's ability, doubtless, penetrated further than the simplicity of the woman, yet discovered little more beyond the boundary separating the real from the ideal. The great prob-

lems upon which nature was at work were as mysterious to him as they had been to her, whose understanding had had no conception of their existence.

Voices coming from the direction of their home suddenly disturbed the reverie of Marlband and his wife. As if a thunderbolt had broken the spell of enchantment surrounding them, they were recalled to a full consciousness of their situation, and both involuntarily exclaimed: "The children!" Playing in the vicinity of the cottage the children assembled at the approach of night, and, after due consideration, agreed to seek their parents at the old fort. Hand in hand they went, skipping along the path, their merry prattle and laughter reaching into the evening, as if designed to greet the agents of nature present at that hour.

Father and mother forgot everything except the great bliss awakened in their hearts at the approach of their loved ones.

When they descended the grassy slope of the fort and joined hands with the young group they felt as if the happiness of that moment was sufficient recompense for the trials of all future time.

Marlband especially was cheerful, and the shadows which had hung over him recently were temporarily dispelled by the joy and innocence of youth come to entwine their arms around him.

Thus united, the night shedding across their footsteps its light and shade, and with the sweetness of love pervading their minds, the family returned home.

To counteract the unfounded rumors prevailing in Footford in regard to her husband, as well as to prepare the inhabitants for the dangers now near at hand, the wife dispatched messengers to the village requesting the most responsible persons in it to visit her. As this was customary when questions of public importance came up for consideration, the people responded in the usual manner.

When the principal facts were stated, one old man, who was deaf, inquired of the person nearest him :

"What does she say ?"

"She says the potatoes will be taken from us this year."

"What is going to come in their stead ?"

"Nothing."

"There must be something."

"Starvation."

"Bad enough," laconically replied the deaf man, subsiding into silence.

Notwithstanding their want of erudition these simple people had their methods of studying causes and effects. Superstition gave them a substitute for what science revealed to others.

Mrs. Marlband, instead of placing the scientific fact before them as received from her husband, related a marvelous tale ; for she knew full well they would not believe that a small brown spot on the leaf of a potato stalk indicated the coming of a wide-spread famine. When asked by what method her husband had found that this awful visitant was approaching, said, "he was present a few nights before at a great battle in the fields, fought by the spirits from the land of the conquerors and those belonging to their own. The object of the fight was to determine whether or not the blight would come on the potatoes this year. The battle lasted the whole night, resulting in the defeat of the guardians of their homes. They were scattered to all points like chaff before the wind. The sight," she continued, "was awful. All the movements known to soldiers were practiced. The only thing wanting was noise. The silence was just the same as on other nights. The spirits appeared like white figures. Our side beaten showed the potatoes would go."

The people believed this wonderful narrative.

When everybody present was pale with affright Marlband laughed. It was his turn.

They thought on this account he could avert the impending calamity. His brother-in-law said to him: "You can stop it, master?"

Marlband shook his head to signify his inability to perform such a feat.

"Haven't we seen you do wonderful things," continued the man. "You kept the badness of witches away from us; you stopped the evil eye from sending any more sickness to our children. None of the 'good people' could carry off a child and leave an idiot in its place while you were here. If an old witch changed herself into a hare, so that she might run off in rattling style, you could draw a line before her she would not be able to pass, except she came back to her own form. Surely you have power to keep the blight from coming on us."

It will be noticed in the above enumeration of Marlband's exploits that not one really serviceable performance was mentioned. His establishment of open air sports and sociability seemed to have no value compared with the dull, unmeaning sophistries entertained by superstitious minds. He had grown tired of this persistent grovelling in darkness. While merriment was in order, superstition might be regarded as a phase of it, but now in the face of danger its recognition was irksome and unmanly. He chafed under the feeling engendered by the words of his friend; yet he was too gentle to offer him harsh sentences in return. Nevertheless the occasion called for bold language, such as he was not accustomed to deliver, but which found ready utterance now. Everyone became attentive when he said:

"The play is over. What follows will test the strength of every one of you, for it shall be a struggle of life and death.

We have had pleasant days even amid great poverty; when they return again, it will be to delight the children of another generation. There is yet a little time left—a month. Enjoy yourselves while it lasts if you are able.

Look at the sunshine. Gather the wild flowers. Go meet the breeze upon the hills, where its purity invigorates.

Listen to the voice of the stream. Let the stars twinkle above your heads in the night. Say to them: 'Farewell! O lovely gems of the all-pervading power! The end is near.'

I have already begun.

You wondered because I left you.

I was beckoned at.

The powers disclosed to me what was coming. Therefore I stood up apart from all others.

I said, 'I am ready.'

I knew you wanted to play. I was willing you should; but I turned to look at a more stupendous spectacle.

I must fight the battle for my children. I shall be to nature in the last extremity what she designed—a guardian to my offspring, who may be unable to protect themselves.

Now it may be seen why I have forsaken you. Like a skirmisher I have been driven in on my main resources.

Coöperation has seductive phases. Friendship is worthy of reciprocation, but in the hour of trial all are disregarded in the interests of self. Nature deals separately with each person.

Individual life means individual exertion.

Nature's action is forced upon her in the present instance through the ignorance of man. Hence as a result *he* only will suffer, or what pertains to him in the animal kingdom.

The powers at my command do well enough to amuse a party sitting before the kitchen fire, or playing in the fields, but compared with those of nature in her domain they are nothing.

When *she* moves, opposition is of no avail. If you move with her, she may save you; but if you do not understand, you must fall. The famine will have no mercy. Lay your plans quickly for self-preservation. You must do more than pray; act.

In your sufferings do not ask if there is a God; for while you were contented he was forgotten."

The terror inspired by Marlband's announcement silenced every one. There was no response. When fear goes beyond a certain point the power of speech is paralyzed. The mind retreating to its secret center crouches beneath the awful presentation, and forgets the use of words.

However indistinct appeared the meaning of a portion of his language, all who heard him knew the import of the sentence spoken by his wife and corroborated by him.

"The potatoes will be taken from you this year."

A speech requiring five days for delivery could not signify any more to them than this; because it involved the loss of their entire wealth; nay, more—it placed their lives in imminent danger, with the probability of no hope of escape. Drawing their outer garments closely around their persons, the visitants hurried to their homes, to communicate the news to others, and cogitate on it for their own satisfaction.

The prospect was the darkest ever known to them.

CHAPTER III.

A SECRET POWER.

A GLANCE at the children of Marlband would enable an observer to determine the secret power binding him to a life of poverty, apart altogether from other causes.

No man with such a progeny could refuse them the full exercise of his physical and mental capacity, whether it endangered his life or not. It made but little difference if he had been originally an aristocrat or peasant, a good citizen or a criminal, a native or a foreigner, or a person intending to be false to his surroundings. Whatever character suited him in the past, any one of his country neighbors could assert positively what he was *now*. A father loving his offspring without reservation. A man bold in the defense of his household, regardless of the strength or viciousness of its enemies.

Travel where he might, examine every feature of human life, weigh wealth and title in the balance, and after all it was probable he could not find on the face of the earth objects of such value to him as those present in this poor cabin at Footford.

They loved him! Think of it! He who had seen the heart's impulses, in the highest walks of society, made the agents of deception. Who witnessed the betrayal of friendship, the destruction of innocence, the guile of flattery, the baseless instinct of covetousness, and thought there was no genuine good associated with the life of man.

In the darkest hour, however, he beheld light.

Beings having the purity of Omnipotence, the fervor of a divine principle, the beauty of celestial creatures, doted on him, a poor tramp!

Innocence reveled in his presence as if he were a god.

Purity shone around him like the lustre of a star.

No falsehood, no dissimulation, no mockery, no murmurs of displeasure were there; but the effulgence of attachment for his individuality, glowing with the vigor of sunbeams.

Where he expected to meet misery centered in destitution he found paradise; so strange are the dispensations of nature.

Lips tinted deeply, as if with vermilion from heaven, kissed him. Cheeks beautified by dimples, pressed against his rugged face. Tiny fingers sought to erase the wrinkles from his brow. Dainty arms encircled his neck, while words fell upon his ears like the sounds of distant music.

He would have attacked a mountain, with the view of removing it out of place, if directed to do so by one of these children.

Storms could blow, threatening destruction to enterprise on land or sea; the political world might be shaken by strife; disaster follow disaster in social economy, but for him there was reserved the love of angels. Whatever science exhibited by way of instruction as to that which constituted the true destiny of mankind, it was evident to him now, the family circle was the place of its execution. It was here where nature expended her richest treasures, and here were congregated the great gifts she meant to bestow worthy of enjoyment — love, truth, virtue, innocence and peace.

Seeking for happiness elsewhere was time wasted in a visionary project, excepting, perhaps, with those few persons who scaled the immense heights of knowledge through the genius of intellectual power.

Look at Amby Marlband, the eldest daughter. She was more like one descended from a line of kings, whose imperial hauteur had become hereditary, than the child of a peasant. The poor material of her clothing only made her beauty more conspicuous. The chiselling of the features was modeled after her father, and the paleness relieved by tinting of the most exquisite delicacy. Her eyes were blue. Their steadiness in repose was remarkable. They met the gaze of the people with an expression of frankness both pleasing and decorative; yet, under excitement, there were extraordinary flashes of lustre darting through the air around her from them as if she were a luminous body. The eyelashes, rich in design, were of that order usually given to beautiful women, copious in length and weight.

Her hair was dark. It was exceedingly fine in quality, and when loosened, extended almost to the ground.

There were dimples on her hands, and the touch of her finger-tips would create an idea that in an extremity their application might heal the sick.

Now that she had reached womanhood, being nearly seventeen years of age, her figure was tall, graceful in its movements and flexible, a quality admirable in youth; it bespeaks strength for old age.

No description of parts, how minute soever it might be, could give the true idea of her appearance.

It was like a statue sometimes suddenly encountered in a multitude of others, along whose lines the genius of a master could be traced.

May came next to Amby. Her features were of the Roman type — broad forehead, straight nose, large eyes, full cheeks and slightly prominent chin. Her figure was erect, the shoulders being square, the breast well developed. She might be a little above the medium height, perhaps, when full grown. There would be a display of physical power associated with

her presence, evidently, and resolution attached to her character. Her hair was brown, but gradually darkening as she advanced in years, and her eyes were brilliant exponents of that color. Beyond the lips, when she smiled, could be discerned teeth of great regularity and whiteness. The more her powers increased the less became the irritability of temper peculiar to young persons. Indeed, she was as mild as the dawn of morning in summer. Though her dress was made of printed calico, without frill or flounce, this fact did not disturb the peace of her soul. She did not know what was poverty, although bred in its midst. According to custom she was not old enough to have either hat or bonnet, but the sheen of her hair surpassed every artificial adornment. Occasionally she wore shoes. At other times these useful appendages were wrapped up in paper and deposited for safe keeping in the family chest.

A selfish man feeling his inability to guide himself through the world would be likely to fall in love with May ; for, seeing her, he beheld beauty and power combined.

Many a miserable clown has in this way become a shining light in society, sustained by the wisdom of his better half.

Valine followed May. In proportion to her age her figure was more fragile. It was moulded in that special form so admirable for ladies — tall and elegant, possessing delicacy without weakness, and the power to command obedience without a display of strength.

Evidently Valine's beauty, when her person became matured, would surpass that of May, in the estimation of a large class of people. Her habits, too, seemed directed by different instincts. Instead of calling forth splendor from chaos, as May did by labor, she would simply grace the interior of a boudoir, and personate a goddess by the majesty of her demeanor. She was figure, grace and attitude combined. When she came to be a woman the toss of her head would be looked to by open-mouthed admirers as something without a parallel in nature,

outside the domain of woman. She would be a lovely brunette if the fairness of her person did not set aside the illusion. If she could not design she had the faculty of the arrangement of designs as applied to household duties, and in this way was beginning to render some assistance under the supervision of her mother. Notwithstanding the admiration due these children, the boys, Orfa and Clare, were the favorites of the parents. In order to appropriate as much of the parental affection as possible without disputing the good fortune of the boys May became the self-constituted guardian of Clare's interests, while Valine for the same reason was attached to Orfa. Amby was neutral. Although there was nothing approaching antagonism or a display of ill feeling on the part of either children or parents, yet it was instinctively known that May and Clare were nearer the father's heart, while Valine and Orfa were specially beloved by the mother.

Orfa was about ten years of age. His character was artless, exceedingly gentle, but in person he was weak. On this account his mother devoted much attention to his wants, and he repaid her with all the love at his command. He was a fair boy, possessing no unsoundness but effeminacy approaching it. Time and care would make him strong, although he might be immature at twenty-five.

Clare, the youngest, was also the *greatest* of all the others, had there been a thousand of them. Strong and active, he made himself the general favorite through the force of characteristics well known in human life on account of their charms for the heart: courtesy, benevolence, fearlessness in dangers, boldness in the defense of virtue, a sense of justice displayed in all his transactions, and the preference to relieve the wants of others instead of his own. Affability, gentleness, and truth shone in his person like the brilliants in the diadem of a king.

Even the queen-like beauty of Amby, the beaming purity of

May, and the graceful delicacy of Valine paled before the classic magnificence of Clare.

The features of this boy had the impression of nobility stamped upon them. He bore a greater resemblance to a god, such as the human imagination conceives than to animal man. It would be fair to suppose nature designed him for transportation to another sphere without suffering death, on account of the absence of those habits suggested or originated by the propensities of the body, which tend to lower the standard of an intellectual being, and the methods of doing good which he pursued.

He was a wonderful boy. The calmness perceptible in him was like the placidity of a lake, combining with its condition a mysterious beauty incapable of analysis.

The tinting of his face was beautifully executed. Nature displayed great power in her design and finish of the entire head, neck, and shoulders. So, also, in the shape of his limbs. There could not be detected a hair's breadth of divergence from what might constitute a sculptor's perfect model in these parts. His hands and feet were also admirably shaped. He resembled Amby in the expression of his face; but May in the color of his eyes and hair.

From indications discernible at this time it was concluded he would attain a high degree of proficiency as a scholar and philosopher if kept under the tutelage of his father. Already he could read with ease and fluency, and was daily committing to memory a vast number of technical terms connected with various branches of knowledge. His father watched the boy's growth with the most intense delight. He saw his own mind reproduced in this child. Perhaps Clare would be his superior at manhood. He must be made to avoid grinding want, however; and for this purpose, as well as to be quits forever with the whole train of disadvantages which surrounded him here,

he would send him into another country, where he could acquire fame and fortune.

These were Marlband's calculations sometime before he became possessed of his present knowledge of the future.

An unusual harmony bound the members of this family together. The quarrels so prevalent among young people were absent from their home; because the judicious watchfulness of the father instituted methods of procedure for his children that proved far more satisfactory in results than broils. He took the necessary pains to instruct them. They went deeper into details than the learning of preliminary rules. They were taught to know great principles. When the peace, which mutual respect and mutual love beget, became known, they vied with each other for the purpose of promoting its continual existence. Hence, this grand condition of nature increased until the household bloomed in happiness like a garden full of flowers.

The love nurtured there was awful. It would be good enough for heaven! The Marlbands carried it through the district, until it was felt like sunshine. Wherever one of them entered there was concord. Their presence was a benediction. The family was like an institution for the promotion of the general welfare; every one knew its character, and loved it on account of its superior merits.

The loss of the Marlbands to Footford would be equivalent to the suspension of light, so accustomed were the people to the presence of their beauty and genial fellowship.

On account of the period, the place and the circumstances surrounding them, the children were obliged to wear the plainest clothing. For similar reasons they were afraid to exercise their genius in the production of fancy work; excepting articles that could be hidden easily when completed.

Amby could sketch landscape scenes, paint flowers or portraits, and embroider.

May carved designs in wood or metal. If encouraged, her taste might be cultivated to originate new designs in dress, especially head-gear.

Valine would not excel in any accomplishment requiring skill for its execution, but she would know enough to make her services valuable. The whole field of art was very fairly occupied by these young girls. The natural genius was there without the privilege of exercise. A species of terror had been suspended above the household with the understanding that it should remain undisturbed. This practically instituted a condition of slavery as complete as that which surrounds the lower animals.

Nevertheless, the girls devoted much of their time to their favorite work, in the second apartment of the house, called "the room," where the family chest with all its mysterious accessories stood, and where the hopes and fears of the little circle were daily discussed.

The boys, for the most part, loved field sports. Clare was positive, or the leader in action; Orfa passive, or the follower. The younger boy designed expeditions which his brother assisted to execute. With them there was no dearth of amusements; for among other acquisitions, Clare was the owner of three favorites whose association contributed largely toward the pleasure of both himself and Orfa.

There was Fly, a sparrow, trained to live on a perch fixed in the angle of the window. He was very tame, but proud and noisy. Clare used to carry him into the garden among the low bushes, where, after playing for an hour or more, the bird returned with him to the house.

The favorite, however, which exhibited most attachment for the boy was Tyro, a dog. This animal was not distinguished on account of pedigree or nationality. Neither was he large or small; nor admirable because of glossy hair or long ears. He was not a rat dog, such as falls to the ownership of men whose

ideas seldom go higher than rat-catching. There was no poodle in him; and it could not be said he was related to a water-dog or a setter; for he showed no desire whatever to follow the special characteristics of these species of canines; yet with all these disadvantages Clare loved him, and as has been remarked, it was evident he loved Clare. This mutual affection puzzled the boy. He felt it grow so strong within him as to equal, if it did not surpass, the feelings he entertained for members of his family.

He was afraid to own to such weakness, lest it should be accounted bad taste, or want of decent pride; yet it held its place notwithstanding, not only without any effort at retention on his part, but actually against his inclination. The attachment of Tyro never wavered for an instant. In cold or warm weather, wanting food or with plenty; at home or abroad it was all the same. The business of his life seemed to be devotion to his young master.

It was probable he did not understand how much of the boy's attention was engrossed by another play-fellow, a young ass; else he might begin to realize how precarious must be the mental condition of dog or man whose peace depends on affections of the heart.

The ass was the gift of a farmer living at a distance. He became a great favorite at once, seeing how meek and helpless he appeared. He looked like a handsome fool. Clare called him Rompy. He had not yet shed his first coat of hair, which resembled wool and was quite thick on his back. The eyes, eye-lashes, the tips of his nose and hoofs were black, the rest of his body gray. The boys collected grass, growing along the paths, for him and there was a temporary shed erected near the house, by the father, for his convenience. Thus were the children amused.

While the little which served the wants of the family was forthcoming through Marlband's labors he was quite content,

seeing the reward his life in Footford attained. Now, however, he was caught in the midst of his glory, by a power far beyond his influence and threatened with destruction.

When he looked into the future at the aspect of the evils approaching and then turned to behold his children blooming in health and righteousness, he trembled as if the earth shook beneath his feet. There was going to be a conflict of powers. Those beautiful gifts which had come to him from heaven would be recalled, as if they were too valuable to remain longer on earth.

The flowers of his planting must wither on their stalks, prematurely and their remains be strewn around him without being able to save, perhaps, one lovely leaf.

He had great philosophy on the one hand; but immense love on the other. The greatness of the head was pitted against the greatness of the heart.

If his offspring were not so charming it is probable the reasonings of the cynic might predominate over the feelings of the father; but with such loveliness and purity as surrounded him here, it was impossible to witness their sudden removal by violence and continue to exist.

He should perish with them, like a pine stricken by lightning, in the storm obscuring a beautiful day, when there had been hopes entertained of a long career for it in the midst of its stately branches.

No wonder he raved. Men in possession of a mere fraction of this knowledge would go mad outright. It was no longer surprising he rushed into the void to see if anything could be, accidentally, encountered there with capacity to aid him in the design of saving his children.

Now he might shout until the cliffs of the hills re-echoed his voice, yet the people of Footford would no longer think his conduct strange or censurable.

There was cause. What now became of his black art they thought?

Nature advanced but one small indication of change such as would be disastrous to the community in which he lived and the whole line of imposture was annihilated.

Where was the power of the witches even?

Driven into the crevices of the rocks and to the hollows beneath the mountains, so as to avoid encountering the dreadful visitation whose presence was so near at hand.

Sophistry was silenced; genius appalled, merriment forced to seek a hiding place somewhere out of reach of the family circle and courage drawn to its utmost degree of tension.

What remained was the reality of misfortune. A place to struggle with death, like the unfortunate travelers cast from a sinking ship into the sea.

In the estimation of those who credited Marlband's announcement, there was no hope; because there would be no sustenance; but with him there yet remained the test of an experiment.

Face to face with supreme difficulty, where nothing but power could assist him, he might reach forward and touch science.

What could science effect?

With proper conditions almost everything.

But without conditions? Nothing.

Science could not manufacture food except by the ordinary processes where crude nature played the principal part. Now she meant to insinuate some new movement into this department, which would alter the product and leave science, as understood by men, wholly at a disadvantage. Besides science does not, by any means, guarantee protection to animal life.

How could she aid him though?

Her powers were numerous and subtile, her dominion far extended. He had examined her capacity; knew he could

perform wonderful transactions, if accorded facilities; but the material was wanting.

He felt himself as powerless, nearly, as the most ignorant man in Footford. To supply the wants of the body he must work as others did.

He had ample experience on that point. Still he was not satisfied, although determined to do his part in the ordinary way.

Was there anything *beyond* science ? he asked himself.

Where ?

In that degree of nature the next above the sphere of man. Superhuman. Perhaps there were immense powers in it; but like these in an inferior place, they could not be utilized. He had imagined, however, it was possible to enlist some of them in his behalf. He was induced to pursue this train of reflection by his practices, heretofore, while pandering to superstitious minds. From the fable of superstition he imagined there was something, to which he might come, the fact of superhuman energy, or spirit power distinct from mind.

It was a plausible theory and one held by many worthy as well as learned people.

As he reflected upon the possibility of its existence he grew enthusiastic. Clasping his hands together, on one occasion, he exclaimed :

"Oh! if I can call forth the hidden powers of the universe to save these dear treasures of my house, I shall consider that the destiny of man was shaped after a noble design, one through which he may ascend from animal life to the everlasting potency of a god."

CHAPTER IV.

THE GREAT PROBLEM.

THE world was before him resisting his efforts. He had been driven from one position to another, while contemplating the solution of a great problem—how to save his family in the coming struggle outside ordinary means.

The physical elements answered not his calls. He saw the operation of universal law, as pursued by nature, never varying from the direct course. Indeed he found nothing else but this steadfast adhesion to uniform movement. He was confined to a narrow sphere, among human beings where liberty dare not be mentioned nor the semblance of prosperity made known. The food supply was about to disappear. Death would stand in grim horror before him, intent on slaying those whom he loved, without mercy.

Debate how he would, Marlband came to the conclusion the tangible world would afford him no relief, excepting such substance, belonging to others, as might be gathered through the country by persuasion or force. This brought him on a level with the commonest man in Footford.

Nothing remained but intangibility, the unseen powers, distinct from the great laws just referred to.

Were there such powers?

If it were possible to discover their efficacy could he hope to preserve the *entire* family through their operation?

No. The history of their interference pointed to relief only; but not the supplanting of established law. It was impossible they could neutralize the force of nature exhibited in permanently fixed agents for any length of time, if at all.

The famine must carry off a large proportion of his friends—perhaps the whole of them; but something might be made to intervene for the purpose of saving *one* without showing any deviation from natural order.

Hence he had concluded to concentrate all his researches on this issue—to save his son Clare, no matter how difficult it might prove to be.

Clare must not die at this time. Before he witnessed such catastrophe, he would, sword in hand, attack cattle on the hoof, the property of the rich, within their domain walls, and possess himself of the bleeding product of his foray to feed his boy or die in the attempt.

However, he would continue his investigations. Having read in an old work on metaphysics that "innocence in danger calls forth a protecting voice from the depths of the unknown," he resolved to give this so-called principle a practical test, understanding it to mean that a protest would be made by an invisible power, as a warning to assist deserving people who chanced to be in danger of death by accident.

Taking his son with him one morning, he proceeded towards the base of a spur of the mountain, ostensibly for the purpose of fishing in a stream near it, celebrated for mountain trout, but really to carry out what he had planned.

After they had cleared the cultivated land of the settlers, they entered on a large flat moor skirting the base of the mountain. Here the father raised Clare upon his shoulders and carried him until he was rested sufficiently to resume his walk without suffering.

Before noon they reached the river; but instead of remaining on its banks, they pushed onward in the direction of the

mountain's summit by a circuitous path. The ascent was tedious, and the boy had to be assisted most part of the way. The view from the summit, however, was exceedingly imposing, and Clare showed his appreciation of its merits by his looks of wonder and admiration. Crossing the top of the mountain a short distance they came to a perpendicular bluff, the side of an immense precipice, where the ridge had been rent asunder at some early period of the earth's history.

The chasm was for the most part surrounded by huge ledges of jagged rock. It extended nearly as low as the base of the mountain, and resembled a shaft of the bottomless pit.

So far as could be observed, there was no water in the basin-like space below, an evidence that there were openings from it to still lower ground; but whenever accumulated mists descended into its depths the situation was appalling.

There was a billet of wood lying across the peak, whose ends were securely held by the solid rock; and there were other signs indicating the presence at that place recently of some person or persons. By means of this log they were enabled to bend over and look into the chasm.

Clare, who never before looked upon anything so dreadful, became uneasy; but to encourage him, as well as to excite his interest, the father said: "It is reported there are some strange birds at the bottom of these cliffs, whose feathers are rare and beautiful."

"I hope they will come out while we are here," replied the boy.

The father resumed: "They will not come out unless disturbed. I would give anything to know if they actually inhabit the place; because I would find an entrance below and secure some of their eggs, if not the birds."

"We might throw stones from here," suggested Clare.

Although this was the proper course to pursue for the attainment of the desired end, if such were merely the bringing forth of the birds, yet the father dissented.

He continued: "We must find some one to go down *over* the cliff."

"Who shall we find, father?"

"You!" answered the man.

The word was spoken so suddenly and with such emphasis that Clare became speechless. The expression on his face was pitiful, and it smote the father to the heart.

"You will be quite secure, my boy," he said. "See, the rope is already in place and properly adjusted."

As he spoke he removed a quantity of heather lying within a few feet of where they were seated, and revealed a large coil of rope to the boy's gaze. One end was fastened to the log, while the other held some pieces of rope secured together in the form of an elongated net. Then the son knew it was his father who had made the arrangement.

Feeling the necessity of showing resolution on the occasion, the boy stood up and said:

"I am ready, father."

The man was evidently moved by the quiet resignation of the boy. He held him in his arms while he gazed lovingly into his face and finally kissed him.

"When the sun is on the meridian I shall lower you into the abyss."

"Into the abyss, father?"

"Into the abyss, my son. I have drawn the meridian line for this spot before now, and the shadow from an upright pointer will indicate it."

"Why do you wait for that time?"

"It is more likely what I seek will respond while the power of the sun is at its highest degree than at any other time. Nature is then prolific of subtile emanations. I do not desire the profound energy from darkness, such as is invoked at the midnight hour, but that which proceeds from light.

"Must I go down the whole way?" asked Clare, not understanding the last sentence.

"No. You will be suspended in mid air. When there shall be no further motion downward, cast the stones. I will give you into the space beneath, and listen for any disturbances that may arise there."

"Do you mean of the birds?"

"Of anything. Now, promise me. I am anxious to know exactly the kind of noises you may hear."

"I will tell you everything just as it takes place."

"Will you be afraid, my son?"

"No, father, if you promise to be near the rope."

"I will be near it, my boy."

The time having come, the man, placing Clare securely in the net, raised him with both hands and dropped him over the cliff, allowing the rope to glide slowly along the smcoth surface of the billet of wood.

When the rope was all out he bent over the precipice and listened. The silence was almost painful. Then he arose and glanced at the horizon. The distant landscape appeared superb. It was like a dream of a rich prospect where mortals might enjoy happiness. Inspired by the beauty of the scene, he seized a handful of earth and casting into the chasm, said: "If in the depths of this solitude a spirit resides with sympathies for poor human life, come forth, I beseech you! I implore you! as a sign that my innocent child, Clare, shall not perish prematurely."

There was no answer.

Then, laying hold of the rope with one hand and placing a foot on the edge of the cliff, he allowed the rest of his body to be suspended above his son.

Nature was still calm, as if nothing but the most delightful amusements were transpiring in her presence. It was evident she was smiling at his folly.

After relieving himself of this fearful situation, he began to draw up the rope with the steadiness and regularity he displayed during its descent. Finally Clare was brought in trembling and in tears. The father, without making any observation, took him in his arms and encouraged him to sob on his breast.

"I should not have asked so much of you, my sweet son," he said at length.

"I cannot help crying, father. It was so lonely and my body began to tremble, and I could not stop it."

"You will be well presently."

"There didn't any birds come out, either," continued Clare. "I thought often I would fall, my hands shook so much."

"Did you hear any sounds?"

"I did."

"Ha!" said the man, eagerly grasping at this faint indication of the realization of his hopes.

"Was it a voice?"

"It was like the quiet breathing of a large animal—oh! ever so large!"

"Then it was but the sighing of the wind in the void."

"I thought it to be what we hear in the woods when the evening is calm."

"Aye! the zephyr playing amid the boughs and leaves of the trees."

"Again I imagined it was water running over a shallow bed of gravel."

"Yes, the mountain hollows given voices by the moving atmosphere."

"The whole place appeared as if trying to speak, but could not."

"Well said, my child. It was the mysterious meeting of light and shade; loneliness and vacuity; gentle breezes and

granite walls, and nature the prime mover, holding each to the performance of its duty."

"If it could speak, father, what would it say?"

"Ah! my boy, that is beyond my knowledge."

"But what do you *think* it would say?"

"I wait the end. I am but the medium of a power—a creation like other agents. I move; I change; I breathe; I speak, but my language is not understood. I am beautiful and deformed, merry or sad, as the impulses surrounding me impel me to action or repose. I am a type of man."

Detaching a portion of the rope, he wound it into a portable coil, threw it over his shoulder, and taking Clare by the hand, began the homeward march. It appears he had borrowed the rope in sections from the farmers in the valley, and would return it at intervals.

Cautioning his son to maintain silence in regard to the business just concluded, Marlband reflected philosophically on his recent failure.

All energy, he thought, is the result of established law. There is no detached spirit with qualities similar to living persons. Life is the result of a combination of physical parts producing it, as light emanates from luminous bodies, but cannot be sustained without them. The inferior gods were merely names chosen to characterize powers of nature. They may render assistance to man if employed lawfully, but not by miraculous means, such as he had sought to procure.

No doubt this, too, was the rule in respect to the Supreme Power. How could erring man hope to change what the unknown had made imperishable through time? Man must follow—not presume to lead. His ideas are like the mists of a mountain, a necessary adjunct of its condition under certain circumstances, but of no perceptible value unless they coincide with law.

If any concession would be accorded him at all, it must come from the Supreme Power — the Invisible.

How ? By prayer ?

No ; by demand ! Prayer, in the ordinary sense, was an appeal for mercy on account of transgressions against Omnipotence ; he had nothing of that kind on hand in the present case. Clare was as guiltless as a being holding companionship with the godhead. If the Father really existed in heaven, as popularly believed, he would not deny justice and safety to his son, or think it presumption in Marlband to expect it, no matter how the petition was made.

Even if this belief was brought to adopt another name for God, to be known as the ruling energy of the universe, still the demand would be in place and liable to operate successfully.

Clare was related to this energy and must be regarded lovingly by it, if its intelligence were anything like that of mankind.

For several days after his visit to the mountain he fixed his mind deeply and forcibly on this subject, as if he meant to draw some response out of chaos. Curious as it may appear, this action continued for some time gave promise of favorable results. He began to have strange dreams.

One night after wandering more than usual around the old fort inhaling the fragrance of the wild flowers and pondering over his favorite theme, he lay down to enjoy his accustomed repose.

He was no sooner asleep, than he awoke to a vision surpassing in magnificence anything ever conceived by his mind.

He was alone at the entrance of a great plain extending from the earth into the firmament by a gradual incline upward. He found himself walking into this plain, as if drawn by a secret power; and saw that its proportions increased in width until it involved an expanse as large as the

compass of the horizon. In fact its limits were without bounds, so far as he could observe.

On either side of him were avenues flanked by arches and monuments of various colors and exquisite in design. There were fountains of water, trees and shrubs whose leaves appeared most beautifully tinted. The sheen of the architectural work combined with the brilliant colors of the natural growths prevailing there, produced a view whose grandeur was beyond description.

The surface of the plain was divided into several sections in different colors and felt exceedingly pleasant to the touch. He heard sounds like the notes of high toned instruments, away in places inaccessible to him, and a wonderful calmness pervaded the place.

The light appeared uniform in intensity. It was sufficient, without glare and permitted a view into the distance; whose beauty fascinated the beholder as if he had been stricken by a magic spell.

In this delightful region there were no inhabitants. Neither did the trees contain birds nor the water fish nor the ground insects.

Animal life was not there in any shape.

Notwithstanding Marlband's delight at beholding such a glorious spectacle the feeling became manifest that he was accompanied by an individual. At first he could see nothing of this person being only conscious instinctively, something was there ; but gradually the semblance of a form appeared beside him. It might have been his own shadow ; yet on reflection he concluded this could not exist, as there was no central point from which the light emanated, such as produces shadows.

He found he was guided by this companion without obtrusion or language and felt a kind of affection for it, like what is experienced in the presence of a dear friend or a lover.

After reflection on the mysterious presence enabled him to command sufficient power, he turned suddenly upon it, and beheld what he supposed to be a tall man of comely aspect near him, meditative and young.

This man with look fixed on the ground, advanced slowly to the base of an eminence hard by, leant familiarly against it, crossed one foot over the other and beckoned the man of earth to a seat near him.

Marlband in accepting the invitation knew the time had come to decide the fate of his boy.

He not only sat down with alacrity ; but began a conversation on the subject nearest his heart.

"I desire," said he, "to make conditions with the Supreme Power regarding the preservation of my son Clare."

"Why have you presumed to follow a course adopted if at all only by madmen ?" inquired his companion.

"I have but obeyed the impulses of my heart ; my reason sanctioned the action and I felt myself, in this cause, guiltless. My son is as much the work of the Supreme Power as the worlds which revolve in space, and hence I consider it legitimate to approach with the design of saving him from premature death."

"Have you considered how absurd it must be in ignorant man to aspire to know the plans of the All-powerful ? "

"I have."

"How mad the being of earth, to ask a revision of laws inscribed on the records of eternity through countless ages?"

"I did not look at the question in that way. It was not contemplated in this connection to interfere with law."

"What do you exact for your son ?"

"Long life."

The stranger smiled, like one hearing some foolish platitude.

"Why do you not ask that the privilege be extended to all your children ?" he said.

"I consider it would be demanding too much; and possibly frustrate my design respecting Clare. Besides I wanted an additional concession for him."

"Name it."

"Whosoever injures the boy by word or deed, shall be brought to a speedy and terrible end."

The stranger remained motionless and silent, with his eyes bent on the ground. After a considerable time spent in this manner, he asked:

"You mean by death?"

"I do."

"In the natural order of things it will come to every person."

"Yes, but my request would be for *sudden* death; violent extirpation, before the circumstances attending the offense against my son be forgotten."

"The civil law will protect him."

"Oh no! no! no! no!"

"What difference would it make if an interval intervened between the time the punishment was inflicted and the dissolution of the party engaged in its perpetration?"

"The criminal might exult in his iniquity and enjoy happiness, while my innocent child would suffer unjust torture unable to assist himself."

"No criminal can be happy. The memory of crime is like gall to the taste, it inflicts chastisement on the possessor of it. The most trivial injustice committed by one person against another will strike the memory of the offender with pain, even after years have passed since it occurred."

"True, yet it would please me well to have the boon asked for, accorded my boy."

"Do you consider it just to inflict punishment greater than the amount received?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Because an unprovoked assault on a good citizen is the highest crime known to man, if it terminate in death. In any less degree than this, although not estimated as a capital offense, yet the circumstances, such as the innocence of Clare, the respect due to public order and kindred subjects, would call for the punishment of death on the offender when he who would inflict such punishment was identical with the Supreme Power."

"It is almost impossible to concede what you ask, seeing that nature fixes the degree of punishment for offenses against her, from which she will not deviate."

"It is not impossible. There are intricate laws connected with human life unknown to mankind. Death strikes persons at all ages. It would not disturb law or surprise any one if offenders fell in the streets or were carried off in a hurricane, which is sometimes the fate of innocent persons."

"In order to attain this end you must guarantee certain conditions on behalf of your son; and remember, we shall amend your original proposition by striking out 'word' and confine ourselves to *deeds* of assault. If the offense against Clare be words only, it shall not be punished with death."

"I will guarantee anything for him I can."

"He must be just."

"He shall."

"And innocent."

"Yes."

"He will render assistance to others in need of the common necessaries of life."

"Be it so."

"Instruct him to defend the helpless, so as to procure them a full measure of justice."

"It shall be done."

"He must walk with nature in her beautiful ways and drink deeply of her mysteries."

"I am already leading him to do this."

"Do not inform him of this meeting or of the questions discussed thereat."

"No."

"It is understood he will not be told of any superhuman aid enlisted for his protection during life other than such as all persons well learned confide in."

"The requirement shall be observed."

"You will make no provision for his future comfort on account of the knowledge here obtained, excepting such arrangements as you would have instituted without it."

"Very well."

"With scarcely enough clothes to cover him, or food to allay his hunger, he shall be allowed to drift on the world, without protection or friendship or love or warning voice or companionship or hope of any place that would hide him from the evils of a barbarous age."

Marlband clasping his hands together bowed his head before the stranger, overcome with grief. After an interval of some minutes he answered : —

"It cannot be avoided ; but this is very hard."

"He will assume a new name," continued his companion.

"On what grounds ?"

"Because having been granted a renewal of his term of existence, he becomes a new individual. As a member of your family he would have ceased to exist."

"What shall he be called ?"

"Zanthon."

"This only ?"

"Zanthon."

"No trace of my family name, old and renowned as it is ?"

"No. You cannot reasonably complain on this account, seeing how persistently you have labored to set the example. You were the first to erase it."

"I remember too well the circumstances. Then, I presume, it will die out altogether?"

"Yes."

"Is there anything else you would impose?"

"Some of the incidents of his life, after parting with you may be mentioned. He will have several narrow escapes from death. He will be deceived by persons in the guise of friends. Betrayed into the power of his enemies. Disappointments shall pursue him to the end of his life. He must endure hunger, thirst, and exposure to inclement weather. Cruelty shall be perpetrated upon him. He will be despised, envied, and false accusations preferred against him. No wife or child shall exist to contribute to his happiness. He shall stand like a lone pine on a plain, whose companions of the forest have been blasted by the storm!"

Marlband fell upon his knees, exclaiming: —

"Mercy! Mercy for Clare! Mercy for Zanthon!"

Then extending his arms in a supplicating manner, he continued: —

"Oh, thou! who in the depth of infinitude, soarest on wings of golden light, companion of eternal power, behold one kneeling to thee in behalf of innocence and helplessness. Thou supreme glory beaming with surpassing loveliness, above the domes of unknown worlds. Father, ruler of eternity, Almighty One, imperishable energy, manifest through material and space; absorbing all time, controlling all power, and having thy habitation in eternity, spare my son. Mitigate these terrible afflictions!"

The stranger replied: —

"It is but the common fate of mankind, excepting a few of the visitations. The genius of nature will be taxed to reconcile with law whatever is granted your son. Hence the necessity of strange features in his history."

"Will there be any privilege given to lessen the burden of his sorrow, and enable him to enjoy existence to some extent?" said Marlband, regaining his seat.

"Through the difficulties indicated he shall reach competence. Nature shall give him fame in return for his companionship. Temperate habits will result in purity of thought and peace shall finally surmount his troubles."

"I am content," said the father.

"Are we now agreed as to the terms of the contract on each side?"

"I believe so."

"You understand the reasons why some of the conditions, apparently harsh, are necessary to be observed?"

"Yes."

"Then all the privileges requested for the boy shall be conceded; and the powers shall know of the compact, so as to keep inviolate forever the agreement here enacted."

Marlband felt the business of the hour concluded, yet was anxious to understand the character of the place where this important interview had transpired. Attempting to speak on the subject, he was seized with a slight dizziness, obliging him to lean against the back of his seat. Then a mist crept slowly over his eyes obscuring the view before him. His strange companion disappeared. Drowsiness oppressed his feelings, and finally he slept.

When he awoke, the sun was rising over the mountains and forcing his rays through the chinks of the old door of his cottage; the birds were singing in the fields, and the children chatting through the apartment while preparing to begin the labors of the day. Notwithstanding the visionary nature of his experience during the night, Marlband entertained the belief that the great problem was solved.

CHAPTER V.

FAMINE.

THE people of Footford had not long to wait for the verification of Marlband's predictions. Those who doubted them in the first instance became somewhat alarmed on observing the large spots on the leaves and stems of the potato plants at the time promised. A few weeks afterwards the season had come to begin gathering the products of the year. The genial harvest, the period of abundance, when even the poorest of the poor became conscious how delightful the world appears to persons having plenty to eat.

Alas for human expectancy. Instead of full measures on this occasion the people who sought for them returned home empty-handed. The potatoes were all rotten in the ground! What they had heard their neighbor say was true to the letter.

When the facts became fully known; when people began to realize the condition of their families, there arose a wail or lamentation in the land such as was never before heard. It was the cry of women, who, in their frantic distress, rushed out on the highways and gave vent to their sorrow there, as if to awaken the mysterious powers of the universe to action in their behalf. This added terror to the general consternation.

For a short time the immediate distress of the very poorest people was relieved by their neighbors. After this they left their houses never to return. Those who remained did so only

to follow the example of the others, when their means of subsistence had been expended. A number of farmers had small quantities of oats and barley intended originally to be sold to pay rent, but this year were retained for their own support.

All payments were stopped, charity disappeared and friendship even became extinct under the necessity of providing for self.

The open country, the public roads and the towns were thronged with destitute families seeking food to preserve life. As the year advanced the number increased. Every resource imaginable or available was examined by them. Cattle were slaughtered in the fields ; domestic fowls fell one after another to satisfy human demands. Hogs and even horses were devoured by their owners.

Children could be seen digging for roots and gathering various kinds of leaves, which they carried home and cooked for food. On the coast the seaweed thrown in by the tide was eagerly sought, and such portions of it as could be used eaten.

Some of the middlemen, who were growing large quantities of turnips for their horses and cattle, sold the crop to the poor at maturity as a substitute for potatoes.

Suddenly an announcement was made that numbers of the people were dying. Those who could afford to satisfy curiosity at such a trying time found the dead in several places unburied; on the tops of the hills, in ravines, along the roads, as well as in deserted houses.

Nature was shocked to the heart at the spectacle.

It would be offensive to laugh, even in private, lest the void sorrowing for this portion of mankind should smite the transgressor with a death stroke.

Disease in many forms appeared. Its vigor became terrible, for the victim never escaped. All the noble qualities peculiar to man in the pursuit of good became dormant. He fell in the course of a few months from the happiness of an intellectual

being to the irresponsibility of a savage. The face of physical nature appeared in awe of some immense power operating in its presence, furious with the conditions imposed on it, to destroy innocence, while the guilty remained untouched.

Oh, it would be only for a season. When the angel of Death ceased his present mission there would be a day of retribution appointed for the nobles. Aye, it was probable their total extirpation would be determined and agreed to. A system so obnoxious to nature could not last long, especially if productive of such dire disaster as witnessed here.

Fairside Marlband and his family were among the first to feel the effects of the famine. Having no grain on his land, the failure of the potatoes left nothing but a few garden vegetables. Taking into account what friendly acquaintances gave them, by the end of October their entire means were exhausted.

Then, indeed, did this mysterious man rise to the dignity of a hero by the extraordinary labors performed in behalf of his family.

Although the season was growing cold and rain fell in considerable quantities, every morning witnessed his departure in search of provision. If he did not return until near the close of the day, it was understood by his wife and children he had traveled many miles on that occasion. He never came home without bringing something. There were no questions asked as to his methods of procedure ; it was satisfactory to all parties when the food appeared, no matter how procured. After the sources of his supplies for some distance around Footford were exhausted, he extended the circuit. Then he penetrated to the town, distant about ten miles, where large numbers of people congregated, attracted by the rumor that some form of relief was being adopted for them.

Aid from distant countries would come, no doubt, and did at a later period, but the flower of the people would be laid in the dust before it could be utilized to save them. The mer-

chants and some of the aristocracy, however, instituted proceedings for giving immediate relief. This consisted of soup made of corn meal, water and salt.

In the history of the world there could not, perhaps, be found a more reprehensible preparation for the nourishment of mankind. Had the meal been issued singly it could have been made into bread or mush and relished by the consumers; but *soup* of this consistence, color and flavor was an abomination. However, there were no remonstrances offered or complaints heard. Weighed in the balance of human excellence the devisers of this scheme were far beneath the unfortunate recipients. The narrow-heartedness shown in this instance was such as to make a person ashamed of being related in any way to the miserable creatures. Notwithstanding its deficiencies Marlband had some difficulty in procuring a share of the so-called relief. After making use of it for several days almost all the members of his family sickened, obliging him to explore other districts in order to vary his supplies.

These daily marches enabled him to witness woful scenes. Desolation appeared to be increasing everywhere. Footford was wholly abandoned early in the season. For miles around no one remained but his family. It was as if they lived in the center of a wilderness.

He often saw persons fall by the wayside, yet was afraid to render assistance, lest an accident should detain him from reaching home when expected.

Children endeavoring to bury their parents, without coffin or shroud; women carrying children on their backs and the dead in their arms; men digging graves in front of their doors, might be seen frequently over the face of the country. On account of constant exposure to scenes of this nature, as well as to inclemency of weather, he felt the savage rise in his heart. From solicitations he merged into demands. When he entered a house, if there was food, the occupants were obliged to give

him part of it before he would leave. If the people were dying he carried off all without scruple. When he found none but dead folks he gutted the house like a fiend. He broke into chests and cupboards, battered down doors or bored through the roof without hesitation.

His wife said to him one day: "What will we do in the depth of winter? You cannot make such long journeys then in the snow and rain as you do now. You are getting weak already."

"Aye, the winter," said the man, reflectively. "The winter will surely test all my strength; and it is already at the door."

This was about the end of November. The changes wrought in the family since the beginning of the famine were very perceptible.

Marlband was bent on account of over exertion. His face was thin and hard like carved wood. While there could yet be seen a penetrating look in his eyes they had sunk deeply in their sockets, showing great mental disquietude. The hair permitted to grow over his face and head in the utmost disorder, gave him a frightful appearance, especially as his pale features glistened like one risen from the dead. No one could recognize him any longer by his voice. It was weak and frequently husky from emotion.

His clothes hung in tatters around him; the shoes on his feet were ground to the uppers, and an old misshapen piece of felt which had once been a hat covered his head. The wife exhibited a kind of wild look, a picture of nervous excitement called forth by actual suffering and fear of impending danger. Perhaps the circumstance which pained her most was her inability to assist her husband other than remaining in doors to watch the children. The food did not agree with her, and a continuation of her present surroundings would produce some trouble, ending fatally, no doubt.

Amby had become pale and thin, but her brilliant beauty remained. She kept herself busy at some trifling work, speaking very little. May showed great vitality. She worked fearlessly through the house, spoke loud and laughed sometimes to encourage the others.

Valine began to fail soon. The beauty which distinguished her previously was gradually disappearing. The rosy lips assumed a bluish tint; the lustre of the eyes became dull and the face sharp. Her movements through the house were quietly performed, and she often sang to herself. Orfa lay abed. He had been sick since partaking freely of the soup brought from the town, as already noticed. The father controlled the trouble by giving him some potions which he prepared from certain astringent roots, yet it was thought advisable to keep the boy in bed, as he appeared quite weak.

Clare was grave and at times sad, but strong as usual. His age did not permit him to think so deeply as the others of his situation, and he required but little food, even during times of plenty.

May and he helped each other. They went frequently into the fields, and when alone laughed with as much zest as of old.

Clare, however, had been grievously troubled by the loss of some of his favorites.

During the spring Fly, the sparrow, left the house, and, associating himself with a strange bird in the garden, began the construction of a nest in the identical hawthorn bush from which he was originally taken. The boy, complaining to his father, intimated he would prefer to see Fly alone. The man replied: "He is going to build a nest, and needs assistance, which accounts for the presence of the other bird." About midsummer Fly had congregated around him a number of young sparrows. He seemed to be more attached to them than to his old friend who took such care of him formerly in the house. One morning he was seen rousing up the whole col-

ony, like a captain marshalling his men for an expedition, and taking the lead, flew across the open country, followed by the others. This was the last seen of him.

Fly's desertion, however, was trivial compared with a later misfortune — the death of Tyro.

This event occurred, no doubt, on account of dire want. When food became so scarce that each individual was given a quantity proportionate to age, and that, for the most part, short allowance was the distinguishing characteristic of the meals, poor Tyro could not be included as one in the division. Nevertheless Clare voluntarily gave him some of his share, until cautioned by his father that such action should be discontinued as a matter of necessity.

The dog actually seemed to understand the nature of the distress, for he frequently howled outside the door at night and absented himself during a portion of the day, as if seeking food elsewhere.

One morning he was found dead under Clare's sleeping-place, curled up on a straw mat which had been made for him during happier times.

Among the children it was a day of great mourning, and at May's suggestion a grave was prepared for him in a corner of the garden, where he was buried.

After Clare's grief had subsided he said to May:

"I will plant a tree over him next year."

Not knowing the changes liable to occur in the mean time, his sister answered:

"We will remember him."

"What kind of a tree will we plant?" continued the boy.

"Hawthorn, I think, would be the best," she said.

"Like the one that Fly lived in?"

"Yes. In the spring it has white blossoms that give a sweet perfume."

"Do you think Tyro would like that?"

"If he knew it, he would. This fragrant air above his grave is the highest tribute you could pay to his memory."

"They're all gone now but Rompy," resumed the boy, "but he will stay with us, because he can get plenty to eat."

"We must not part with Rompy," said May, "he will soon be able to carry you on his back."

"Oh, you may be sure I will keep him. Rompy will be with us forever."

While the attention of the younger children was directed in the manner just described, Marlband suddenly encountered a difficulty more terrible than famine. Whatever strength and ingenuity remained unexhausted in him were roused to their utmost capacity by an appalling circumstance.

Amby, his daughter, left the house one morning to meet a party of acquaintances moving out of the country, and did not return.

The mountain road coming through the district in a south-eastern direction passed near the old fort on the eastern side at a short distance from Marlband's residence, and running north-west joined the King's highway, or main road, which lead north to the principal shipping point on the coast.

At the time mentioned groups of people were constantly passing along these roads, most of them on their way to foreign countries. There were others, however, intent on plunder, and it was not an unusual occurrence to witness a well-appointed party of the aristocratic factions dash along the route as a variety to their entertainment.

Marlband heard of the event on his return from the day's expedition; for, as the distance to the mountain road, where Amby was to intercept the friends, could be but a few minutes' walk, the mother noticed her daughter's absence in the early part of the day and dispatched messengers to search for her. As these returned without finding any trace of the missing girl, the mother became alarmed, but could do nothing until

the arrival of her husband. Although it was now winter, and the fatigue of the journey just completed pressed him to seek rest, yet the man determined to search for Amby during the night.

Expostulations offered by his wife were heard in vain. While his pulse quickened and his breath came quick and short, he sought for weapons in a cavity behind one of the beams supporting the roof of the house. These consisted of a bludgeon and knife. They were formidable instruments of offense or defense, especially the long steel blade held in place by a heavy spring.

Both had been prepared at leisure and furnished with everything necessary to their complete usefulness. He had no definite idea as to whether or not he would be obliged to use them, but if an encounter did take place, woe to the enemy giving him battle! With these he rushed into the night, his hair being lifted by the wind in awful aspect; his headlong speed making him appear like some creature of another world.

The night darkened upon his passage through it until its murky depths resembled those of caverns beneath a mountain, as if it meant to hide him from the face of the peaceful firmament. It was calculated before leaving home he could overtake the party Amby had gone to see, at a camping-place, or village, on the highway, about sixteen miles distant, where they would stop for the night.

In this estimate he was correct; for long before dawn he halted in the village where they slept.

There was nothing gained, however, by his precipitous march. Amby was not there.

The party had seen her on the mountain road, near the fort, where they spoke to her and had their leave-taking, she turning, as they understood, to go home.

On his return he examined carefully every place in and around the fort, assuming if she had been murdered he might

find her body; but nothing was seen which could give the least trace of her condition or the causes of her disappearance.

From explorations in the country he penetrated to the town. Here he wandered through the streets, searching now for his daughter as well as for provisions. Through the lanes and by-ways; into remote corners and public places of resort; at the doors of private residences, he was seen gliding like a troubled spirit incapable of relief.

Whatever interest might have been excited in the public mind for him in prosperous times, no one paid any attention to his case at present.

Where hundreds were falling daily into a worse predicament, it was not likely *he* would be made the object of special protection by those who had enough to do keeping famine from their own doors. Besides Marlband looked more like an insane man than one in possession of his reason. The story told by him regarding the loss of his daughter might be merely a presentation of his disordered fancy. Hence, there were some who laughed derisively at it, as a fabrication to excite sympathy in his own behalf. Such tales were heard almost every day. The world sometimes turns on a noble spirit, striking it in its ignorance without mercy.

Marlband felt the blow, as if a heavy rock had fallen on him It made him exclaim in the bitterness of grief and rage: "Oh, humanity, thou art unworthy of an apostrophe uttered even in thy dispraise!"

No rebuff, however acutely it might have been felt, prevented the continuation of his inquiries. His words were limited to two sentences in the presence of strangers:

"Give me food; I want my daughter."

Once a woman, leading a boy by the hand, asked him in a sympathizing manner:

"What was your daughter like, poor man?"

"Like?" he answered, wildly, while grasping his hair with both hands, he whined, in the manner of a sick child. Then, recollecting the purport of the question, replied calmly:

"Hast thou seen the sun in the glory of the summer solstice, when he puts forth the supreme brightness of his vigor to adorn the heavens and excite the admiration of all living creatures? How absolute is his grandeur, freshened with ruddy health and beaming alone, immeasurably above all competitors.

Such was Amby.

Hast thou beheld the evening, robed in refined beauty, standing calmly and with pensive mood in view of the Infinite? Sweet as a dream of heaven; the idol of pure minds; chaste as the companion of God; clear, like the crystal waters of a fabulous fountain?

That resembled my daughter.

Hast thou heard of the beings beyond the stars, whose breath resembles the perfume of flowers — with eyes of fascinating light and lips aglow in the tints of the rose?

My child was like unto them."

The woman turned away, not knowing how to reply, and the boy asked her:

"What does he mean, mother?"

"Hush! He is mad. No one but a madman would talk in that way," said the woman.

The loss of Amby was the first great indication to Marlband that a power greater than his own had begun the work of his destruction. It was like meeting a barrier he could not pass, because insurmountable.

Knowledge of occult science, ingenuity, courage and perseverance were of no avail in this case. His progress was checked when hope had induced him to believe he might be able to work his way through the evil of the times.

He was stunned. An invisible hand struck him in the darkness, and he staggered from its effects.

A few more of such calamitous strokes, aimed at him with like precision, would bring him down to earth, never to rise

The other members of the family were fearfully stricken by the misfortune so unaccountable in its occurrence. It made them tremble, because its work was so complete as not to admit of the least interference.

They could do nothing to defend themselves.

CHAPTER VI.

CELEBRATING A FESTIVAL.

THERE was a climax of destitution in the home of Marlband on Christmas eve.

On the outside, the snow lay thick and heavy over the ground obliterating familiar pathways, leveling uneven places, and blocking the public roads. The sky was obscured by an opaque mass of it, which in its disintegration would add to the quantity already fallen.

Sounds indicative of movement were heard no more. Even the stream hard by, so garrulous heretofore, became frozen and its voice hushed into silence. It seemed to have felt the incessant prattle before sustained, to be obtrusive and harsh at this time, when Death was solemnly extending his wings above the doomed earth with the intention, apparently, of sealing up human life in eternal slumber. No doubt it was satisfied to participate in the general desolation.

Within, the family had waited until evening for the coming home of the father. There had been no food tasted or eaten by any one of them since yesterday; and the fact that Orfa was yet in poor health added pain to their bewilderment.

Besides, it was well remembered, Christmas would come to-morrow: the festival distinguished for liberality towards the poor; a time of happiness for young and old. The period when every one was permitted to enjoy a full measure of legiti-

mate pleasure without criticism. Apart from its supposed spiritual advantages, it ushered in on this account large supplies of the most delicious viands the season could afford. What would it bring now? Something to be remembered, no doubt. As the day approached its close, the father was seen returning home. May, Valine, and Clare ran to meet him, regardless of the snow coming in contact with their bare feet. Custom made such contact endurable.

Marlband extended his hands to grasp those of his children. In their joy at meeting him, they did not notice, poor creatures, that he had not the accustomed supply of provisions. They were blind to the fact that for the first time during the year he was coming to them without a particle of food!

He had visited a place from which he had expected to have taken a supply, but was disappointed. Moreover, his strength was not now so good as it used to be, making it impossible to do more on that occasion. Any day, beyond the present, might witness the appearance of his incapacity for further travel.

On entering the house, the wife perceived at once the true state of affairs. She drew forward a seat into which he fell rather than sat, while the children gathered eagerly around him, smiling in their wretchedness, thus giving some cheer to his disturbed mind. Neither husband nor wife seemed disposed to talk. They had reached a period when the mind turns in upon itself, from a disgust or terror of external things. In this situation it is extraordinary how much information is obtained by intuition.

Without saying so, the husband knew his wife understood all about his want of success, while she, on her part, believed his mind fully alive to the pity she really felt for him.

The children, however, would not remain silent.

May, who was standing close to the man's shoulder, said:—

"I could go out with you every day, father, to help you."

Both parents turned suddenly to look at the girl, but neither of them spoke. May continued : —

"I feel strong, and you are getting weak."

"It is your spirit, my child, the desire to do good. Whatever you could have accomplished at an earlier date, it would be now impossible to attain on account of winter."

"If you tell me where to go, and how to get what you bring home, I would venture out alone."

"Ah, my brave girl," said the father, struck with the remarkable persistence of his daughter, "You do not know the dangers attending such a course."

"Then tell me father."

"The people have fled from the district; you would be obliged to travel a long distance to reach points sparsely inhabited, with no certainty of procuring anything of what you sought. There are bands of desperate men on the highways it would be unsafe to meet, and altogether the difficulties are too numerous and obstinate to be overcome."

The mother raised her head and remarked quietly : —

"May is strong yet, and could go into the town to work."

"She could be a servant girl," said Orfa.

"She might wash dishes in a kitchen," spoke out Valine.

The father turned to Clare : —

"What shall we do with May, my boy ?"

"Keep May at home, father," answered Clare gravely, and he continued : "May must not part with me. If she goes, I go with her."

May approached the boy and put her arms around him, while the man offered commendatory words in his praise by saying : —

"Good, my boy, you are worthy of my esteem and gratitude."

The mother, however, urged the original proposition; and she added : —

"Something must be done soon."

"The girl could earn no more than her own support," said the man, "even supposing that work was available. It would be one less to supply here, to be sure; but I am not willing to show any disposition of getting rid of her. She is too young for rough treatment."

"I might go before the doors of the rich and ask them to relieve us," said May.

This observation brought Marlband to his feet as if a shell had burst behind him, while his haggard countenance betrayed the depths of his emotion.

"Oh, spare my soul this supreme anguish!" he cried piteously. "Alone amid the dark shadows of desolation have I wandered without murmur to provide you food and conceal your helplessness from the world's criticism. The depths of misery into which we have fallen are shocking. The prospect of future deliverance uncertain, as well as the hope of ever again regaining the happiness of former times, poor as they were; but I have been proud of you notwithstanding. It was a delight to me to know I was rendering you efficient services. I have had my full measure of reward while thinking of your love. Now that I have been brought to the brink of the grave, I am yet happy, conscious of your presence in my home. When I calculated on your innocence it was no vain speculation. You are spotless, like the sheen of the moon upon the waters that beautifies the night. If I were king of the earth, and sought a genuine recompense for the noblest gift at my command, I could not find one more beautiful and satisfactory than your disinterested love. Remain near me with it, and I shall fight the evil of the day joyfully until I fall.

I would account it a dishonor for a child of mine to beg before the presence of any one.

The rich do not affiliate with the poor. There are men in their ranks who would not scruple to bribe their way to the overthrow of virtue. Gentility is no guarantee against degen-

eracy acquired by excess and crime. Nobility is meaningless ; because it is not exclusively noble, where it is represented to be, and sometimes not at all.

Some among the rich will give back to the people a part of what they have taken from them, under an unjust system of social economy ; and many, really generous, will give what they can spare. I harbor no enmity against them ; but I should tremble were you to appear in their presence unprotected. It would not be a question of beggary *then*. Whatever pity you might excite in the breasts of the few, it would be virtue passing in review before the sensuality of the many. Physical weakness at the mercy of strength. Beauty in the clutches of deformity. Innocence confronted by baseness. Poverty derided by wealth.

I could not permit your subjection to such a severe and unequal trial. I would not have your purity upbraid me with its fall in exchange for the government of the world.

If you go back to the Divine Principle at this time let it be with the same unsullied nature which distinguished your coming.

You do not know the immense value of virtue such as you possess. A tiny flower plucked from the embrace of the snow can make you happy ; but if once subject to the wiles of opulent desire the wealth of the universe could not accomplish it. You might pray with head bowed to earth and gather solace from the exercise ; now you can raise your face with confidence to the dome of heaven, and reaching beyond the clouds, seek the presence of God.

Be content.

The cruelty and baseness of the world shall not yet be permitted to interfere with the freedom of your soul in its maintenance of purity."

The children surrounded the father while he was speaking. The mother stared at the fire, evidently with no intention of making any comment on the harangue of her husband.

May, who understood the force of what he had said, would have offered excuses for having caused him so much distress, but was interrupted by Orfa, who, reclining in an easy seat specially prepared for him, changed the subject abruptly. "I would like to have some soup to-morrow, father, for Christmas," he said.

One would suppose that, owing to existing circumstances, the man was likely to return a harsh reply to this unreasonable demand; but Marlband was equal to the emergency. His answer was prompt and kindly spoken.

"You shall have soup, Orfa."

"Not the soup from the town, but meat soup," resumed the boy.

"I understand."

"Fine, fresh soup, boiled at home."

"Genuine, high-flavored soup, such as we used to have formerly."

"I would like pieces of dumpling boiled with some of the soup, father."

"Your suggestion shall be entertained and acted on."

Then Clare took hold of his arm and continued in the same strain:

"I will want dough to make horses and cows."

"It will be forthcoming, my son."

"May will make lots of things for me."

"Very good."

"She will bake them on the griddle."

"The griddle will do its duty as in former years."

It is surprising how much cheer may be communicated by one person to others on mere promises. The man was further questioned. Valine said:

"We are fasting all day, father, dear. I am quite hungry and weak."

"I pity you, child; I have done my best."

"It is so long, so very long to fast that way."

"Great feasts are preceded by great fasts, Valine."

"Why, father?"

"Doubtless to make them more desirable and therefore more interesting. When the appetite is sharp the feast will be kindly relished."

"Will we have a feast to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Can we have anything at all to-night?"

"Yes; sleep."

"To eat?"

"Rest."

"Or drink?"

"In the depths of oblivion, where anxiety is dissolved and the nectar of forgetfulness dissipates all pain."

The children having been quieted, the father turned to the open door. The gloom was increasing. A cold wind precipitated itself over the face of the country, its direction being indicated by the snowflakes, which again began to fall. There would be sufficient light, however, for pedestrians, owing to the white covering on the ground.

If the man's promises were to be kept, he must add a night's journey to his travels of the day, and they were considerable.

As he looked and meditated there was a red glare in his eyes that made him appear terribly wretched, as if he were on the eve of execution.

The thoughts which careered through his mind in that dread hour will never be known.

His mental suffering, apart from bodily ailments, could not even be imagined; yet he stood boldly against adversity like the massive rock on the promontory's head which bares its breast to the lash of the ocean waves in defense of its beloved home.

He would carry out one part, at least of the programme — the voluntary sacrifice of his life while protecting those whom he loved.

The wife, having looked up to ascertain what her husband intended doing, he beckoned her to a conference at the door. In this position the passage was blocked by their bodies, while their heads protruded into the atmosphere without.

Their voices could only be heard indistinctly, and the nature of their conversation for some time remained unknown to the party within the house.

After the main portion of the question, whatever it was, had been settled the mother was heard to say :

"The like of this I never knew before," alluding to the series of propositions advanced by the husband.

"There is no reason why it should be so very objectionable or distasteful," said the man.

"Grass being the common food of the greater number of domestic animals, the flesh cannot be other than sweet-flavored."

"It goes to my heart and my conscience," said the woman, with strong emphasis on the latter word, "on account of the poor, homeless thing."

"Aye, and the boy," said the father.

"Well, I suppose we must try it, as we have nothing else," continued the woman.

"Yes," returned the man.

"It will carry us over four or five days, at least, and by that time I will have collected other material."

Thus ended the mysterious conference, as both parents, with downcast looks, withdrew into the house.

When Clare arose next morning he found the whole household astir in preparation for a feast. The mother was engaged in making cakes. May had already procured a quantity of dough, from which she was fashioning figures of birds and beasts. The griddle was beside the fire, fitted up for baking.

The large iron pot stood near it, clean and half filled with water, ready to receive some delicious morsel before being placed over the fire. There was a dish of onions, evidently intended for flavoring soup, and altogether it looked like Christmas, when taken in connection with the holiday cleanliness and smiling faces of most of the family.

Seeing all these indications of a return to old times, the boy was delighted. After the family partook of a light breakfast, the business of the day proceeded briskly and systematically. Clare watched his father intently. There was a reserve about him which appeared remarkable, like a person resting after having had a fierce encounter with a terrible power. His face was pale and thin and his head inclined to fall upon his breast.

When the time arrived for placing the boiler in position, the father whisked from behind the door what appeared to be a leg of venison, conveying it into the receptacle mentioned, together with some detached pieces, intended, no doubt, to enrich the soup.

The details of preparation kept every one busy until the family, at length, sat down to dinner.

It was evident Marlband employed all his powers to make the most of the present festival. That he had calculated beforehand on its demands, and in consequence reserved certain supplies for it, such as flour and onions, there could be no doubt.

It was strange, none of the children inquired where the meat had been procured, notwithstanding the fact that no trace of it or expectation appeared yesterday.

At the head of the festive-board the father listened attentively to every sentence spoken by each person present, and gave replies in the kindest words he could select. Moreover, he directed the conversation into pleasant channels, and even went the length of propounding jokes, in order to carry his

plan of celebrating Christmas to the highest point of enjoyment.

The present was the last feast they would partake of together ; and the knowledge of this fact seemed to emphasize his movements and his words.

How eagerly he scanned the features of his children ! as if he could see in them the history of the future, and their premature death. While physical strength was less than formerly, his penetrating perception multiplied. His laugh had become a cackle, a stranger would be shocked to hear.

When the feasting was finished, and the family sat in a semicircle around the fire on the hearth all appeared to be happy ; and the night was far advanced before any one showed a disposition to retire to rest.

Long after the others had gone to sleep, however, Marlband paced quietly over the floor of the apartment engaged in solemn meditation. On one occasion he opened the door, cautiously ; and looked into the gloom. With his face raised to the sky trying to penetrate the darkness, and his hands grasping the upper part of the door-frame, he cried out :—

"Oh God ! Oh God ! Oh God !"

He did not mean to charge the Supreme Power with the hardships of the times ; but to pour out the burden of his spirit into the home of the unknown.

On the following day two scenes of trouble became manifest to him. Clare and May reported that Rompy could not be found anywhere ; and three of the family became sick ; the mother, Valine, and Orfa.

As no person was observed near the place where Rompy had been kept, the children were at a loss to understand how he could have been stolen ; but the father explained that the animal had gone away of his own accord to a distant part of the country, like the people of the village, and would not return.

Clare was so much astonished at the recital of this proceeding that his grief did not appear so great as it otherwise would and the matter rested there. May, however, privately mentioned her suspicions to her mother in regard to the fate of Rompy, and was told they were well founded; but was cautioned to preserve silence on the subject. The fact was he had been slaughtered to make a Christmas feast!

The sudden appearance of sickness was undoubtedly due to the free use of fresh meat by those who had previously an insufficient amount of food. The character of the complaint also, dysentery, made it exceedingly dangerous. With it life has but a short lease. In the present instance, it was true to its reputation. By the time the old year was preparing to depart, Mrs. Marlband expired, and Orfa followed a few days later.

Although in need of all the strength at his command for the purpose of attending the wants of those still living, yet the man did not neglect to deposit the remains of the dead in the burial place designed for them. Whatever opinions he had entertained, heretofore, on the subject, were willingly set aside in deference to the wishes of his wife. As he had begun so would he end, faithful to the expectations of the persons depending on his genius and labors.

In lieu of a coffin he wrapped each body in cloth, and when the twilight of evening began to appear, carried it on his shoulder to the cemetery, distant about two miles. On these occasions Clare accompanied him, while May remained at home watching her sister.

Thus the old and the new year met. Thus the dead and the living parted; one to rest, the other to struggle with events as heretofore.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORM KING MAKES WAY.

VALINE'S condition did not improve. Notwithstanding the united efforts of the other members of the family directed toward her comfort and convalescence she grew weaker daily. She could no longer move in bed without assistance, though there appeared to be no pain associated with her weakness. It was a gradual cessation of the action of the physical powers.

Her breathing resembled the quiet motion of the west wind among summer leaves.

About a week after the death of Orfa, the father was sitting near the bedside where Valine lay. May and Clare were also present.

It was morning, but the man was not going out on this occasion, for latterly he made but two trips to town per week. Besides, the atmosphere was disturbed by a storm.

Immense clouds swept across the heavens, and the wind roared continuously as if it were announcing the destruction of all created things.

Valine appeared uneasy, though not on account of suffering, so much as showing the prevalence of a change. Her fingers, which were outside the bed-covering, began to move nervously. A livelier appearance superseded the languor of the eyes.

There was a faint smile on the attenuated face; and she began a conversation, surprising even to the father, by its suddenness and depth of thought.

"Is the wind coming from heaven, father?"

"No, my child; it is only the atmosphere immediately above the earth, which is in motion."

"I would like to look up into the blue sky above the storm."

"You will soon be able to do so."

"*Now*, father, *now*," she replied with emphasis.

"Why *now*, Valine?"

"I don't know. I feel the liking for it. I wish I could see it soon."

As no one made any reply to these remarks, she resumed :—

"Tell me about heaven, won't you?"

"It has been called the home beyond the clouds," replied the man calmly.

"But you know everything, father. Tell me what is in heaven?"

At first Marlband did not possess a sufficient amount of enthusiasm in the subject to give a glowing picture of the place, to which the sick child's mind was wandering; but seeing how earnestly she appealed to him, at this, the last interview, perhaps, he would ever have with her, the deep affections of his heart began to move and his intellect to grasp the ideas necessary for the occasion. He answered :—

"Heaven is where all true happiness will be realized, or it is a blank. The most beautiful scenes imaginable will meet your view. You shall walk in lovely gardens and breathe an atmosphere charged with delicious perfume. Lakes and rivers of crystal waters, multitudes of singing birds in the sky and other delightful sources of enjoyment may be encountered. Above all, the inhabitants will be agreeable."

"Are there houses?"

"Aye, indeed; castles, having walls adorned with precious ornaments, reflecting the glory of eternal light."

"Will mother be there to meet me?"

"Yes, darling."

"What shall she have for me?"

"Flowers, my child, gathered on the shores of the beautiful islands abounding in the ocean of eternity."

"How will I appear?"

"You will be clothed in beauty, and your face shall be pure as the stars in the night. There will be a garland on your head such as angels wear, and you shall wander over regions full of grandeur and delight forever."

"Ah, but we cannot be happy unless you be with us."

"Amid such exquisite beauty?"

"Yes."

"But you will see God there face to face. His appearance would attract all love."

"Oh, but we want you as well. Let God go along with the others; you come with us."

"I may be there in a little while, my child."

"And May and Clare?"

"Yes."

"Is it true, father, that we shall all meet again?"

"Let us hope it is."

"Oh, but you must *say* it is. If you say it, then it will be true."

The man hesitated. The confidence reposed in him by the child made a powerful appeal to his conscience in favor of truth, such as he had endeavored at all times to teach; yet he could not answer the question directly, because it went beyond the sphere of men's knowledge. His belief, too, might not agree with Valine's aspirations on the subject. Nevertheless, his reply showed how carefully he watched the expression of her hopes, so as to prevent any contrary opinion from interfering with them during the last hours of her life. He answered:

"We shall all meet again."

"Oh, I'll be so glad when I see you coming, never to part any more."

"Never to part."

There was a lull in the storm without at intervals, indicating the approach of its termination. Some rain had fallen, and the thick masses of clouds which had obscured the heavens were drifting past or breaking up into thinner layers, if not wholly dissipated. Suddenly a gleam of sunshine penetrated through the clouds in that part of the firmament observable through the doorway by those within the house, and a beautiful spectacle appeared. The opening in the clouds widened until it became like a huge chasm, through which the blue sky was seen. The sun's rays came through this chasm, flooding the cottage with golden light.

From the zenith to the horizon, especially on one side, the clouds assumed the appearance of a human form: A man with a crown on his head, his long hair and beard in wild disorder, his garments swept back furiously by the tempest and his face apparently agitated by some internal commotion.

The head and shoulders stood well in the breach, as if he disputed to the last the present action of the power under which he was obliged to move slowly away. His head, too, was turned, with the face partially towards the interior heavens, and the intent stare in that direction showed there was some object of surpassing beauty and authority attracting his gaze. All this was seen by the persons sitting near the sick bed, as well as by Valine. The father, pointing with his finger toward the place, said:

"See! The storm king makes way to afford you an opportunity of beholding the sky."

This incident seemed to give her great satisfaction.

She smiled while looking long and wistfully into the heavenly prospect. Then she called to her father:

"Lift me up! Lift me up! Hold me, father, dear; hold me!"

In an instant the man had her in his arms with her face against his.

There was a slight trembling of the entire frame, a little sigh heard coming from the snow-white breast.

The rigidity of the spasm-like attack relapsed and the spirit of Valine was gone into the gorgeous avenue she so much admired but a few minutes before!

The father laid her gently on the couch and buried his face in the coverlet, giving full vent to his tears. May and Clare wept silently, with averted faces and remote from each other, the better to indulge their grief. The greater part of the day was spent by the three sorrowing relatives decorating and preparing the remains, like the others, for burial. Before any changes incident to death set in, the corpse acquired a peculiarly peaceful appearance. The hands, especially, seemed in these few hours to have become extremely beautiful, as if the dread destroyer Death had added some extra touches of loveliness, unknown to other powers, on the day he claimed her as his own.

When the time came to proceed with the burial, it was noticed, with alarm, that the man was unable to raise the burden, though extremely light.

May approached, and, taking him gently by the arm, led him away from the position he then occupied, saying:

"I will carry it, father."

"I cannot account for this feebleness," answered the man, in a whining tone of voice which indicated great mental distress.

"The shock produced by this child's death has evidently struck home and paralyzed a portion of my strength.

"Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do, May? May, my child; May, my darling, what shall I do?"

Thus, in the most piteous language, he appealed to her.

She put her arms round his neck, kissed him and answered in that steady, deliberate manner peculiar to brave persons in times of great danger:

"I will take your place, father dear. You must rest and recover yourself."

"Aye; but the food for our support," said the man wildly.

"What shall we do for food?"

"I will provide food," she answered.

"You shall remain at home in future. I will take the road."

"Oh, May! May! May!" cried the man. "It will kill you. I was hoping you might be left with me and Clare; but this necessity will cause your death, my sweet child."

Still with her arms round his neck, without a tear in her eyes or a contraction on any part of her beautiful face, she replied:—

"I have nothing to fear in death. If I be of service to you and Clare, at the time when you need help most, I am willing to meet death in any shape. Now, calm yourself, and I will carry Valine to the grave."

He was silent. A great voice had spoken. Like as if he heard the sounds of the trumpet designed to awaken the dead, his spirit recognized the majesty of the command. Her words in his hearing were like the action of nature on the angry waves of a troubled sea, when the wind becomes still; and the dark waters go to rest on its bosom.

It now became evident, May's physical and mental powers must be employed in the fight for existence, so long maintained by her father. She did not shrink from this ordeal. Young and naturally energetic, the labors imposed on her by necessity would be executed with the utmost cheerfulness. Indeed, as has been seen, she was hitherto obliged to restrain her desires to assist her friends, on account of the opposition of her parent. Now, the deprivation of his strength left the field wholly in her possession. She felt herself to be the last

remaining prop of the household, and like a true heroine came boldly forward to sustain that character.

On the present occasion, after instructing her father to remain at home, she raised the burden on her shoulders and led the way over the well-known path to the mountain road previously mentioned, and thence to the cemetery, followed by Clare. The boy carried a spade to assist in making a shallow grave.

While the children were absent, Marlband had time to reflect on this new phase of his misfortunes. The terrors inspired by it came unexpectedly.

To live in the full operation of his senses—yet powerless to defend himself. To die by slow torture, witnessing the destruction of those whom he loved, seemed to him more terrible than death.

During the journey to and from the cemetery, as well as while engaged in covering the remains of Valine with soft mould, in her little grave, May spoke continuously of her father. All their exertions now must be directed towards his relief and recovery. He had worked so constantly for them, she and her brother must do everything they could to show how much they appreciated his assiduity and affection.

On the following morning, in the pale light of the dawn, May was up making preparation for her first expedition. The greatness of the responsibility suddenly thrust upon her, almost paralyzed her powers. She knew she would rally from this temporary oppression; because labor had no terrors for her; yet the cold reality of unknown circumstances liable to be met at every turn, making failure possible in so many different aspects, that she frequently trembled while reflecting on the details.

About her neck she wore a small silk handkerchief, the only article with the semblance of value in her possession. Her dress was as plain in its make as in its material; the skirt being

without flounce or extra work of any kind ; the body close fitting, with a few narrow pleats down the breast, confined by a band round the waist.

From the box she took the shoes and stockings, so carefully preserved heretofore, to be worn henceforth permanently.

Her hair yet fell over her shoulders in thick glossy tresses, but they would be concealed from view by an old shawl left by her mother, which she would wear to protect herself from cold and rain while traveling.

For the next hour she busied herself about the house, preparing what little was there for breakfast, and conversing cheerily with her father and brother.

The man did not attempt to leave his bed ; but observed with keen interest every movement made by his daughter.

When the time came for her departure ; when with pale face she bent over to kiss him, he could no longer refrain from giving expression to his thoughts.

"Oh, May, don't leave me," he cried. "Don't go ; don't go ! Remember Amby's fate. Some foul plot or murderous hand may deprive me of you, the rarest jewel of them all."

She had resolved evidently to overcome his affectionate appeal ; for there was no response to his words. May merely drew the shawl closer around her head and hurriedly disappeared through the doorway.

Clare sat down beside the bed and awaited the passing away of his father's emotional attack. He witnessed what few persons care to behold—a man's grief.

His sister had instructed him how he should act.

He must not give way to any sorrow ; but to keep near his father, and speak to him when he was ready.

He should be bold like a man ; because she would depend on him to do lots of things for their father while she was absent. In the mean time he might look for her return in the evening.

For the first time in his life Clare felt the necessity of exercising mental power to combat such of his surroundings as threatened mischief. By complying strictly with May's wishes, he felt a kind of satisfaction in having done something towards the general good. He induced the man to take the recumbent position, adjusted his hair, spoke to him in a brave manner, and otherwise intelligently made efforts to allay his sufferings.

The father submitted to the boy's endeavor to soothe him without uttering a word; probably believing that the least movement might dissolve the charm of the youth's solicitude, so grateful to his senses.

Thus like two children, father and son comforted each other, while revolving in their minds the deep-laid sorrow of May's departure, concerning which none wished yet to speak.

After leaving the house, May crossed the river and pursued a trail leading westward to the highroad.

She carried a tin can in her hand for soup, and a ticket in her pocket, authorizing its issue to the bearer. This instrument, the ticket, had been given to her father as a compliment by some secret friend; for be it remembered, *every* destitute person did not obtain relief.

Notwithstanding the depressing circumstances attending her journey, May began to feel more light-hearted as the route lead her into a diversity of scenery far superior to that surrounding her home. The road coming from the coast after traversing the cultivated land of the peasantry, stretched into the valley of a large river flowing to the sea. This valley contained rich and beautiful land, owned by numbers of the aristocracy: and, seen from a distance, resembled a vast garden.

Before reaching this view, however, she was entertained by the varying scenery flanking the highway, while there yet remained two miles to be traveled. When tired with so long a walk she fain would have rested by the wayside, it instinct-

ively occurred to her that the inequality in the road immediately in front was the last she would meet before gaining a view of her destination. In this she was correct.

As she approached the summit of the ridge, one could see her eye kindle in anticipation of beholding some ideal picture of landscape. A few more minutes brought her face to face with the reality.

She halted. The old shawl fell on her shoulders, her arms by her sides. A brisk wind blowing from the southwest lifted her beautiful hair as if to exhibit its sheen to the sun. Her eyes were illuminated with an unusual lustre, and her cheeks tinged with the flush of health and beauty.

What she saw surpassed her wildest dream of fancy. She was alone with nature in one of her amiable moods. The genial face of her great mother was smiling at her. It was spirit meeting spirit. Purity greeting purity.

Poor as she was, the grandeur of her innocence ; the supreme delicacy of her loveliness, beaming in the face of the sun with more effulgence than a star, had no equal in the valley, taking into account all the rich objects it displayed. To the right, midway in the view, stood a castle, whose gray towers and castellated walls appeared in bold contrast with the surrounding verdure. It was situated on the left bank of the river. Still further northward in the course of the stream a second structure could be discerned, apparently more magnificent than the first, in the center of clusters of evergreen trees and spacious pastures.

It looked like the palace of a king. The material composing the exterior walls was a blue stone. Some of these employed in the construction of the abutments, pilasters, balcony, colonades, and decorative work around the windows, were highly polished. The pinnacles piercing the air above it, resembled a warrior's crown ; and as the reflected light came shimmering from the entire outline, an observer could

not, at first, determine whether it belonged to the earth or to the heavens.

Further westward and northward the land was wooded ; but having extensive openings, where rich grass was cultivated for the feeding of cattle.

In the head of the valley, to the south, the town referred to by the father was situated. It was known by the name of Kindleton. At this distance it had a very attractive appearance. The blue slates covering the houses, the spires of the churches, the diversity of the public buildings, the substantial and cleanly character of the whole place ; as divested of smoke by the breeze, it stood out in relief, made May's heart palpitate and her mind to wonder at the strangeness of the scene.

In her enthusiasm she turned and looked around where she stood, with a vague expectation of seeing her father and brother there sharing her enjoyment ; but perceiving the certainty of their absence, she renewed her observation in the former direction.

"How happy the people must be who are living in these beautiful places," she thought.

Why was there such a vast difference between them and her poor folks ? Her father was not a bad man. Surely her brother and the children, now dead, were worthy of a better fate. Who was so good as Amby and her deceased mother ? Why was it she could not understand all the circumstances which made her surroundings at home so terrible ?

Who was responsible for the cruelty perpetrated on the poor? It could not be God. It must be man. Standing here on a clear eminence, with extreme luxury on the one hand and extreme destitution on the other, her sensitive nature was shocked at the contrast. Even while fascinated by the glory of the picture in the distance, large tears rolled down her cheeks and her bosom rose and fell like an ocean wave.

As the reflection came uppermost in her mind that the loved ones at home depended on her exertions in their present distress, she brushed the tears from her eyes, replaced the shawl over her head and walked sturdily forward.

The road led to the river, and thence along its right bank to the town. Near the point where the two first approached each other she could observe the castle very plainly on the opposite side, and to the left a smaller valley with a smaller river at right angles to the larger one, into which it emptied its waters. After crossing this stream by means of an ancient bridge of many arches the signs of town life began to appear.

People could be seen moving about; wagons were driven over the roads and carriages drawn by fat horses dashed along.

The river divided the town into two parts, connected by two bridges about five hundred yards apart.

The inhabitants seemed to be eternally crossing and recrossing these bridges. At the center of the upper bridge, in a niche of the wall designed to contain an iron plate with the builder's name, as also the year in which it had been completed, sat an old blind woman crying out for alms. This cry could be heard sharp and clear amid the din of other noises, and seemed to May like the wail of a distressed spirit in the gulf over which happy ones soar in eternity. The streets were narrow and irregular, often winding in a semicircular manner, but the center of the town was composed, for the most part, of three-story stone structures containing handsome stores.

The place was full of people, evidently strangers, as most of them wandered listlessly about in search of something they seemed unable to procure.

They were beggars.

Distressed humanity in almost all forms known since the creation of the first man might be seen here. Blind men led by dogs; cripples, idiots, deranged persons, the maimed; the chronic drunkard, penniless and clothed in tatters; peddlers

without packs and tinkers without a budget; large families surrounding parents standing motionless in the streets, not knowing what to do. There was no difficulty in finding the soup yard, as May's destination was called. Women could be heard speaking of it as they moved in that direction, and the girl availed herself of the opportunity of joining a group of these without appearing to be obtrusive.

The entrance was gained over an inclined plane downward, a fit introduction to the gloomy abode beyond. A large building flanked the yard on one side, the rest being surrounded by a high wall. The structure was dark colored, as if it had passed through a fire and had not since been retouched. In the first story were the kitchens and offices employed in the preparation of the relief for the poor; and above, the storerooms, containing the material from which it was made. When May approached the principal kitchen two well-dressed men were standing at the door, on the inside. They were members of the Relief Committee, whose duty it was to examine applicants and preserve order.

One of these men extended his hand for May's ticket, and, glancing at it, said to his companion:

"This family was not in the district, but the man was given relief on account of ——" here his voice became so low as to be inaudible to all excepting the person addressed. The speaker continued:

"The new movement is the best, in my opinion. The people should be made to work for what they get. We will set them to work. They should not be fed in idleness."

To which his companion replied:

"What they get is scarcely worth working for. It is doing no more than keeping body and soul together; besides, most of the creatures have not strength to do anything."

"Pooh! Nonsense. You are too chicken-hearted. Think

of feeding a whole countryside in idleness, when the labor of these persons could be turned to some account."

"How would you employ it?"

"How would I employ it? I'd employ it in cutting down the heights on our public roads."

The humane man, who had spoken in defense of the poor, having no further remarks to make, the first speaker continued:

"Look at this case. See what a strong girl is here turned beggar. How much better it would be if she went to work."

Several persons turned to look at May, as well as the men of the committee, and the poor child felt, as she drew the old shawl closer around her head, as if she had been guilty of some heinous offense.

"Come here, my good girl," said the man. "Why don't you work?"

"We do not know where to get work, sir," answered May. "My father is sick, my brother is too young and I would work for them if I could find any to do."

"Where are the rest of the family?"

"Dead, sir."

The man moved uneasily about at this reply, but the idea with which he was infatuated overcame the natural impulses of his heart, and he returned to his inhumanity. He continued:

"Tell your father no more relief will be given in this way. We have determined to make people work in future. If he is not able to labor on his own account, he must provide a substitute. *You*, for instance, might work for him."

"Yes, indeed, sir; I will be very glad to do so."

"Tell him we believe we are doing him a great service when we permit this — to allow his house to draw a man's allowance of relief when you perform the work."

"Where will it be, sir?" asked the girl, timidly.

"On the public road, within about three miles of your father's residence. There is a hill in that neighborhood that must be cut down and the gravel removed to other parts of the highway."

"The public road, sir!" repeated May, with eyes glistening in tears.

"Yes; don't you understand?" resumed the man, passionately. "So prepare yourself to wheel a barrow, or handle a shovel, or pickaxe without growling."

May bowed her head in silence; and, having been provided with what she had journeyed so far to procure, turned from the place into the town, and from thence retraced her steps homeward, revolving in her mind if this new movement would be beneficial or detrimental to the interests of those whom she loved.

There are beings in the human family who abhor beauty. Their minds are subject to a vicious principle, impelling them to wound, if they cannot destroy it, whenever or wherever encountered. The man here mentioned was of that class. He felt a kind of devilish satisfaction in having hurt the feelings of May; beautiful waif, wandering without protection and inexperienced in the craft peculiar to human life!

We bury him here, writing above his tomb the epitaph best suited to his case:

"He was hideous."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LAST PROP IS REMOVED.

LONG before May left the highroad by the path leading to her home, Clare ascended a hedge about midway and kept watch for her coming.

Anxiously he looked into the distance. There was nothing but desolation visible. At length he saw, a great way off, something that looked like the stump of a tree, gray from age. It was upright and apparently motionless. After concluding that this object was stationary, he directed his vision to another point; but as he came quickly back to the original figure he observed it *had shifted* its position.

He sat down and watched its further progress.

The distance between it and the ruins of some houses, in the neighborhood, was very perceptibly increasing.

It *was* a moving body. A person coming this way.

A few minutes more brought the figure into full view and the truth flashed upon his mind that it was his sister.

He stood up and bounded forward, crying in his exultation, "May! May!"

The girl allowed the shawl to fall over her shoulders, as she met her brother with smiling face.

"We thought you would never come, you were so long away," said Clare. "I stopped with my father a great while. Then I asked him if I could come to meet you, and he said yes."

"How is he?" inquired the girl, as hand in hand they walked in the direction of home.

"Better, I think. He was sleeping part of the time. I kept near him in the morning, as you told me, until he got very quiet."

"Did he ask for anything?"

"Yes; water."

"Were you in the house all day?"

"I was; but I went outside often to look for you."

"What did father say when you left?"

"He said: 'Bring May home with you.'"

"Ah, poor father!"

"What did you see in the town, May?"

"Lots of things. Fine houses and shops, and a golden sheep hung outside one of them."

"Hung by the neck?"

"No; but by a belt round the body. It was over the door, and I asked a woman why it was up there. After looking at it she said she did not know, if it were not a sign that they sold cloth made from wool on the inside.

"Then I saw a whole lot of soldiers guarding wagons full of sacks of meal. They were bringing it from a ship to the stores; and it had to be guarded, or the people would carry it off by force."

"I suppose they were hungry?"

"Yes. A great many people were there who had nothing to eat."

"Did you hear bells?"

"I did. There was a man going through the streets ringing a bell in his hand. He was saying something to the people; but I could not understand him. I heard a very large bell ring about the middle of the day. Oh, it had a beautiful sound."

"What was it like?"

"The bell?"

"No; the sound."

"Like loud thunder coming out of a fiddle."

"Did you see fine ladies?"

"Yes, indeed; some of them in the shops dressed in their silks, and ribbons round their necks."

"Had they gold rings?"

"Lots of them. Besides necklaces, bracelets, side-combs, ivory skewers stuck in through their hair; bands, bows, braid, collars and cuffs made of lace; frills down the breast, where some dresses were open; flounces, feathers in their hats; gloves, gold chains, and little boots."

"Oh, aren't they fine!"

"Every one I saw had her dress tight-fitting round the waist to make it look thin."

"Why have they that fashion?"

"I don't know."

"I wish you could be like one of them, May."

"Ah, my brother, I will never be rich enough to be a lady."

When the children reached home, the father was dressed and sitting near the fire-place. In giving him an account of the day's proceedings, the daughter was minute as to detail. When she delivered the message sent to him by the member of the relief committee, an expression of wonder mingled with ferocity appeared on his face.

"They expect *you* to work upon the roads?" he said.

"Yes, father."

"Like a horse?"

"Like a man."

"With a barrow?"

"With a shovel."

"Through rain and wind?"

"At all times."

"Bareheaded and barefooted?"

"Any way."

"Exposed to the rude jests of every passing boor?"

"Yes, father."

"The wretches! The inhuman monsters; with less feeling than the beasts of the forest; their cruel heartedness ought to be enough to strike them dead," said the man.

"Father, I am willing to work. It is good."

"Yes, child; but with due consideration for time, place, and circumstances. Work should be so distributed as to suit the capabilities and surroundings of each worker. To require you or any female to perform manual labor on the public highways, is an outrage on the human race; and none but ignorant half savage men would exact such obligation. Oh, had I the strength which recently left me, I would—"

"You would not, father," said May, hastily interrupting him. "You are too good to hurt anybody, and the persons spoken of do not know better."

"Patience has its boundaries, my child. Ignorance cannot at all times be permitted to carry high-handed brutality above the privileges accorded human beings, even those who are poor. The common feeling in us all revolts against barbarous customs, especially cruelty. If this should be carried too far it would be lawful to stop it by retaliative measures aided by one's own hands."

"We cannot do anything," resumed the girl.

"No. We have long submitted and must further submit to the arrogance of men in power," returned the man, as he bent over the few coals on the hearth in deep meditation.

As a matter of necessity the original proposition was finally agreed to. May went to work on the public road at the place formerly indicated.

The equipment of the girl was rough. She wore an old coat belonging to her father over her dress. About her head she fastened a thick handkerchief, after the manner of Indian

women here. Her hands were encased in gloves made by herself from a piece of sheepskin, and her new shoes would protect her feet, while exhibiting their own powers of endurance.

The new regulations regarding the distribution of relief to the poor were an improvement on the old method, with the exception of such as obliged females to work on the roads already mentioned. There was an allowance of money given each laborer instead of soup.

This permitted the introduction of variety in food and really a larger supply. Thus, twenty cents per day, the wages given, small as it was, would purchase meal and buttermilk, supplemented occasionally by salt fish or liver, heart, tripe and other cheap provisions. For a few cents a bag of "seeds" could be procured, consisting of the husks of oats, which, when immersed in water for about twelve hours and strained, yielded a thick fluid, often substituted for milk; or boiled, when it became a very greatful preparation, known by the celebrated name of flummery.

While the prospect began to brighten in the home of Marlband as a consequence of the return to better times, the exertions required of May were enormous. She walked a distance of three miles to her work and returned the same day after its completion.

Besides cooking and other household duties, the man needed attention, which his daughter gave him willingly, regardless of its inconvenience. Thus, she arose before dawn and was busy far into the night.

It would be impossible for human life to continue under such fearful hardships as this young girl was forced to endure!

About the end of March it appeared to her mind she, too, must die. This conviction aggravated her sufferings.

Although no particular disease presented itself in her case, there was general debility. In this condition some vital part may be attacked at any moment.

Her face became thin and pale and her eyes hollow.

She seemed to shrink inwardly from the rotundity of former days. The voice, so musical heretofore in the ears of her friends, fell to a whisper.

Clare found her silently weeping frequently at this time, and was greatly disturbed in consequence. Seeing her one evening coming home in this distressed condition, he insisted in his own way in knowing the cause of her grief.

"May, sister dear, tell me what is troubling you? Just now, before we go home, tell me," he said.

"I don't know. I can hardly say what."

"Yes, you can. It must be known to you very well."

"Oh, it is — hard to think that after coming so near being happy we should still have to part."

"We are not going to part, my sister."

"We must, Clare. You will be alone soon."

"Oh, don't speak in that way. I cannot bear to hear you talk so. Where are you going?"

"Where the others have gone, my brother."

After some silence and reflection the boy resumed:

"Why do you think you will die?"

"I am getting weaker every day, and a constant pain has settled over my heart on account of our troubles."

"Are the people good to you where you work?"

"Oh, yes; good enough. There are some there a great deal worse off than I am; women working and having babies on their backs, and young girls little more than children."

"If we could go away, May — you and I — to some place where you would not be troubled, would you like it?"

"Ever so much."

"Why can't we go, then? Father could come after us in time."

"Ah, where shall we go, my brother? Strangers would not care for us. We might starve on the way, and never find a place such as you are thinking of."

Finding the difficulties which surrounded them so hard to overcome, Clare's cheerful disposition gave place to fear, and for the first time, perhaps, he discovered the shadow of the future stealing upon himself menacingly. He resumed:

"What will become of me if you die and my father dies?"

"Perhaps father will not die."

"But if he *did*, what would I do?"

The girl was at a loss to know how to answer this question. However, she said:

"Somebody might take you to another home."

"Ah, but I would not like any other home. I do not love strange people. They would scold me."

"Ask my father. He will tell you everything."

On this understanding brother and sister returned to the house. The helplessness of Marlband did not prevent him prosecuting a close observation of the declining health of his daughter. He knew she was encumbered with too great a burden; that her life would be sacrificed to affection for him and her brother and he was trying to find in the depths of philosophy enough fortitude to withstand a catastrophe now almost impossible to avert.

Day after day he looked with the utmost concern in her wasted face and at the attenuated figure which came so lovingly near him; nay, started involuntarily at the sound of her voice, so marked was the change from what it used to be in former times.

Hard labor is a terrible agent, when used on the fibers of a tender body, such as May possessed, and the transformation in her appearance was soon effected.

One day, about this time, Clare, who had been outside in the vicinity of the house, came rushing in to tell his father

that he could see at a great distance on the plain some irregular figure moving, he thought, in their direction. As the man could not get up without assistance, he remained seated where he had been placed in the morning.

"It is not a person, father. It is more like a piece of timber, but moving," said the boy.

"Perhaps it is a raven, with his wings extended, soaring cautiously above the land, expecting to find prey," remarked the man.

"No. It is larger than the raven; and it don't look as if it had wings."

"It is a beast, doubtless, moved by some instinct to come this way."

"I would not think that, either. I know the beasts."

"Go again, my son, and bring me tidings of its further motion."

The boy having gone out to continue his observations, returned immediately with a report: —

"It is nearer to us now, father. I can see two men carrying something on their shoulders."

"Ha!" exclaimed the man with a start and a cry. "They cannot be coming here. They are going in another direction; towards the mountains, for instance."

Thus he endeavored to persuade himself into a belief contrary to facts. He would not dare admit the truth to which his inward thoughts pointed; but tried in the last moments, even, to suppress the inevitable.

"You will find they have turned into the mountain road," he continued.

Clare returning from without once more, held up his hand as if to signify that all discussion should end; and he said in a suppressed voice: —

"They are here."

Marlband by a great effort arose to the upright position, trembling and with a fearful aspect.

In the next minute a dark shadow was thrown in the doorway and two men appeared bearing some object on their shoulders. Pushing forward to the center of the apartment, without delay they deposited their burden on the floor ; then stood up silently and began to wipe the sweat from their foreheads.

Clare hurried to one end of it, and snatching therefrom an old handkerchief by which it was encompassed, revealed the beautiful face of May cold and fixed in death !

Half distracted with grief, he went out the door crying aloud, while the father knelt down beside the body undoing the fastenings which had bound it to a plank, and otherwise composing its parts, saying :—

"My beautiful child ! My heroic daughter ! You have died, my darling, in trying to save us."

Unable to say more, he bent his head, covered his face with his hands and wept long and bitterly.

The men left the house immediately ; but before finally quitting the place, they told Clare that the girl had fallen at her work on the road, and died in a few minutes thereafter.

The overseer or superintendent had said her death was caused by disease of the heart, and he sent them to take the body home, knowing where the family lived.

They must hurry back, they said, according to instructions ; so they departed precipitately.

The lamentations of father and son were continued throughout the day for the loss of their last and dearest friend.

They covered the couch with the remnant of clothing available, placing the body upon it and decorated it as best they could. At night, a couple of candles, preserved since last year were lighted, and everything around the remains carefully composed, out of respect for the departed.

Then the man and the boy drew their seats near the side of the bed to watch what remained of their beloved May during the lone hours of the night.

To pacify his son, the father said : —

"She has only succumbed to the demand of nature, and through this means gained eternal rest. She was too good to live."

"She was too good to die," replied Clare quickly, and with such earnestness as surprised the man.

"Her exertions in our behalf were such as to entitle her to the name of heroine. Under other circumstances, if permitted to live, she would undoubtedly have become great!" continued Marlband.

"She was so ready to work for us," resumed the boy. All unselfishly, too, guided by her love and noble nature."

"It always pleased her to know we loved her in return."

"Yes , it was the only reward we could give."

Some hours before daybreak, the father recommending Clare to retire to rest in the room, remained alone in the presence of the dead, and with his own reflections.

The cheerful appearance he was accustomed to assume in presence of his son died away quickly and an expression altogether beyond the control of the will, but like a reflection from the grave, took possession of his features.

Since our last summary of his condition, he had grown more decrepit. The disease, whatever it consisted in, was evidently progressing towards a fatal end. His speech, as well as his physical parts, was rapidly failing. An observer of a few weeks ago would no longer recognize him as the same individual. It would be correct to say he was dying ; yet he pressed his hands perpendicularly on his seat, as if to test their strength ; indicating there was something else he would like to perform before resigning the great struggle.

The candles burned out; but were not replaced by others, for the reason, there were none available.

The man did not move from his seat; or seem to notice that total darkness surrounded him. He knew the body of his child was near him in one place; and he could hear the breathing of his son in the other. He was satisfied, so far as satisfaction was possible under the circumstances then present.

He did not sleep. He thought; and his reflections were the most profound of any period in his memory; for he saw life and death on either side in their most dreadful terrors.

Oh, how acutely his mind penetrated through the unfathomable depth, searching for the solution of abstruse problems, which, however, evaded his efforts. He was not afraid; because he understood what nature demanded of him: to die without uttering a complaint against the Supreme Power.

Then through the interstices of the door, he could see the thick darkness of the night grow pale. The whole aspect of the atmosphere was assuming a new condition, as if some master hand was at work impelling the trivial powers before it for the purpose of inaugurating a great phenomenon: the illumination of a world.

A few minutes afterward he became convinced the dawn had come. Roused by some internal force, he arose with difficulty and moving to the door gazed toward that part of the eastern sky where the morning sun would appear.

Notwithstanding the absence of listeners, he said in a plaintive voice, as if desirous of relieving his mind from the oppression with which it was burdened: —

"Oh, Dawn! thou lovely visitant from heavenly spheres, how like the spirit of my departed child thou art.

Fashioned in beauty. Bedecked with robes of brightness. The effulgence of purity on thy brow.

The glory of virtue guiding thy footsteps.

"Darkness flees before thee, leaving a world to rejoice in thy presence.

Thou divine essence. Herald of Eternity. Mystery of the universe. Sweetness made manifest through the vision. Deputy of God. Imperial crown of Day.

Pursuing and pursued. The stars controlled by night before thee; the sun ruling the day behind.

Like the impenetrable future on the one hand and the clearness of the past on the other; or Evil leading humanity by the forelock, followed meekly by Good.

Animated nature welcomes thee. Like a trumpet blast thy approach commands attention.

Midway between extremes thy flight is preserved from interference. Thy passage is in peace. Freedom has been given as a part of thy inheritance.

Soaring above the material world, godlike, incapable of destruction by its agents, thine eye may behold with equal complaisancy the billows of the stormy ocean roll in unbridled fury and the peaceful landscape decorated with verdure and the dwellings of men.

Farewell! The time for parting is at hand.

We shall never meet again."

He withdrew from the door with a shiver and resumed his seat. Soon after this Clare appeared and instructed by the father began the preparation of the morning meal. The source from which their supplies had been furnished having terminated with the death of May and only so much left as would meet their wants one day more, they appeared to have reached a time when it might be predicted their destruction was inevitable. Nevertheless, the boy performed the work cheerfully communicating with the man at every new requirement and endeavoring to assuage his sorrow.

As the day advanced May's burial became the chief subject of consideration. On account of his inability to carry the

remains to the cemetery, or indeed to any distance, the father finally determined to deposit them in the house. This plan could be successfully executed by making the grave in the floor which was composed of soft clay and might be easily penetrated.

Clare was strong enough with some assistance from the man to make the small excavation needed.

They began the work soon. The completion of the grave brought them to another difficulty ; how to remove the body to its last resting-place without undue disturbance. Here the ingenuity of the man served instead of his strength. By means of a rope thrown over one of the cross-beams of the roof they were enabled to raise and lower it as they desired.

Supporting himself by a staff the man stood by the side of the grave while the boy appeared at the end of it mourning.

While his breathing became difficult and the trembling of his voice betokened fearful agony, Marlband prayed aloud, in solemn tones, thus : —

"Oh, Power, whom the world knows as God, if the spirit from this child has sought thy presence, in thy peculiar abode make it happy.

Her innocence resembled sunshine ; and, therefore, capable with thee of adorning the mysterious depths of the universe.

Her beauty was richer than the diadem of a king.

She can vie with angels in thy heaven and look upon thy face knowing no guile.

To the ear her voice was like the sweet sounds of a harp.

Among mortals she was divine. They carried a memory of her in their hearts like an impression of thy glory. It reminded them the earth was not wholly destitute of good, or the human race of rectitude." –

At a motion made by the man Clare began to fill the grave. The boy worked hard until his task was completed. Then father and son sat down to rest in the midst of desolation.

During the past few months such articles as could be disposed of were carried away from the house by the man and sold.

The clothing was expended in wrapping the remains of the dead and the old furniture employed to light the fires. Little now remained of anything.

After they gazed upon the bare walls and waited in silence a few minutes, their eyes met. Clare's look meant inquiry while the father's was one out of which all hope had fled. It appeared plain to the boy the calm demeanor of the man indicated his inability to attempt any further struggle. However he would speak : —

"To-morrow there will be nothing here father."

"Nothing."

"There won't be much to eat, I mean."

"Nothing to eat."

"We will have to get something to live."

The father did not answer; but looked wildly around the apartment.

The boy continued.

"Maybe a kind man would come with a basket full of provisions to relieve us."

"Oh, no! no!" said the man suddenly and with such sarcastic force as frightened his son.

"Do not suppose *that* my boy. It is the last event to occur out of all others possible. Such issue accords very well with the theme of a nursery story; but the realities of life surround us here."

"What will we do, father?"

"I will instruct you, presently. Let us take a little rest."

"You think provisions will come to us."

"I believe we may find some for to-morrow."

The boy began to smile.

"You are a great man, you never give up," said he.

When the time required for rest had expired, Marlband signified to the boy he wanted assistance to rise from his seat. Clare procured his staff and rendered him aid as far as he was able on the occasion. The work just completed had been exceedingly tedious and consumed the entire day in its execution.

Even now, as the man arose, the sun had set and the twilight was beginning to change into darkness. As he stood motionless gazing through the doorway his appearance was appalling. Extending his hand to the boy with the intention of leading him forth, he said in a sepulchral voice : —

" Come ! "

Clare did not understand this. He approached him lovingly and looked into his face, fearing he might have become insane.

The man repeated : —

" Come ! "

" Are you going to leave the house ? " the boy asked.

" We will be on the way, presently."

" To-morrow, father, we can go wherever you desire."

" To-morrow is designed for other work, my son."

" We will not find any place to rest so good as here."

" Where rest is eternal it must be better."

" The darkness may overtake us on the way."

" It will be friendly, my boy."

" The wind coming down from the mountain will blow severely against us."

" Aye, but its sounds shall be like the voices of our companions, reminding us of their love."

" We may meet robbers."

" In that case we shall hope for some advantage ; for as we have nothing to lose, our absolute destitution may procure us relief, even from them."

"But the house, my father; the house, who will take care of it?"

"It needs no further watching. At best it was but a tomb for the living. It is now a tomb for the dead."

Clare realizing they were about to quit the place forever, became greatly agitated. One by one the safe-guards which formerly surrounded him had fallen. Every day, recently, came burdened with some new menace. Now, his dwelling place must be abandoned for some cause unknown to him. These terrors were forcing him to think seriously on problems of life, which older heads than his were unable to solve. They would make him a man before he quitted boyhood.

Thinking, in his simplicity, the father did not fully appreciate his surroundings, he exclaimed:

"We are at home, father. You have not forgotten that this is our home, where we loved each other so much?"

"The world at large has a variety of situations from which to choose a suitable substitute. You may reach a good home in the future," said Marlband.

"Oh, but this one, my father! this one is where I wish to live," said the boy passionately, while he sobbed aloud, and laid hold of the man with both hands as if to detain him. He continued:

No other home can ever be the equal of this. Kindness was always here. The grand house I saw one time frowned at me, while the stones, even, of our old dwelling have a kindly look, as if they all knew us. My heart was bound up in everything belonging to this sacred place. Young as I am, must I surrender what all others enjoy, home and friends? If we go, tell me I can come back to it again. Tell me I can, father dear! I want to come back. I love the old walls, the roof, the fire place, the floor, where May used to be with me and you, my good, noble father! Oh, don't go. Remain with me here always.

We two can yet be happy.

I will work for you.

My love shall never be wanting.

What need we care about strange people, when the happiness of the whole world is with ourselves. Stay. Content yourself. Am I not fond of your company ?"

The man, unable to speak from emotion, bent forward and kissed the child.

Such awful depths of feeling displayed in this appeal astonished him. His heart felt as if it had been pierced by a lance. He would have fallen to the ground if he had not summoned all his powers to save himself.

The inevitable was before him. Taking the boy by the hand in a gentle manner, he moved slowly toward the door, and the two passed out together.

CHAPTER IX.

BORN AGAIN.

AFTER emerging from the house, the progress of father and son became exceedingly slow on account of the man's extreme debility. The direction taken by them was east. Clare at first imagined the intention of his guide contemplated an entrance to one or other of the favorite nooks of the garden, but he soon perceived all available places in the vicinity were left behind unnoticed.

Striking into the path leading along the river, their movement would be scarcely perceptible to an observer at a distance so little headway did they make. Indeed the boy frequently thought his father would fall in his tracks never to rise; but he rendered all the assistance he could by supporting him on one side, while observing that the staff aided the other. Darkness had closed around them when they came abreast of the old fort, looking like a sad witness of their helplessness in the gloom of the night.

Would they pass this too?

No. The man turned toward the old familiar place, well known to have been his favorite rendezvous, and his spirit seemed to revive at the spectacle, for he sprang a little livelier than before so that their accelerated march soon brought them to the sloping ground of the ancient landmark.

On the man's account they rested a little before attempting the ascent. In the mean time Marlband began a conversation of a serious nature; he said:—

"Clare, my son, will you listen like a man to my instructions?"

"Like a man, father?"

"I mean, you will be required to have courage and accept what is now going to transpire without being unduly disturbed?"

"I will try all I can."

"The time has come when I must speak unreservedly concerning your future, and of other subjects it will be well for you to know."

"I will hear every word, father."

"We are going to enter the fort to-night; not only the portion already known to us, but a part beneath the mound you have not yet seen."

"Is it down into the earth?"

"It is. I shall lead the way. Will you be afraid?"

"I will go any place with you, father."

"That is well, my boy. Come."

What had not been previously known was now revealed; the fort had certain subterranean passages or apartments beneath it, with which the man had evidently been long acquainted, and into whose shades he now proposed to retreat.

These apartments were, no doubt, the storerooms employed by those who originally manned the works.

After entering the space enclosed by the breastwork, Marlband lead the way to a point where portions of a large rock protruded from the side of the ditch.

This rock had not escaped notice heretofore. Every person visiting the place saw it; but supposed it to be an ordinary boulder, such as could be discerned lying around in other

places; or the outcropping of a ledge whose dimensions extended perhaps far into the earth.

There were some shrubs growing in front, as if designed to conceal the rock from view, with sufficient space between, however, to allow the passage of any one desiring access to the base of it.

Here there was an aperture so adroitly choked by long grass as to almost escape recognition.

Even when disclosed to observation, it would be thought a hollow, formerly made by some animal for a temporary sleeping-place.

It was in reality the passage to the underground apartments above mentioned, against the opening to which the rock had been rolled in imitation of an ancient custom. It was a stone door.

Marlband on first discovering the boulder knew its purport, and made the entrance beneath it as now existing.

On the present occasion, arriving at the place, he dropped on his knees, pushed the grass aside, and began to creep in. As the passage descended an inclined plane he had less difficulty in gaining an entrance than we might suppose, owing to his condition.

The boy followed without trouble. When they met on the inside there was total darkness.

The act having been premeditated, certain provision had been made to meet emergencies.

Thus from a crevice in the wall the man took an old tin box containing pieces of candles and a roll of match-paper. With the back of a jack-knife he struck sparks from a stone on a piece of the paper, and by this means procured a light.

He then gave all the articles here mentioned to the boy, so as to be used again when necessary.

The compartment now occupied by them was a mere passage or hall-way about six feet wide, and not over seven feet high.

It extended lengthways, however, fifteen or sixteen feet. There was no plastering on the walls. The floor consisted of earth.

Facing the main entrance, at the other end of the passage was a square doorway just large enough to admit the movement of an adult through it without inconvenience.

The man bent down and crawled through this second aperture followed by the boy, and without stopping passed two other such openings in succession.

The last room entered was circular and covered above by a huge slab of rock or slate. It was the termination of the system of rooms in this section of the fort, whatever they were originally designed to hold.

One object in the circular chamber attracted attention; a broad bench of stones, shaped like an ottoman, standing grim and lonely near the wall on the left-hand side of the entrance. The man now thoroughly exhausted turned to this bench and sank heavily down upon its cold irregular surface. After a little while he improved his position by extending himself to his full length, as if he were on a couch designed for resting or sleeping, crying after a great sigh: —

"Aye, this will do."

From the time of leaving the house up to this moment his sufferings must have been terrible; for his efforts were exercised with the consciousness of being the last he would make on earth. He doubted if he could reach this point; but now that his desire was attained he wore a more placid expression on his countenance than heretofore, and allowed the long pent up groans to escape from him unchecked.

He did not speak for some minutes; but breathed hard, as if unusually excited and weak.

Clare, with the light in his hand, stood looking at him wistfully, unable to render any assistance or determine what was best to be done under the circumstances. The man's agitation

having subsided, he directed the boy to proceed to the second chamber and examine its contents. On reaching it, Clare found nothing but an old box with a movable lid, which, when pushed aside, showed that provisions had been stored therein sometime previously.

The boy was reminded of Christmas eve and of the problem presented to his mind on that occasion; how it was possible for his father to have procured the meal which supplied their wants the following day, in so short a time. This chamber was evidently his father's storeroom, and no doubt it would have been more liberally provided with provisions for the present emergency if the suddenness of the man's disability had not prevented him from renewing the former supply. However, there was one small package left, containing about two pounds of meal, well secured in a cloth covering.

This ingredient the boy found to be in good condition as he ripped the head of the sack open and began to eat.

When he returned to the chamber where his father lay, reporting the extent of his discovery, he wanted him also to partake of food. The man replied: —

"I need no more. I am going to die."

Feeling the gravity of the situation, the boy seated himself on the bench beside his father, setting the light against the wall and the other articles on the floor. Instinctively the man took hold of his son's hand.

The rush of feeling to his heart on account of this action gave him renewed animation, and he began to speak. He said in a weak voice: —

"When I am dead leave this place immediately by the way we entered."

"I will do so, father."

"My body should be left extended on this bench without interference. I selected this chamber to be my tomb, knowing

the difficulties which must attend my burial if none but you remained alive ; and hence I have buried myself.

When you regain the outside, close the passage-way somewhat ; and returning by the house take the path leading to the highroad. You know the highroad, Clare ?"

"I do."

"When you gain the high road turn to the left in the direction of the south, and travel until you arrive at the town of Kindleton."

"Yes."

"Reaching that place there may be but little difficulty in procuring assistance as a large number of persons reside there, and some of them doubtless will pity you."

"I would like to get story books from them if they bring me home."

"You must work hereafter for what you get."

"I'll do all I can."

"They may force you beyond reasonable limits ; but learn to avoid as much cruelty as possible until you become a man."

"If they touch me I'll run away from them. I would go with a drover and help him to drive his cattle. I can crack a whip now ; besides, I like it."

The man's eyes sought the face of his son through the dim light of the chamber, as if he meant to smile at his boldness and simplicity, remarking :

"Ah, my boy, few can escape the tyranny of human power."

After a little time, he resumed :

"I implore you to observe every requirement here laid down for your future guidance. I beseech you to remember what I announce in your presence for the last time. Will you promise me ?"

"Yes, father. Nothing shall be forgotten. You may rely on it."

"Bear in mind then, your name must be changed from its present form to another, you have not yet heard, with the view of severing all relationship between your future life and my family. This is done so as not to embarrass your freedom in the pursuit of a career wholly your own. It is thought best, also, because going forth from this cave you shall be as one newly born."

"I do not know the good of it. I would prefer to keep my old name; but your wishes, father, shall be obeyed."

"From this time forward you shall be known by the name of Zanthon."

"Is that all, father; Zanthon?"

"No more. When asked by strangers how you have been called, answer Zanthon."

"I understand. They will be told my name is Zanthon and no more."

"Just so. The history of this period and of our family as you knew it, must be concealed from every one."

"I won't tell anything."

"You may deny with perfect propriety my name, because I was the father of your first life; but the father of your second life is invisible."

Zanthon not understanding this sentence remained silent, and the man continued:

"Say you do not know the name of your parents, because they died when you were young. This will be true for the reason that Marlband is really not my name."

Zanthon looked bewildered, hearing this, thinking his father was beginning to lose his mental powers.

The man continued:

"My father's family was rich. We held estates in a distant part of this country. Indeed, he was a chieftain among the people and noted for his daring plans and exploits, exercised in the cause of political liberty, which he believed could be

established here. In other words, he favored the overthrow of the present rule held by a foreign government, and the institution of one by ourselves. Let me say further: He was the great chief Merraloon."

"He was perfectly right," said Zanthon, gravely.

"Wars and petty quarrels have been the ruin of thousands," continued Marlband.

"The action of your grandfather was just, but opposing a power greater than the one espoused by him, he fell beneath it without hope of mercy. During the troubles that disturbed the country then, he lost everything. The estate was confiscated. My father died in prison. Two brothers, the only ones, left the country and died in exile, and I, wandering in disguise lest I should be seized as a rebel, without hope or ambition, came to Footford as a peasant, and settled here unknown and forgotten. My history is the history of hundreds of other men who have been so unfortunate as to be concerned in great political movements resulting in defeat. There is no time now to tell you the incidents of my early life; nor would it be wise to do so in any case; because they were enacted amid pleasures and home comforts which might excite your feelings unduly, seeing how far their equivalents are now beyond your reach, in your present destitute condition. I must rather direct your mind to other considerations.

Your conduct among the people wherever you reside shall be guided principally by two principles or virtues, namely honesty and truth. You do not know what these are?"

"I do. Not to take what belongs to another person, and to tell no lies."

"Say to me that these shall never be forgotten by you, my son."

"Rest satisfied, father, I shall ever remember to keep them in practice."

"Education without these is almost worthless; but alone, even, they are capable of raising an individual to a high place in the estimation of the rest of mankind. They will lead you into prosperous ways, and ultimately gain independence."

"I won't let any one tempt me to do a thing else."

"Assist those persons who may be suffering for want of bread as we have been, when you can."

"Yes, surely."

"Render justice to all, irrespective of country, creed or race."

"I shall do so."

"Sympathize with the people."

"Very well."

"Teach the ignorant their duties to themselves, at least, to conceal their views as much as possible, so that their weakness may not be detected."

"How can I do all this, father?"

"When you come to be a man and acquire knowledge, the impulse to perform good shall inspire you with new methods of procedure in the interests of humanity at large. Do not forget yourself, however. Learn to live properly.

Be temperate in eating and drinking.

Walk with nature through beautiful places."

"When I am a man," said Zanthon, suddenly, "I would like to punish the enemies of my grandfather if I could find them."

"His immediate enemies are all dead. The power, however, which sustained them is still in existence. It would be useless to attempt its overthrow. You would fall like him," said Marlband.

During the delivery of his exhortation the man frequently hesitated and towards the end his voice died away to a whisper so that the boy was obliged to bend down close to his face for the purpose of listening. As Zanthon was exceedingly wearied on account of the exertions recently encountered, when the

man ceased speaking he nestled by his side placing his head against him as if he were a pillow and in this position fell into a deep sleep.

Shortly afterward the light dropped from the wall and was extinguished. Then the silence and the darkness reigned supreme within the cave.

The boy's rest was temporary ; but the sleep of the man was eternal.

With one hand lovingly over the boy's neck the father as if yielding to the awful stillness of the place gave a sigh and expired.

Many hours passed before the loneliness of this dismal abode was disturbed.

The breathing of the boy alone remained to indicate that all life was not extinct.

Sleeping the usual length of time in addition to the amount expended in speaking to his father, Zanthon's awaking occurred about the afternoon of the day following his entrance to the cave.

Although the darkness was terrible he soon became conscious of his situation.

A feeling of chilliness pervaded his body and the recollection of incidents lately transpiring in his presence was very vivid.

After repeated attempts, he at length succeeded in striking a light which he fastened near the couch against the wall. Then he bent over his father. Placing his hands on the man's cheeks so as to have a full view of his face he called to him.

"Speak again father ! Speak to me. I am listening. I will hear every word. Zanthon is my name."

As the cold rigor peculiar to dead bodies was beginning to assert itself over the remains of Marlband, Zanthon became terrorized by the conviction that his father was dead. The motionless aspect of the body also confirmed this belief and the physical signs prevailing with it ; the eyes being fixed and

staring and the mouth open. The expression on the countenance was one of wonder, as if the man when dying had beheld some extraordinary vision.

The boy then broke into wild lamentation, feeling how helpless he had become.

"Oh, father you have not gone from me? You would not leave me here alone? What will I do without you?

Oh, God, you have not left me anything!"

This last sentence was uttered out of the depths of his heart as if he protested against the spoliation of all he held dear on earth by the Supreme Power from whom he expected more clemency.

Remembering the instructions of his father he began after a little while to adjust the parts of the body so as to let them rest in proper position.

The arms by the side; the head with the face upward; the eyes and mouth closed and the feet adjoining each other stretched to the full extent.

On examining his resources he found the lights available would be expended in about three or four hours and the balance of provision in the little sack might afford him but two scanty meals.

He felt no desire to eat. His attention being directed to the future for now indeed he must provide for himself. Therefore he carefully recalled all that had been said to him before he shaped his course on the present occasion.

There was no elaborate plan developed, you may be sure. He would remain until the candles had been expended, then depart.

Notwithstanding the terrors which his mind evoked he clung to the custom of watching the dead before the changes incident to that condition appeared; as well as for the reason that he loved his father.

Even when his solitary vigil came to a close he arose from the bench where he had been seated with a sigh, and new fears thinking if what he was now going to tempt would not prove as dreadful as the place he was leaving.

Taking a last look at the body with the light in his hand, he hurried through the first aperture neglecting to carry with him anything in the apartment, even the food, as burdensome.

From this he proceeded easily until he reached the last opening. Satisfied it was the one leading to the outer world he dashed the light against the ground and began the exit, having been in all about twenty-six hours beneath the earth or until the beginning of the second night.

If a person could have been in view of the mouth of the cave on the occasion here mentioned, at first a minute disturbance could be detected at that point by the protrusion of a little hand, the tips of the fingers delicately clutching at the earth or moving nimbly in the air. Then another hand acting as its fellow. Following these a round head with short hair; and finally the well-shaped frame of Zanthon assuming the upright position and advancing to the center of the fort into the world and into the night.

Into the world and into the night with their unfathomable depths, mysterious laws, aspects and exactions now almost wholly unintelligible to him; yet the very obscurity in which they were enveloped seemed to lure him into the expectation of reaching great things: a future of his own creation where sunshine and happiness alone should prevail.

Into the world and into the night where vice lies in wait for innocence to attempt the overthrow of its purity and thereby destroy the fair field bequeathed by nature for its existence. Where ignorance assails intelligence and stupidity is ever seeking the acquisition of power for the purpose of attaining its selfish and corrupt ends. Where imbecility

traduces the fame won by the honest laborer and attempts to despoil him of his just rewards.

Into the world and into the night to view the shadows left by disappointments and the gleams of light by success, each stimulating human life into renewed exertion toward the perpetration of eternal movement. To behold the good worker often falter beneath a burden of accumulated cares and the evil disposed individual make a false show of happiness over the possession of ill-gotten wealth.

Into the world and into the night to solve the problem of the unknown by the discovery of experience.

Either to assist in the lighting up of the obscure paths pursued by illiterate humanity with knowledge or follow the boisterous highway of vulgarity and lawlessness. To attempt the diffusion of truth and wisdom fearlessly through the ranks of mankind or walk the path of life like a dumb animal, an unworthy possessor of human genius. To be the instrument of making the moral existence of the human race harmonize with that which is regulated by instinctive power through other fields of nature's domain, or waste all endowments in criminal folly and useless dissipation.

Into the world and into the night, for better, for worse; intending to accept whatever might be given him wisely, in a spirit of thankfulness, rejecting everything he was instructed to avoid. Determined to select if possible the course leading to peace and prosperity that the somber appearances of the two great agents whose society he was now about to seek might, in future, be relieved by hope, joy, love and competence.

CHAPTER X.

THE NIGHT.

IT was starlight.

The change from the awful darkness out of which he had come, to the appearance exhibited by the heavens startled Zanthon into mute wonder. He stood motionless looking into the depths of the firmament, fascinated by its immensity and splendor.

It seemed to him like the face of God—glorious and impenetrable. Almost instantaneously this superb display of nature operated to relieve his distressed feelings. His soul was drawn into space as if by a magnet. It floated on silvery light amid the brilliants of the universe. It inhaled the beatitude of the Infinite. There existed an affinity between it and the glory peculiar to the stars.

Like one relieved suddenly from pain by a skillful physician, his thoughts soared above grief into the realms of the night.

There was friendship for him in the beauty prevailing there.

In the past, his observations of the dome of the heavens were cursory; because his mind had been engaged with personal interests relating to home and friends; now circumstances carried him face to face with it, forcing him to a minute inspection of what it contained, without a thought for other things.

Awe suppressed all considerations to enable the spirit of the boy to embrace the spirit of the Deity.

Sparkling in different modes and holding forth various degrees of illumination the stars were out in myriads.

Illimitable space appeared *crowded* to excess with them.

The twinkling of the dog star alone was sufficient to absorb the attention of the whole human race and decorate the plain above the horizon. Its force had some resemblance to the restless energy of a cataract.

The accumulated beauty of the earth could not surpass the grandeur with which it was endowed.

In the zenith the well-known accumulation of pale light attracted notice for an instant.

Orion, the Great Bear, Taurus, Cassiopeia, and the Pleiades were conspicuous.

Although restlessness characterized the scene, there were no noises. The silence was profound. Indeed, this appeared the more strange when taken in connection with the movements perceptible.

Zanthon felt a vague expectation of hearing a crash or the thunders produced by colliding worlds; nay, he listened as if a voice from the depths of this immense region were about to speak words of encouragement to him. He was disappointed. However much his mind yearned to hear mysterious sounds, nothing transpired to meet his expectations, but the presence of unvarying splendor sealed in eternal silence.

He turned to the earth, gazing through the gloom in the direction of the village. The barking of dogs, so familiar to his ears in times gone by, was no longer to be heard.

Were they all dead?

This question recurred to him, notwithstanding the fact that he was well aware Footford had been abandoned by man and beast, yet some hope remained that representatives of the canine race from other parts would make their presence known by the usual method peculiar to them. No murmur of voices arose from the hamlet where his kind companions used to

dwell, whose hilarity displayed itself oftentimes even in the night. The stupendous quiet above pervaded all below irresistibly; and the Supreme Power stood forth to vindicate itself. It alone was there. Last year the concerns of mankind, such as those seen near his home, impressed Zanthon with a belief in the vastness of human capacity compared with dull material, or even invisible force; now there was nothing left of what he had admired. His father's greatness with the rest fell so quickly as to annihilate further belief in the power of man. Their feeble resistance seemed to have no more influence with nature than flies struggling in a tempest.

A trifling change in the atmosphere stole in upon them unperceived from the domain of the unknown and laid them all in the dust!

How easy it would be to destroy the whole human race.

With this thought came the speculation as to the numbers of those who perished during the famine.

Perhaps he, Zanthon, only remained. The evidence of his senses pointed to the total obliteration of mankind as well as the great bulk of the inferior animals. His father could not assert truly whether people at a distance survived or not.

How wonderful appeared the reality of which he was now conscious; every one had been obliged to leave the village or die. Zanthon, however, felt no other inconvenience during the period of hardship than grief at the loss of his friends.

Why should *he* be singled out from among the rest?

What merits had he above his brother or sisters?

Surely, no superior power would be concerned with the preservation of *his* insignificance in preference to the goodness of his father or the strength of all the men of Footford? A weak boy, a bee in its flight might easily overthrow, or the shadow of a tree discomfit?

Yet, although the solution of these questions was incomprehensible, the fact could not be denied that he lived, feeling

the serene breath of the night on his cheeks and the vision of a material omnipotence before him.

This presentation must have been prearranged without his sanction or knowledge.

What was the object in making him so destitute if there was any desire to have him continue to live ; or had he been brought here merely to die in a manner different from others, so as to conform to the law of variety ?

No friends or money, knowledge, strength, hat, shoes, or gloves ; nothing but the semblance of a coarse tunic and pants reaching a little below his knees to cover him. This was not the worst, however.

Heretofore his relations supplied him with food, now he must procure it by his own exertions. There was none left or prospect as to where or how it could be obtained.

He was at the mercy of the void ; but the void gloried only in silence. If he lived with it he must work.

Should the darkness call forth a carnivorous bird to attack him, he had no implement available by which it could be repelled.

An escape from death appeared an impossibility.

Should he, therefore, return into the cavern, and taking his place beside the remains of his father, await dissolution ?

No. Life and death are incompatible. It would be too shocking to resign the one for the other, until forced to accept the change, by the suspension of the powers of animation. To judge by his own feelings, he did not believe it true, as asserted by a prominent author, that people abhorred death on account of the dread uncertainty of the life beyond the grave.

It was the horrors attending the *act* of dying which made it so terrible to the imagination.

The negative answer given to the promptings of his mind composed the turning point of his career.

The breath of Spring came up from the surrounding plain.

He felt it invigorating his person and soothing his thoughts in a wonderful manner. In the trees, too, he could hear it like the whispers of friends designed to welcome him to their home.

Sweet as the kiss of a maiden, the fragrant air played with his sense of feeling. It seemed an embodiment of purity and loveliness. All then had not disappeared.

Nature was left; and she seemed as kindly now as ever.

Oh, he would on account of this first meeting, love her henceforth, knowing how absolute are her laws, and astonishing the beauty her features display through the varying seasons of the year.

Standing erect with more courage than heretofore displayed, he thought of the instructions of his father respecting the town. It would be a fearful journey to make in the darkness of the night, and over a route unknown to him.

Whatever terrors the loneliness of his present situation inspired, the movement through a series of shadows, strange and bewildering, if not exceedingly dangerous, appeared an appalling ordeal, sufficient to intimidate the bravest spirit imaginable. Yet it must be attempted and endured.

While deliberating here, it was possible an attack might be made upon him with as much evil intention of destruction as any he could encounter elsewhere. Therefore the decision came promptly; he would hasten to the town. After arranging the long grass and placing some stones in the aperture before the cave, he crossed the prominence of the fort, and struck boldly into the path leading to his old home.

As he passed, every familiar object was recognized; but the grief at his heart prevented him from speaking the words of farewell which he otherwise would have addressed to these inanimate relics of happier times.

Silently, and with some show of caution, he entered the ground on which the old house stood. His movements on this occasion resembled the stealthy march of a youth to the sacred

resort of a companion with the intention of witnessing how events occurred there as in his absence. Perhaps, too, he expected to meet a living being in or near the domicile never before tenantless.

Seeing no evidence of life he approached, and placing his hands against the stones of the wall nearest him, assured himself of the reality of the scene. Yes, it was the house; for the stones were the same he well remembered feeling formerly, whose irregularities and positions had become as familiar to him as the faces of his friends. The door was open; but the darkness within could not be penetrated, nor the awful silence described. Passing noiselessly into the garden, he seated himself in the summer house, associated with so many pleasing recollections of his past life. It consisted merely of a bower among the trees nearest his home, specially appropriated for his amusement; where also he was permitted to train plants and flowers.

Here the pent up fountains of his sorrow gave way, and he burst into tears. His weeping was woeful. As no one now appeared to restrain or soothe him, he wept passionately and grievously. It seemed a relief he suffered no interruption; not even an echo arose to mock his grief. The outline of the house could be discerned through the starlight. Nothing he had ever seen appeared so desolate., Every line of its external figure portrayed in the manner peculiar to it, how absolutely it shared in the general calamity.

No doubt this tendency toward extreme distress appeared when it became the tomb of May.

It would be sacrilege on the part of nature to institute a cheerful aspect above the remains of his beautiful sister.

The roof drooped like the shoulders of a decrepit person abandoned on the highway; and the shadows surrounding the entire structure were dyed deeper, immeasurably, than the darkness of the night, as well as being far more mysterious.

To behold this inanimate object assume the garb of mourner pointed one of the most bitter thoughts that keenly directed its way to his heart. Nor would the poor thing accept consolation. Its glory had departed and it was doomed to become a ruin. One by one the friends he had lost appeared to his mental vision, as if soliciting a portion of his lamentations. Every incident of recent years was reviewed; every joy loudly deplored.

"Oh, why did they all disappear so soon after I loved them?" he said. "Why am I left so lonely? The loss I have suffered can never be repaired. The powers of heaven, even, will not be able to fill the void in my heart.

If there had been *one* spared, if it were only a *beast*, my abandonment would not appear so cruel; but this total separation from every object around which my fond desires clung is terrific!"

Looking from where he sat he could see by the position of "Charles Wain" that the night was not far advanced, yet the necessity of moving *forward* came forcibly to his mind.

Recrossing the space in front of the house, he walked listlessly over the piece of common adjoining the river, formerly the scene of many a pleasant encounter with companions now irrecoverable. At the point where the stepping stones began, he halted a few moments desirous of viewing for the last time what remained to be seen of past associations.

Everything seemed to assume a sadness in harmony with his feelings as if his departure were fully understood. The branches of the trees were waving him farewell, the water murmuring adieu and the breeze sighing for the forlorn condition of the boy traveler.

They were the instruments of the power which recognized him as the greatest work among them and hence one to whom deference should be paid, in this, if in no other way.

With his hands clasped above his head, the better to support it, perhaps, while making a most minute inspection of all that

lay before him, Zanthon, after a little while wheeled around, dropped his hands by his sides and resolutely crossed the river to begin the world in reality.

On account of familiarity with places adjoining the path or trail which he now pursued the journey over the first mile did not appear unusually distressing, notwithstanding the fact, that there were several stiles to cross, as well as ruts and steep ascents.

When, however, the second mile was entered and he began to penetrate a place which even in daytime he regarded with dread, it may be easily understood how his courage commenced to fail and his limbs to tremble feeling the extent of his exposure to the full fury of whatever might arise to assail him.

The route entered, suddenly, a straight stretch of moorland where it partook of the character of a country road. There was a black ditch on each side of it and the land itself was black and devoid of any but the poorest vegetation.

The gloom of the night on this lonely waste appeared fearful. It seemed to deepen into a shade which language was unable to characterize or vision penetrate. At certains points where excavations had been made and the surface water accumulated in stagnant pools, the appearances presented were like dismal craters of volcanic passages opening into the bottomless pit.

While the extreme depression under which he labored began to give place to a more courageous feeling as he proceeded without molestation; yet he kept his eyes on the dark banks and frequently glanced on either side and in front of him as far as possible.

He never looked behind. The imagination pictured such awful scenes in the space just passed that he dared not look to ascertain if they were real.

Ghosts and goblins were at liberty to desport themselves behind him as much as they pleased, but so long as they remained invisible he could well afford to travel.

When the path struck, once more, into green upland and he reviewed, mentally, the dangerous way traversed, he shuddered at his temerity and wondered how he ever succeeded in overcoming the perils with which he seemed to have been threatened by the semblance of courage exhibited on the occasion.

After making two or three short curves he came in sight of something attractive; a level strip of land distinguishable in the darkness by its light color. It came in a straight line from the north and stretched far away toward the south. Clouds of dust careered upon it, like squadrons of horsemen or the whirl of rich men's equipages.

While he did not at first recollect what this could be, he bent to the march with additional speed.

As he advanced at a rapid pace the truth broke upon him; and he suddenly found himself on the center of the high road, his mind raised to such a point of enthusiasm as almost to compel him to shout in exultation.

This was the identical highway so often referred to by his father; the one pursued by May on a memorable occasion still fresh in his memory, and now available for him in his transit from desolation to unknown scenes of fortune.

The contrast between the narrow way he had left and this broad road with its trim earthen fences on either side, its surface suitable for easy travel and vast proportions sweeping from one indefinite point towards another equally obscure, appeared so great that he halted for some time to admire it.

Even the wind seemed to enjoy its uninterrupted course as it drove half madly, half mirthfully, over the surface; jostling legions of small pebbles in its wake and raising the dust into the face of the night as if intent on blinding it to the wanton folly it was practicing.

Zanthon followed the direction taken by the wind as it corresponded with the one he had been instructed to pursue. He experienced great satisfaction on account of the superior appointments of the new route though his watchfulness continued as before, his fears being only partially lessened.

When the dust came rushing after him his imagination heard voices accompanying it, and noises as if people were struggling for room in order to expedite their passage to the city. For this reason he frequently ran to the roadside to avoid being run over. Nothing, however, appeared to disturb him in that manner, but the cloud passed on carrying its voices to the front until all were lost in the distance.

"Oh, the town must be a great place," said he, "when even the wind and the dust are in such haste to reach it."

The nodding of the trees adjacent to the highway often startled him; and the appearance of houses, deserted like his own, whose dismantled walls and open doors were frightful to behold.

After walking a couple of hours he began to experience fatigue. His feet pained him, a heavy weight seemed to be pressing his shoulders and discomfort felt generally all over his body.

Distress of this kind in a like degree never before assailed him. Young as he was, the reason came uppermost in his mind; his father's care and May's love were proof against everything tending to disturb his comfort. Now, however, he was defenseless. The fight must be made henceforth by himself.

In view of conforming to the new condition of things, he was putting forth all his strength with the result of being crippled by the severity of the march.

Fatigue was supplemented by hunger and thirst. There was an internal weakness making itself felt, threatening his life at one fell blow, caused evidently by an empty stomach. Thirst,

too, was fully developed owing to the character of the road and a feverish condition of his body.

When these misfortunes accumulated he fell into a slow pace such as is characteristic of lagging; nay, he began occasionally to totter off the direct course like one afflicted with dizziness.

Oh, how eagerly he scanned each portion of the way as he dragged his weary limbs forward.

The broad sameness of its features was frightful. The only thing it seemed most desirous of accomplishing consisted in pushing itself forward, precipitately, without change.

Headlong into the darkness it went, never stopping for an instant; showing no break in its clearly cut lines; no contraction from the rule and compass width possessed where it was first seen; no changes of color or consistency, neither turning to the right nor left, it looked like the highway best adapted to carry the traveler over the entire earth.

Would it ever end?

About this time a section of the road was encountered bounded by high walls and a grove of firs.

These would have enhanced the view if seen in daylight, whereas they were menacing at night.

Zanthon supposed if he moved under one or other of the boundaries mentioned a ghastly head might come up from the other side and look down at him. The weird sounds heard through the trees also favored the entertainment of dreadful thoughts; but he kept well in the center of the highway, as being most secure.

The persistent determination to push forward did not imply that he was gifted with an iron will or possessed grit far beyond boys of his age. On the contrary, he was tender hearted, tinctured with the deep superstitions of the times, and although remarkably healthy, soft limbed on account of the care bestowed on his youth, and immunity from manual labor. It meant

obedience to the wishes of his father. The time had come, however, when he asked himself: —

"Must I fall and die here?"

And, again, aloud: —

"Oh, father, where are you? Will you come to me? Will you help me?"

The night listened; it answered nothing. The boy continued: —

"Oh, if I could be with you, May. To be near you. Oh, God! oh, God!"

He was about to stop, probably with the intention of yielding to necessity and falling on the ground, but an elevation in the road before him induced the desire to overcome this last obstruction, and then give up all as lost.

If he were going to die let it be where the wind would catch his last breath and bear it away above the trees and the hills to the new home where his friends resided. Thus sweetly contemplating the mystery of the future, he slowly ascended the bluff.

It was the place where May first beheld the town and the grandeur of the adjacent valley. Coming to the top of the inclined plane, Zanthon perceived a marked change. The walls and the wood terminated here, the road bent over a descending grade, and a noise came up from the valley like that of falling water.

Looking through the pale light prevailing, he saw a star on the horizon.

Hold! was it a star?

A luminous body, evidently; situated near the earth, and of a red color; a planet, as its light was steady. Mars only, his father said, appeared to the naked eye like this. He had frequently seen Mars, but his color never appeared so dull as the one before him.

Suddenly the physical signs of reverie on his face disappeared, a peculiar light was kindled in his eyes, he smiled faintly, and extending his arms in front of him he cried aloud : —

"It is a light ; there are people yet in the world. I will be saved."

Continuing his observations, other lights appeared, until five or six were visible. Questioning himself no longer as a foolish boy, but as one who must learn the truth, he concluded that these signs were the lights in some of the houses of the town, to which he was journeying ; and he would enter it probably in another hour.

These reflections revived his drooping spirit once more ; nay, turning them gradually into a hopeful channel wherein the ideal presented bright pictures of success in the future, he resumed his march, after a little rest, considerably relieved from anguish.

The approach to the town appeared strangely interesting. If there were deep shadows, the mind of Zanthon invested them with imaginary beauty or exemption from terrors such as surrounded scenes in less favored places.

Presently the river came in view, moving in harmony with all that was perceptible in the night.

Like the road it emerged out of the unknown on one side and disappeared into it at the other. The first bridge crossing the mountain stream excited his curiosity, and a short distance further ahead the houses of the suburbs loomed up in silence.

The direct route lay along the right bank of the river. Zanthon pursued this line, notwithstanding that the high buildings of the city stood immediately to his right, and that the first of the two bridges invited him over it by its broad passage-way. It was too risky, he thought, to tempt the loneliness of such a situation where the ingenuity of man and the ingenuity of nature met with such immense results as were here displayed.

He had but finished reflecting on this question, when something on the left of the road excited his wonder.

A sombre looking building of vast proportions, such as went far beyond the reach of his calculations. He never beheld anything so terribly grand as this pile ; judging by the outline beside him. It stood in the embrace of the night like a mountain. The suddenness of its appearance, too, tended to increase the awe with which it was regarded.

Compared with the refined darkness in the shadow of his old home, that which prevailed in the indentations of this structure was almost immeasurable.

Spread out to the consistency of ordinary gloom it might possibly be equal to night itself. It would at all events intensify the darkness. The tower, being the part nearest him, went clearly into the sky and even above this, far as he could see, was a spire whose tapering end was lost in the heavens.

Were they gods or men who dared build such wonderful things in the home of night and before the face of day, as if they meant to rival the hand of Omnipotence ?

Eastward from the tower the structure tended.

There were several entrances, all closed ; but the one in the tower had not been completed, and was secured by rough lumber for the time being.

Approaching this point, Zanthon peered through the chinks of the woodwork and could see the interior of the edifice, or rather the darkness in it.

A solitary light appeared at the upper end, faintly gleaming as if it had been turned down to its lowest burning capacity.

There was a fascination attached to all these appearances which could not be described. It overshadowed him, in its turn, like the beauty of the night, though in a less degree, for he knew what he now beheld had been reared by men.

He determined to penetrate as far as the light, at least, seeing an aperture evidently in use by the workmen, against

which a slab of wood had been laid. This temporary obstruction Zanthon pulled back and entered the tower, closing the passage after him.

The place was dark, though the tall windows at the sides could be distinguished, and the rows of white pillars rising from the floor to the roof.

He imagined hearing something breathe like what he had listened to while suspended over the chasm in the mountains.

On this account he concluded the edifice was of vast proportions.

Beneath his feet he felt the floor hard and smooth. Passing on between two lines of pillars he encountered a railing. Within this railing were seats.

These he judged to be for the accommodation of the people. The building was their church.

The rail divided the rich from the poor.

How easily knowledge came to him now, seeing he had been forced to reason in order to obtain it.

He saw it all.

The rich sat down and the poor stood up, or knelt on the hard floor when it became customary to do so. Even on the way to heaven there appeared broad lines of distinction instituted by gold.

Crossing the fence, as it might be called, he soon reached the neighborhood of the light. It came from a large lamp suspended a great way from the ceiling. While standing here an instant, he saw a second enclosure with a passage invitingly open through which he passed. Everything within this space was of the richest kind. Soft carpets covered the floors; crimson cloth lined the seats. There was a throne on the right side surrounded by purple hangings. Beautiful pictures decorated the walls. There were statues on various elevated places, and the air was fragrant with delicious odors. Ah, this place would answer very well for heaven if his friends were with him.

He thought, indeed, nothing could exceed the grandeur now in view, even only partially seen.

About half a dozen steps lead upward to a raised platform, and above this an altar had been constructed. It was composed of polished marble and glistened in the light like moonbeams on the water.

Lost in admiration of these wonderful works of art, he grew exceedingly weary, sinking heavily on the steps in a recumbent position, unable to proceed further. Indeed this seemed to be the end.

Reclining his head on the upper step, the remainder of his body being adjusted so as to favor repose, he closed his eyes, and in a few minutes was asleep.

The wayfarer had gone to rest.

The darkness without and the gloom within would be no more disturbed. The night had encompassed and finally overpowered him, true to its accustomed duty. Then it proceeded alone sadly and silently.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MAGNATE OF DAWNFORD CASTLE.

THE country where Zanthon was born had been conquered by an alien race many years previously.

It was customary in those days for one people to invade the territory of another, and appropriate its resources toward their own aggrandizement.

Instigated by what adventurers used to call the glory of conquest, every phase of barbarity became an instrument in their hands for the suppression of the power commanded by their opponents.

Years were spent in wars. Those who killed the greatest number of their fellow beings were accounted the most distinguished men. Robbery stood on a par with bravery.

Injustice supplanted virtue.

When the conquerors began to frame rules for the government of those whom they had defeated, the equity of pagan Rome would not be tolerated in their code.

They would suit their conveniences and wishes in this as in other matters, on the general principle of doing with their own what they considered best to advance their interests. Hence the *law* founded on these views became synonymous with cruelty and pillage.

There was no law for the natives other than tyrannical enactments.

In the preceding chapters it was seen how poverty and ignorance had brought them on a level with the lowest type of slavery. How the pride a citizen entertains for the fact of his being more or less concerned in upholding the government of his country, and enjoying in consequence the privileges of citizenship, had wholly disappeared, and the weakness and superstition arising from wretchedness and irresponsibility remained, showing how far a brave and intelligent people may, under adverse circumstances, descend in the scale of animal life.

It was wonderful, however, to witness the encouragement given the dominant party, notwithstanding the arrogance and injustice attached to its jurisdiction. The professors of the faith growing up side by side with imperial Rome preached to the unfortunate people here, submission to the ruling dynasty, quoting the words of one of their learned comrades as proof of its importance; that all secular power came as ordinances from God, and whosoever resisted them incurred not only the penalties on earth due to such crimes, but forfeited spiritual happiness forever.

The philosophy of the times proved impotent against this doctrine. Believing it true that the Supreme God had delegated men on earth to instruct their brethren on the subject of political rights, the people resigned every aspiration to freedom and endeavored to reconcile themselves to the yoke of their oppressors.

There were periods, however, when some of their leaders roused them into rebellion goaded into such acts by the vilest kind of usage. On such occasions it was easy to recognize the winning party by the number and discipline of its troops, the character of the resources, and generally the strength of the entire power in operation, which the conquerors had always available.

Large numbers of the conquered people became gradually in favor of permanent peace. As means were afforded them by

which they could acquire independence in exchange for their adhesion to the established rules called law, they were as bold in the assumption of caste as the strangers. Many of them were given titles and estates; while others rose to wealth by the forces of their ingenuity and business qualifications.

To attain any degree of the eminence here indicated as belonging to the rich foreigners, talent as well as treachery to the native race was essential. There appeared to be an eternal struggle in progress on the part of those seeking the distinction named, to reach the object of their ambition; and afterwards, when success had crowned their efforts, they seemed forever at variance with good breeding by their imitation of the manners of the alien aristocracy. To be reckoned within the circle of the upper classes was the end of all their exertions.

The valley running parallel to the district where Marlband used to live was merely one of several, selected for the homes of the spurious magnates referred to. Similar localities might be found in every section of the country at large, forming a remarkable spectacle by the richness of their equipments, compared with the black plains and hills occupied by the peasantry.

The castle seen by May Marlband on her journey to the town had been erected about fifty years previous to that time by a man named Pinton Rigrasp. During his boyhood he came into notice as a herder of cattle belonging to a great landowner living in the neighborhood, whose estate covered all the western bank of the river from the town to the sea, a distance of more than seven miles.

Rigrasp proved very efficient in the discharge of his duties, and in the course of time was interested with others of greater importance until finally he succeeded to the management of the entire estate.

Fortune courted him. Ambition extended his designs.

He conceived the idea of penetrating the ranks of the aristocracy and of founding a family which would ultimately succeed

to titles as well as to all the privileges accorded persons in such exalted position.

Before the death of his master he purchased from him two hundred acres of land on the south end of the estate situated about two miles from the town of Kindleton, where he proposed to build his residence.

From other persons in need of hard cash he secured the property of which Footford was the capital, already mentioned as being portioned off to middlemen. This yielded him a large income yearly.

When the surprise caused by these acquisitions began to subside in the minds of his acquaintances, he astonished them still further, by the character of the structure designed to be his home, whose stately walls assumed the dimensions and appearance of a castle.

It was built near the bank of the river at the confluence of the mountain stream already mentioned and the larger water-course.

A garden lay on the south side, a wood on the north.

The road to the town skirted the western boundary; and from the gate in the wall at this point to the front of the castle an avenue extended, lined with poplars and shrubs of rare quality. Every device known to Rigrasp and his employes in the decoration of grounds, became subservient to his designs.

The glade, the grotto, the sloping esplanade, an open park, woods, shrubberies, flower knots, mammoth trees, hills, valleys, and a great number of other attractive features appeared in appropriate places, besides a beautiful promenade by the winding river, where during summer evenings the glory of paradise could be realized, so exquisite did everything appear in heaven and on earth.

The eastern view stretched over two cascades, several handsome villas, a mill, with a country of hill and dale terminating in a mountain range.

From the fact of the sun shining with peculiar force, and sending a glow before it in this direction in the morning, when not overshadowed by clouds, the man named his residence Dawnford Castle.

His wife, like himself, had been an attache of rich folk ; a scullery girl ; and was reckoned an old maid at the time of her marriage to Rigrasp.

There were four children born to them, three boys and one girl ; two before and two after becoming occupants of the castle.

The plans of the father for the elevation of his children to high stations were on as colossal a scale as those which marked his speculations in land and cattle. A work on the peerage stood over the mantelpiece in the library, to which he frequently referred, with the view of studying how he might reach relationship by marriage with one or other of the families mentioned in it.

Heraldry also claimed his attention. The marriage of one of his sons to a lady having a title would authorize the mounting of a coat of arms above the castle door, on the panels of his carriage and on his plate. The massive silver and gold ware available for table furniture in a vault of the castle equaled the finest in the land ; but it had not yet a single crest upon it. He would give, he thought, the weight of his daughter in gold if he could secure for her a penniless, disreputable husband with a title.

Zerlin, the heir, at an early age had been sent to school to the French capital, it being considered the most distinguished city in the world for fashion. Coming home a young man with some knowledge of French which, however, nobody could understand, a professor was employed to superintend his studies.

After much time and money had been expended on his education, the father by some process of mental measurement, known only to himself, ascertained that, in regard to scholarship, Zerlin was a failure.

It was then he realized for the first time how ambition may be checked if based on expectations of superior capacity in persons. It surprised him to find the difference existing between dumb brutes and intelligent beings as factors of success.

In the management of the one class he had always been successful, while the other defeated his efforts notwithstanding the means at his command. The rules by which he had been guided in former times proved useless in his new sphere.

He conceived, however, the idea that the cause of this was the viciousness in the nature of mankind, and not his own want of knowledge.

His son promised to be all he desired in other respects.

Pride supplanted deficiencies and qualifications in him. The language, manner, carriage, expression and purposes attached to his everyday life were deeply impregnated with it. Indeed this characteristic of human vanity appeared to be the most prominent feature of his life.

He changed his dress three times a day. The morning suit was fashioned after the one worn by the most distinguished European prince of the period. The wardrobe standing near his bedroom appeared the facsimile of that which belonged to the last of the Bourbon kings.

There were fifty horses in the stables ready for his accommodation. He could, if he chose, cross the entire country in his own stage far ahead of any competitor public or private. The vassals appointed to wait upon him, if mustered, would fill a company of infantry. There was a yacht he owned on the seacoast capable of carrying himself and his friends even to distant countries.

All this pleased old Rigrasp. It would attract the attention of the nobles, and ultimately achieve the getting of the coveted titles he labored so much to acquire.

When time summed up his affairs, however, there was not much solace in the result.

The best that could be done for Zerlin appeared to be to have him married to a distant relative of a great commoner, then prominent as a politician. The lady possessed neither riches nor title; but it was expected some portion of the halo of fame surrounding the chief would reach her on the ground of kinship.

Those who understand the ways of politicians need not be told how easily Zerlin's wife or himself could have monopolized the entire circle with their friend's consent if enough money to make the purchase was forthcoming.

The other sons of Rigrasp died on reaching manhood on account of intemperate habits. When all these disappointments and misfortunes had well nigh brought the founder of Dawnford Castle to the brink of the grave the final blow came from a direction least expected. Instead of a prince coming with a great retinue to espouse his daughter, she deserted her home of her own accord and married a peddler who escaped with her to another country. This so shocked the old folks that both died suddenly within a few days after they realized the facts of the case.

Zerlin became in this manner sole heir to all the property. Feeling the extent of the obligation due his father, he asked him before his death what he could do in the future in execution of any special desire he might have now, or if there was anything he wished performed.

The old man did not answer immediately. He reflected no doubt on the way his plans had been frustrated heretofore and did not feel justified in recommending a renewal of them anticipating like results.

It was not thought his hesitancy arose from a charitable disposition, for outside the members of his own family he aided no one during life, in a direct manner.

At the hour of death, however, some great changes have been wrought in the minds of men. After turning his head

on the pillow several times and attempting to speak yet afraid of touching a subject which might prove distasteful to his son, he at length said timidly : —

"You might take care of the Boggletons!"

Zerlin believing his father afflicted with hallucinations peculiar to some of those about to die nodded his head so as to calm him by his consent, but he had no more idea of what he meant than if he never had heard the words just spoken. It was the first time the father mentioned the name in his hearing. So convinced was the son of the truth of the original thought respecting his father's condition that he made no inquiry in regard to the subject referred to ; and on the other hand the old man supposing Zerlin had had information from other sources, said no more on the subject.

After the death and interment of father and mother when time brought again the resumption of ordinary living at Dawnford Castle, Zerlin reflected frequently on his father's words.

He did not like the name to begin with. It would no doubt assail his pride and perhaps hold him up to ridicule before the eyes of the world.

With a sinister smile on his face one day he asked his wife if she knew Boggleton ; but the question seemed so strangely constructed and having no conception of its intent or to whom it referred she shook her head negatively, elevated her eyebrows to indicate the hollowness of her mind on the subject and said : —

"No."

In this extremity of doubt, Zerlin bethought him of a man employed in his service likely to possess the knowledge he sought. This was Antony Firfag, the ferryman.

As Zerlin frequently desired access to the opposite side of the river without the necessity of going to town so as to cross by one of the bridges, he established a ferry for his own use. Under the castle wall there was a small pier, immediately in

front of the garden gate at the side of which a boat could be safely moored and on the eastern bank where the entrance of the mountain's stream caused an angle of calm water to prevail, was another pier where the boat usually lay. Above this on the public road Antony resided with a maiden sister in a small cottage. The key of the garden gate had a whistle attached to it which, when blown, brought Antony over the river with the boat if, as was frequently the case, he was not already on the grounds or in the kitchen enjoying a sumptous repast.

Antony did not exhibit largeness of frame or muscular development. On the contrary he appeared even less than the medium size; but in conversation he was so boastful of his exploits as to make strong men afraid of him. He had a perceptible limp in his right leg, the result no doubt of early inflammation of the hip joint. His features were thin and hard; but comic and pompous looking; kept in place as they were by a high shirt collar. When, with well designed motions of the upper part of his body, the better to lessen the conspicuousness of his limp, he appeared in public wearing a cast off coat of his master, it was not uncommon to consider him by mistake an aristocrat!

To Zerlin, however, he was a great toady. Whenever they met, the vassal never neglected pulling his hat off how much soever the hair of his head might be disturbed by the condition of the weather, to prove how he respected and honored the master.

Whatever the magnate of Dawnford Castle thought of Antony's sycophancy, he found him faithful in the discharge of his duties, besides being an immense source of information on current subjects.

Antony never spent a day at school. What he learned he found on the outside. Indeed so well posted did he become in the ways of mankind, that he was able to laugh at the igno-

rance of the schoolmaster who was supposed to be in possession of all knowledge. Opportunity did a great deal to produce this result. He stood on the line dividing the two great classes then existing in the country with the privilege of seeing each of them in the pursuit of the business of life. One day among the cabins of the poor; the next in the mansions of the rich witnessing alternately the trials incident to poverty and the scandals created by excess.

He was equally learned in the intrigues of fashionable men, the dialogues held in back parlors, the incidents of the last hunt, as with the prices of produce in the markets, the demand for stock at fairs, the rumors prevailing in town and the sentiments held by the country people.

Being conveniently situated on the public road he obtained the privilege of buying country produce for merchants in the town, especially grain for the mill near him. This extended his acquaintance through all the places accessible to the highway and enabled him to increase his knowledge. Nor did his usefulness end here. He knew the several species of fish in the river, the periods of their coming, the length of their visits and when they would depart. He claimed to be acquainted even with their instincts. At times when fish were scarce he used to surprise his master by bringing to the castle a pair of trout every morning for his breakfast.

When Zerlin accidentally thought of Antony being capable of solving the Boggleton difficulty, the impression gained strength with time. Proud men are not given much to reflection; indeed they seek to avoid it as often as possible; and hence their passionate desire for society where their vanity is exhibited to advantage as they believe; but Zerlin could not avoid thinking of his vassal's knowledge as shown on several previous occasions.

Meeting him one day in the garden he determined on introducing the subject before they parted.

The master was a well-shaped man standing about five feet nine inches in height, ruddy complexion, gray eyes and light hair; but the expression most noticeable on his countenance was that of a fool. He was ridiculously attached to a pompous bearing. The method he pursued in carrying his cane under the left arm with the right hand crossed to hold it in front, gave a proud feature to his person it would be difficult to imitate.

Antony with hat in hand, his finest efforts displayed to cover the deficiency of his nether limb walked after his master who moved slowly through the garden as if intent on examining the shrubs and flowers abounding there.

Notwithstanding their long acquaintance and relationship the language of the proud man was harsh.

"Firfag, what news from town?" he asked.

"The mail coach broke down within a mile of the postoffice; the town crier is dead; Slipson the merchant failed and grain is rising, your honor."

"'Pon my honor that's quite a bundle of news, Firfag. When did all this occur?"

"Yesterday, your honor; and on the back of it there's a rumor that young Colonel Roulay, the old man's son, your honor, is going to build an addition to the great house below the boundary wall on the bank of the river that will throw your castle in the shade out and out."

Zerlin made no reply to this remark; but laughed derisively.

On account of the habit of keeping his head fixed one way in his body as if unable to turn it, the effort to laugh was peculiarly distressing and Firfag was frequently shocked by the awful contortions and spasmodic groans accompanying it.

Although the master used no words it could be seen he was in a towering passion for he suddenly drew his cane from

beneath his arm and began cutting off the heads of the flowers in bloom before him.

Roulay was the owner of the adjoining estate, from whose father the grounds on which Dawnford Castle was built, had been purchased and Zerlin, the upstart, believed it obligatory with him to nurse an hereditary feud which should keep them apart.

It was the fashion in those days and may be yet.

In a few minutes he changed the subject.

"Is there anything new in the river, Firfag?" he resumed.

"Lots of trout, your honor. I will bring in a pair to-morrow. I needn't go far neither to find them; they're lying under the wall now."

"Ah, how is it you catch them in pairs, Firfag?"

"That's the way they go, your honor; just like people sometimes. When I pull one out of the water the other expects it to return and will wait, so that when I drop on to him he's there."

"Quite singular, quite singular, 'pon my honor," said Zerlin.

"As for why there's two together," continued Firfag, "one is fish and the other is *mate*, your honor!"

The master could not refrain from smiling at this witticism of the vassal; and shaking his head in approval, said good-humoredly.

"I declare, Firfag, you're quite a pleasant fellow, quite so."

Now that the great man was again in a good mood Antony would have pursued his pleasantries further; but the master had come to the exact moment that suited him in regard to another vexed question.

While the smile yet lingered on his features, he asked abruptly, like a person in doubt of the character of the answer:

"Have you heard of the Boggleton's lately, Firfag?"

Although Antony twisted on the gravel walk as if he had been punched in the ribs with the butt end of a rifle, he recovered himself in an instant and replied promptly :

"Yes, your honor."

There was silence before the next question came. With Zerlin the main point was settled ; Firfag knew the Boggletons; while on the other hand, Antony felt he was being carried over ticklish ground. This mention of the Boggletons involved an entire volume. It pointed to a theme he disliked the most in the world ; for during the time of his giving an account of it he might earn the displeasure of his master whose pride would probably take offence. Hence he was thrown on his wits' ends, as it were ; and required all his caution awakened for the present occasion. Zerlin resumed : —

"Do I know them, Firfag ?"

"Not in the least, your honor. No more nor I know how to fly in the air or count the stars."

"They are not related to me, are they ?"

"Pooh, no your honor."

"*Who* are they related to then ?"

"Who ?" repeated Antony not knowing what reply to give.

"Yes sirrah ; don't you hear me ?"

"The man that was related to them, your honor, is dead."

"What was he in life, Firfag ?"

"Your father, the old master, God be good to him," answered Antony in a solemn voice.

Zerlin seeing a rustic seat hard by, moved towards it and sat down, while Antony following stood before him, like a school boy under examination.

The master continued : —

"Tell me all you know Firfag about the Boggletons and I warn you to have no more quibbling."

Thus admonished Antony prepared to render the information desired. As he straightened himself to his full height, he wore

something of a theatrical air. His face possessed a gloss like that overspreading an unpolished copper kettle and he turned his head slightly to one side, as if to appear wise.

The short hair above and the white collar beneath his countenance gave him a sinister look ; although in reality, it might indicate only capacity for humor ; so carefully does nature try to conceal genius behind the contour of a clown.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SETTLEMENT OF A VEXED QUESTION.

"THE old master, your honor," said Firfag, "never let it be known to anyone, he had relations, until pretty well on to his death. His heart was set on his own children; and them as he thought would shame 'em to keep at a dishtance.

Well, one day, and a cold day it was, between halloweve and Martinmass, your father, your honor, sent for me and says he; 'Firfag,' says he, 'What is it, your honor?' says I.

'Bring out Bully Ponsonby and the Colonel' says he 'for I want you to come with me on an arrand.'

He was a great judge of stock, your honor, and the best horses were all called names so we could know 'em.

In less nor fifteen minutes we were in the saddle; the master on Ponsonby and I on the Colonel.

We took the cross cattling road going west of the town; and never pulled in a rein until we had made twenty-seven mile. There was a cabin on the side of the road where we stopped.

The master went in while I attended to the horses on the outside. When they were comfortable, and I began to wait to see him come out, he called me.

He was as pale in the face as if a ghost met him.

We went in. There was a woman lying on a poor bed in the corner, and a couple of women and a little boy standing

near it. The master went up beside the bed, and the woman said to him :

'I never asked anything from you, nor went to your place, but now when I am going to die, I wish you to look after these children, because they will have neither father nor mother.'

The master said kindly like :

'There will be something done for them.'

Then he gave her money and we came away. When the wind got under us once more on the road home, we fell into discourse.

'Firfag' says he to me, 'Firfag, let nobody know of this transaction. That woman in the bed is a sister of mine ; but because she married poor and had a houseful of children, I could not recognize her."

'You could, your honor, but you wouldn't,' says I, making bold with him.

'Ah, Firfag,' says he again, 'they'd destroy the pride of my children. We would be laughed at. My boys must blush with shame in society when people saw their poor relations. How could I do it ?'

'And what is the name of the father of the family ?' says I.

'Boggleton,' says he."

Zerlin moved uneasily in his seat and groaned audibly, notwithstanding his efforts to appear unconcerned. Firfag continued :

" Boggleton used to be a poor laborer. He left five children after him when he died and a wife. From the day the master and I went to see them until nigh on to a year I was busy going round looking for places for them ; for their mother died a couple of days after we were there. I got places in the town for the girls, four of 'em, and I left the boy with a farmer who knew his people. Three of the girls married in the course of time."

"How many of the family are now left unprovided for?" asked Zerlin, somewhat relieved by the supposition that the majority at least was out of danger.

"The whole of 'em, your honor. They're all to the fore yet," replied Firfag. "The married ones are widows. Whether the husbands died of hardship or went into the army I could not find out. The girls didn't know themselves. One is here and the other is there working for a living, the women I mean. They are good workers in a house. Nobody can say anything against their character. But, you're honor, they're great talkers clattering the whole time, not loud or in anger, but nicely gauged betwixt a high and a low key. They are homely to look at.

The way I got friends for them first was, I paid the master's money to people to take them on trial and let them work their own salvation after.

It *done* well.

Now, they always wear black out of respect for the dead, but howsomever the color makes them respectable, and between you and me, your honor, they hold to it, I'm thinking, on that account."

"Then these people are my ——," said Zerlin, hesitatingly.

"Yes, your honor, they're your——" remarked Firfag, careful not to go beyond the words of his master, neither party wishing to pronounce the word "cousins." After a short silence, the proud man resumed:

"Do you think we could find employment for them within the castle, Firfag? for I am disposed to remove them from among the people on account of their history; singular, 'pon my honor; as well as that I desire to aid them being the friends of my father."

"The friends of your father, of *course*, and of nobody *else*," answered the vassal, with emphasis on the last word. He continued:

"Your honor knows best what to do. There is lots of work for 'em. *I* think they will do better for your honor and her ladyship than the cold strangers."

"How would we place them, Firfag?"

"Mrs. Rinser could take the keys," replied Antony, meaning the position of housekeeper. In aristocratic homes, and indeed in hundreds of others with enough wealth to enable the proprietor to assume lofty airs, the duties of housekeeper devolve upon an employe, the lady owner being relieved from every detail of duty excepting command.

The housekeeper carries bunches of keys capable of admitting her to every room in the house, and her apartments resemble the office of an adjutant general where orders are received and delivered. Firfag resumed:

"Mrs. Rinser is the oldest. Then there is Mrs. Aloes, Mrs. Tuberfoot and Miss Mussy. Her ladyship and the housekeeper, Mrs. Rinser, will find places for them."

"What can we do for the boy?"

"Oh, *him*. I don't know, your honor. He's now close on to twenty years of age, and he hasn't any cutting in him yet."

"What do you mean by cutting, Firfag? 'Pon my honor, you're a singular fellow; quite so."

"I mean *sharpness*, your honor. He's working in the country, and I'm blessed if I know whether he got any schooling or not. If he was made to read and write, your honor could get a *government* appointment for him."

"Ah, yes, Firfag; yes, that would do. We might grind him for it, or cram him," said Zerlin, emphatically.

As Antony did not understand how much violence these terms used by his master involved, he refrained from making any affirmation approving them, but wisely resorted to a sentence long known to be capable of covering a great deal of ambiguity without committing one's self to any side of a question:

"Your honor knows best."

"What is his name?"

"Ham, your honor; Ham Boggleton."

"Well, then," said Zerlin, rising from his seat and slashing at the flowers near him as he resumed a slow walk through the garden: "You see these people and arrange with them about coming here. I will speak to her ladyship on the subject, and I am sure she will agree with me, as you do, that we can make provision for them without its being either radically wrong, or hurtful in any way to us or our children."

These were the preliminary steps taken for the introduction of the Boggleton family into Dawnford Castle. As a matter of fact, the women proved valuable adjuncts to the household. They were assiduous in the performance of their duties; watchful of the interests of their employers, and good natured. No doubt they talked a great deal in that soft, motherly way that a certain class of women possess; but this habit made them greater favorites with their acquaintances than if they were more reticent.

Ham Boggleton, their brother, resembled them in his sympathetic nature, but appeared to be wanting in intellectual capacity. He was boyish looking on account of his smooth face; above the medium height, and his figure on the whole, very well shaped. His hands and feet were large. There was nothing delicate or refined in his appearance, yet it possessed singular attractiveness probably on account of the amount of human nature seen associated with its various habits as already mentioned.

He laughed a great deal. In this condition others laughed with him; for the broad face broken up into good-natured furrows excited mirth. It was irresistible. The hair grew thick and heavy on his head being a dark color. The texture of the complexion would be pronounced swarthy, overspread with a greasy softness resembling leather. His eyes were small,

having a swinish cast when under excitement. The nose large and flattened towards the end. Lips thick, covering a huge mouth.

There was considerable care bestowed upon his general make up after becoming a resident of the castle.

It was customary in those days with young aristocrats to have the hair cut close at the back and sides of the head leaving the top of it well covered with fiber of medium length, so as to permit its parting in the center or elsewhere as well as to favor the suspicion that the individual possessed a *long* head, like Pericles.

Ham's cranium was treated in this manner.

As every one in the place had come to the conclusion that he was to have a government appointment, it became absolutely necessary to start with this physical feature even though it was merely artificial.

In addition to this he was taught to strut. Strange as it may appear, he acquired that accomplishment with little difficulty. Then he carried for the most part, a light coat on his arm, wore kid gloves, to lessen the size of his hands and a plug hat. His figure being straight it looked remarkable at a distance, bedecked with the fashion of the times. In spite of all these agents of pride, however, a portion of his good nature remained with him, which tended towards his popularity with the ordinary people. This induced Firfag to mention on one occasion that "Master Ham, your honor, would make a fine member."

To which Zerlin replied : —

"Ah, 'pon my honor, I suppose so, Firfag. I do really."

As neither party indicated the kind of membership spoken of, we presume it referred to the assembly of the representatives of the people designed to enact laws for the country.

Besides external appearance it was thought advisable to give him some intellectual polish. On this account a schoolmaster

was employed to come daily to the castle for the purpose of instructing him.

After a tuition of six months Zerlin made inquiry in regard to his progress : —

"Was he learning rapidly ? "

"No, sir," answered the teacher, "I cannot say he is."

"What *is* he learning, schoolmaster ? "

"Not much of anything, sir."

"Why don't you teach him ? Is not this what you have been employed to come here for ? " said Zerlin with some heat.

"I do my best, your honor," replied the teacher meekly, "but his intellect resists my efforts. In other words he will not take it or take *to* it.

"Do you mean he is obstinate and willfully opposes instruction ? "

"No. The intellectual power is wanting in him. We cannot cultivate what is not there."

"'Pon my honor, this is *most* singular, *most* singular indeed," said Zerlin.

The teacher continued : —

"We have come to a standstill in arithmetic. It is impossible to proceed. I have been trying several methods of instructing him in the preliminary tables, the multiplication, subtraction and addition tables ; yet all to no purpose. He will pronounce the words after me ; but in a little while they become lost to his memory. Even the simplest forms, such as a child or parrot might be capable of repeating, seem beyond his capacity. I tried similarity of sounds, as in this manner : — six and ten are six ten, sixteen ; seven and ten are seven ten, seventeen ; eight and ten are eight ten, eighteen ; but when asked how much seven and ten amounts to he becomes puzzled and does not know."

At this report Zerlin became stupefied with amazement and a deep blush suffused his features. The teacher resumed : —

"In reading we are yet with words of one syllable and writing in pothooks and hangers!"

As Zerlin feared to question the obscure meaning involved in this last accomplishment, lest it might reveal a state of inefficiency lower than anticipated, or such as would shock his feelings he wisely preserved silence while the teacher proceeded: —

"I deliver short lectures on grammar, geography and history each day on the supposition that by keeping the facts before his mind constantly, he may become familiar with them. As a method of teaching, lectures rank high. I am afraid, your honor, we shall never reach geometry. It was my intention on taking up this subject to make him a great reasoner. I imagined I saw under his physical development a talent for reason, whereas he is wholly destitute of it."

"Perhaps," remarked Zerlin, "it might be well on this account to change our intention about his future position. If he fails in civil service, he would be good enough for the church. How is he on theology?"

"I have not neglected the subject," replied the teacher. "We have been at it almost every day. I began with the ten commandments. We are still hammering away at the first one."

"Cannot repeat the first commandment yet?"

"No sir; not if it were to save his soul for all eternity."

Zerlin groaned like one afflicted with spasmodic contraction of the umbilicus, exclaiming: —

"'Pon my honor, the most singular case I ever knew. It is really so; quite." Addressing the teacher he said: —

"Is there any remedy, schoolmaster, for this state of things?"

"Oh, yes; application. Time may bring some improvement. He will need the services of a tutor for years."

As this suggestion pointed toward the only thing left unaccomplished in the settlement of the Boggleton family, Zerlin

yielded to its importance and engaged a teacher permanently.

During the following years while Ham was struggling to master the preliminary rules of learning, time wrought its usual quota of changes. The heir of Roulay estate erected his addition to the grand manor house north of the castle. Zerlin's wife died; his children, two boys, were sent to Paris to school; and the magnate of Dawnford Castle exhibited in his own person the signs of decay. His eyes grew dull and his hair gray. The stiffness of his neck was kept up by a greater amount of exertion than formerly and his hands trembled on account of the loss of power. He drank deeply after dinner, which brought into prominence, during sobriety, the idiotic expression on his countenance, implanted there by pride. He never gained a title excepting such sobriquets given him by the country people as would be far from flattering to his vanity had he known them. The only institution which flourished with the roll of years, within the boundary of his jurisdiction, was the Boggletons. Time did not seem to touch *them*. They fed lustily; worked, clattered and laughed all day and in sleep snored until the light glass of their bedroom windows shook as in a thunder storm! They bloomed like dahlias in the fall when other flowers were shriveled on their stalks.

It was at this time the famine came.

Zerlin, to avoid additional trouble, determined to join his sons at Paris for a couple of years, or until the advent of better times. His law agent living in the town would attend to the financial affairs of the estate, and the Boggletons, with a few others, remain in possession of the castle as heretofore during his absence.

There was one subject that pressed itself forward at this time more than any other, demanding recognition; namely, Ham Boggleton's government appointment. Now, that he had grown to manhood, being fully twenty-five years of age, it was

thought to be time to launch him on the ocean of life in his own boat. No doubt his learning was very limited ; he could write his name or a short letter when necessary. If not trusting himself to read the page of a book before others, he was sure, on his own part, to be competent to acquire the meaning of it as well as the best. Readers of this class are as numerous as blackberries in summer. Mathematics were abandoned altogether as being too crude and vulgar. His society polish, however, appeared excellent. His nods of assent, the gait assumed by him, in which a light spring on each foot played an important part ; the padding of his coat over the shoulders ; the ring on his finger ; the platitudes heard in his speech, used to flatter or conciliate his acquaintances ; were all considered appendages of a good fellow. In imitation of his cousin and the aristocracy, he frequently used such expressions as "The deuce" and "'Pon my honor." Why not give him station or title, so as to support such commendable practices and display? Would it be advisable to see to this business now or wait until his return ? While revolving the question in his mind, Zerlin encountered Firfag, to whom he expressed his intention of going abroad, as it was called, laying particular stress on the subject relating to Boggleton. Antony replied : —

"The *appintment* is good, your honor, but there's something else far better nor it."

"Ah, what is that, Firfag ?"

"Marriage, your honor."

"'Pon my honor, that is singular, Firfag. I did not seriously think of this point before. There were reasons. Would he desire the marriage state, think you ?"

"Marry him anyhow, your honor, whether he likes it or not. It's the best cure in the world for a greenhorn or a swindler. It makes 'em buckle down or *knuckle* down to the work of the world. It's a safe crib to hold a fool ; not that master Ham is either one or the other ; far from it, your honor."

"I thought, Firfag, there would be some difficulty in finding a lady to accept him on account of—ah, the light nature of his intelligence."

"Pooh, your honor, that's an advantage to him. Wimmen don't like smart men, except they be *very* smart. No one pleases 'em better nor a fool. You know the kind of man I mean, your honor; a big soft fellow that will laugh and play with them, and carry things around and allow the chairs to be piled on top of him on the middle of the floor, and whine like a dog, and know nothing."

"'Pon my honor, that is singular, Firfag — singular taste, indeed; quite so."

"Didn't I see the finest lady in all the land run away with a worthless scamp and leave her husband, a beautiful man, behind her. Didn't Molly Toherson, a born lady, your honor, the daughter of old Toherson, marry a cripple, when she could get the best men in the world to wait on her! Oh, the wimmen *is* queer things, your honor; queer things.

Then they like clever men, because every one of 'em has a soft spot on his head that makes him foolish. There aint no mistake, your honor; it's a fact. The soft spot is on the inside."

"On the brain, Firfag?"

"*In* the brain, your honor. *Larned* men do very well up to a certain *pint;* but after that they fall over the line like the beam of a scale made too heavy at one end."

"This is perfectly astonishing, Firfag. 'Pon my honor, I never heard anything so singular; and doubtless quite true; quite true. Too much at one end; reasonable."

"Yes, your honor. I wouldn't be one of 'em for anything. They give money to people as don't deserve it. They help bad men in jails and out of jails. They would even go before a mob and stop it from hurting a fallen woman. They don't salute the clergy on the street. They talk about the poor being

as good as the rich, and they fall in love on the first moment with the wimmen."

"You are quite well posted in these matters, Firfag."

"And, your honor, let me tell you what's more about them; when they kiss, they kiss like the very mischief!"

"How singular that is, Firfag. Can you account for it?"

"Not in the least, your honor."

"Now, what style of lady would suit my father's relative, Boggleton, think you, Firfag?"

"A country winch, your honor, would be the safest for him. If he had an estate for himself he might be looking after a lady; but when he has to work for a livin' there's nothing better nor the one that will help him along. A country winch as knows how to count and cast up the numbers, could keep the books for him. More nor that, she might take some of the laugh out of your father's relation, your honor. She'd be bold to sit down on him if he did n't keep to his work."

"Quite right, quite right, Firfag. We might get him a situation on the strength of his wife's learning."

"Yes, your honor, he could walk about orderin' things, and she'd do the writin'."

"How may we find such a person?"

"We must go match-making, your honor."

"Ah, match-making, Firfag!" How am I to understand you?"

"It is the common run of the country, your honor."

"It is singular. I know absolutely nothing about common people."

"More power to your honor for it. Well, it is this way. When a country man wants to get a husband for his daughter, he goes to a market or a fair; and coming to meet people from other places they go together, in the coorse of the evening, into a public house to drink. So well, so good, your honor. Then

they begin discoorsing on the weather and the *craps* until they come, in the long run, to marriage.

Them as has a son says to the man with the daughter :—

'Will we make a match between them?' If he says 'Yis,' they say: 'What will you give with your daughter?'

'She'll have two cows and a calf to get; a feather-bed, a churn, a washtub, and a frying-pan.'

The young man, your honor, may have nothing but the good-will of a few acres of land. If the old people agree, the couple *is* brought together and married. Now, your father's relation, your honor, must get some one to go matchmaking for him as knows how; because he don't know the way to find a wife for himself."

"'Pon my honor, I think you are right, Firfag; I do, really."

"It could be done nicely, while your honor is abroad, without people bein' the wiser."

"That is so, Firfag; that is so."

"I'm a great hand at the business, your honor. I'd do my best to get a good match for him. Many and many's the night I spent at it. I married more old bachelors and stale maids in my time than any man this side of the mountain; or beyond it for the matter of that."

"No doubt, Firfag, no doubt; but, on the other hand, if my father's relative—ah—Boggleton, fancied a lady on his own account, that you could not get in the way you mention, what would you do?"

After a little reflection the man answered :—

"Carry her off by force, of course. It's the common run of the country, your honor."

"Really? That is singular. Does not the law take cognizance of it as violence?"

"No, your honor. The law aint asked to do nothing. The people put up with it sooner nor look for law. When a woman

is taken off in that way, it's for love and not with bad intention towards her that it's done."

"I presume this peculiar custom only prevails among the peasantry ?"

"It's all over, your honor, the same way. It was thought so good a thing, that the grand folks tried it, and took to it natural like."

"Is there no redress for the party aggrieved? Is there a remedy ?"

"Follow 'em, your honor, and if strong enough fight 'em. Pitch into 'em. Have war."

"Ah, singular remedy, indeed, Firfag ; quite usual, however, to fight. Came down to us. Animal propensity."

As the foregoing dialogue tended in a great measure to awaken in Zerlin's mind ideas looking towards the marriage of Ham Boggleton, he took occasion to inform Mrs. Rinser that it would please him well if, in the natural order of things, a partner were provided for her brother while awaiting his appointment. He the more readily favored the arrangement, because, if the marriage took place while he was in Paris, there would be a great deal of trouble avoided, and he would not be forced to speak congratulatory phrases in the ears of his father's relative ; a thing he abhorred doing.

When all his views had been communicated to his several dependents, he departed for the French capital leaving the castle in charge of the Boggletons.

This important event took place late in the fall of the year in which the famine made its entrance to the country.

While starvation brought hundreds to premature graves, the Boggletons, secure within the castle walls, enjoyed the good things of the earth in abundance.

Merriment took a daily round among them. The bright fire in the back parlor was surrounded by cheerful faces. The old story and the new story were heard alternately ; and Fir-

fag often boasted of his wonderful exploits for the entertainment of the company. There were no daily newspapers in the place in those days; and news that tended to frighten timid people was suppressed. Hence the Boggletons wallowed in jovial times.

They had struck it rich!

CHAPTER XIII.

AN IMPORTANT CONFERENCE.

AS Mrs. Rinser knew that Antony Firfag had the confidence of the master of Dawnford Castle regarding Ham Boggleton's intended settlement in marriage, she invited him to appear in the back parlor one morning to consider this important subject. Antony's reputation as an outside man had raised him in her estimation to the dignity of a plenipotentiary, capable of deciding any cause by the variety of his information. Now, that great responsibilities devolved upon her, she having the entire management of the internal affairs of the castle, it appeared fitting that this interview should take the shape of a business transaction wherein *her* dignity should also become conspicuous.

Therefore the morning had been selected for this reason, as well as because she desired to avoid any interference with the evening hours, which were usually devoted to relaxation, after the labors of the day, by the members of the household.

While no definite understanding had yet been reached as to her brother's engagement with any lady, the preliminary negotiations looking towards that end should be kept as secret as possible. At this early date, none but the heads of departments, as it were, should participate in the transaction.

Mrs. Rinser stood about the medium height. Her body, although not corpulent in the true sense of the word, yet was fleshy; the waist being thick and short, the shoulders round,

and her arms to her elbows would be considered comfortably large. Her age could not be determined on account of false hair which she wore in the fashion of the times; a fine specimen of a dark brown color. Behind this she wore a tidy cap of black lace or similar material trimmed with a little border at each side and stray sprigs of artificial flowers on other parts of it. Her dress was plain and black. No prominence of the breast or expression of the countenance appeared, to give her a character of boldness. Whatever might be judged as masculine in her person, dissolved into gentleness, or a womanly nature well suited to her position. Of course, the Boggleton face was there, characterized by broadness of feature and sleepiness of tone, flabby after youthful years. The eyes large and expressionless, the mouth capacious, never wanting a tooth, as if designed to gormandize without stint. The nose proportioned to the other parts, but flattened somewhat at the extremity, as if a smoothing iron or a jack plane had been run over it for the purpose of giving it a finishing touch.

She had no fairy tread, such as female denizens of castles in ancient times were represented as possessing; but a ponderous footstep that made the soft leather of her slippers creak as if an elephant were in them. It was remarkable how steadfastly she devoted her energies to the business of her position; rarely, if ever, losing any time in idleness. Her voice might be heard in some part of the structure at all hours of the day and far into the night, with a modulating roll not by any means displeasing to the ear, giving directions regarding the preservation of furniture, sanitary rules, and such other acts as became necessary in so important an establishment as Dawnford Castle. She was not given much to the use of complimentary phrases; and on this account began her discourse instantaneously with such persons as had occasion to converse with her.

When Antony entered the apartment at the time appointed, she was turning over some odds and ends in one of the drawers

of the sideboard, a kind of bureau peculiar to parlors in Europe.

"Of course, Antony, no one will be the wiser of what we say here," she said, surprising her visitor with the belief that it was a continuation and not the beginning of a dialogue he heard. She continued:

"Ham is young, has great expectations, and will be recognized in the highest society. His father often said, before he died, he was bound to come to something. Indeed, it was my own belief, even if he never came to the Castle. Poor fellow, the best natured boy in the world, is shy. I often said to Mrs Aloes I thought he had not enough of *push* in him; but he'll mend, Antony; he is sure to do well hereafter."

"Mrs. Rinser," replied Antony, confining himself to the first part of her introductory remarks, lest he should be lost among the intricacies of what followed, "the face of clay won't hear from me except you say it yourself. I can keep a sacret better nor ——"

"Yes, Antony," she said, interrupting, supposing, no doubt, all he could say on the subject was plain to her, "I told Mrs. Aloes I knew positively Ham would marry of his own accord without any compulsion. It was not likely, indeed, he would spend his life single. The Boggletons were not in love with singleness, although Miss Mussy is so; and what they got by marriage is nothing to brag of. Ham will be one of the finest men in the country by and by. He says, and I think so myself, if he gets any one it ought to be a person pleasing to his mind. No matter about that, if he took my advice he'd venture to look out for a lady with her silks and her satins around her. There's enough of them in the country wanting husbands, the Lord knows, but he isn't in favor of the idea. I told him he was as good himself as the best of them; nor does he doubt it in the least. Why should he?"

Antony, well knowing the style of his contemporary diplomat, made no effort to assume the leadership. Skilled as he was in the several powers of human nature, he had, figura-

tively, thrown up the sponge long ago in favor of Mrs. Rinser. She was too quick for him.

Before he could find a word to speak, she was capable of uttering a sentence. While drawing his breath in order to stimulate him for a fresh effort, she ran off in rattling phrases into a new subject with the ease of a professional orator. Wisdom could do nothing here, where its sayings were smothered at inception without ceremony.

She may have imagined, perhaps, that Antony's want of speech in her presence originated on account of his being fascinated by her superiority, whereas he was only dumfounded.

On the present occasion, however, he found himself possessed of an unusual amount of strength and hardihood, impelling him to the performance of desperate efforts toward the gaining of a fair standard of character as a far-seeing man. He formed a laudable estimate of his own importance and imagined his acquaintances should share it. His recent conversation with Zerlin on the subject of match-making had awakened such proud recollections of past achievements, that he determined on staking the issues of the day with Mrs. Rinser on his knowledge and experience in that line. Full of this idea before the meeting took place, he was discomfited, however, by a volley of her words on the very threshold of the apartment where he had hoped to win additional fame.

Still, he would be patient. Diplomacy owed its greatest successes to this simple remedy. Would he wait until she had expended the heft of her language, and afford him, during the interval of rest, sufficient time to collect and deliver his thoughts in some reasonable shape? No. The absurdity of this course became apparent when he reflected that her vocabulary was inexhaustible. He must rather adapt himself to the occasion by the use of short sentences when possible, until chance enabled him to deliver a stunning broadside of logical facts that would drive her into confusion, if not wholly subdued by it. Hence, holding his head a little to one side, as if

intent on listening, he prepared himself to give his assent to her words as a preliminary step toward the accomplishment of his design. Mrs. Rinser continued :

"Yes ; and, as I said to Mrs. Tuberfoot, it isn't the means so much as the man ; nor is it the man so much as the means. Some like one and some the other.

What's the difference ? Ham will have means as well as being a man. I should think he'd be fit company for the finest lady in the country. Of course he isn't beautiful. Beauty does not go for much. I never did like it. There is always something wrong with beautiful people. Take a handsome girl, for instance, and she cannot wash, wring, dry and iron a tubful of clothes in a day, nor make her own dresses any more than I could."

Antony believing he saw an opening here, said :

"Look at that."

"They're impudent as well ; thinking, of course, they are better than other people. I never could see it. If the rain falls on a homely person, nothing is said ; whereas, if a good-looking woman slides into a river and gets her skirts moistened, the whole town-land is roused by it. The men especially are always making fools of themselves by running after the handsome ones."

"Look at *that*," repeated Antony, with a sharp rattle in his throat, as if he had had a galvanic battery turned on to him.

"I always found it the best way not to take any notice of these things," continued Mrs. Rinser, "for I did not know how soon they might come to my own door. I always like to be prepared for emergencies ; and in the present case I may not be mistaken. I do not imagine whether she will be handsome or ordinary ; I mean Ham's wife. I suppose a person inclining a *leetle* to the handsome side would, after all, be best ; but for the matter of that, he's as likely to go and make as great a fool of himself as the rest, by selecting the biggest beauty he can find. Oh, you needn't talk, Antony. I know it. It's the

way men have. Not but that she might be a good enough lady. There is no denying what may be *there*. Of course we'll do something to keep them together until he gets his appointment."

"Where is she?" inquired Antony, with a resolute intention of turning the conversation into a practical channel.

"Oh, the Lord knows. As I said to Mrs. Aloes ——"

"Will we have to find one for him?" said the man, desperately.

"Of course. We must find *her*."

"Wouldn't *any* one do?" pursued Antony, feeling he had at length come near to a diplomatic equality with his companion on the pending question, and was anxious to press for honors.

"*Any* one?" repeated Mrs. Rinser, elevating her eyebrows, while she looked with such severity at the man, as to make him imagine a section of the apartment was being carried off by a whirlwind. Nevertheless he was not slow to perceive he had accidently scored a point; for he must now give an explanation of what was meant in his last sentence thus affording him a chance of elucidating his favorite system of uniting people in marriage. He said: —

"I ask your pardon Mrs. Rinser for them words. I was bothered about something else the time they were said. I was thinkin' if we went to the market and go match-making for Master Ham, there could be a nice tidy girl found for him like what the master thought might be handy. When I said *any one*, it was in my mind to say *some* one, that would please all parties of coorse. I —"

"Yes. To be sure Antony. Of course, I would have no objection to matel-making so long as it is the custom of the country; although I have no reason to be in love with it; for that's the way Rinser and I were brought together. It didn't turn out the best; but that's not here nor there. As I said to my uncle, the old master, when he went to see me, an empty house is better than a bad tenant. Ham don't like

the way it's carried on. He wants to look around for himself. Indeed he has been looking round already, to some advantage, as he thinks. He may bring in a lady here any day, before we know whether we are standing on our feet or otherwise. Mrs. Aloes is thunderstruck about it ; and no wonder ; for she thought Ham would remain single, at least until his sisters were provided for."

Antony being unprepared for this announcement, twisted his little head over his collar several times, in a vain endeavor to appear composed. Accompanying a hysterical laugh he said : —

" Oh, Mrs. Rinser that beats all I ever heard. To go match-making alone without a sinner knowing anything about it, is more nor the master himself would do."

Mrs. Rinser who was seated about the distance of four feet from her guest raised a roll of paper she had in her hand to the horizontal position and pointing it at Antony continued : —

" *That* is not the worst, let me tell you. I'd be reconciled if it went only that length. Not that he went match-making ; far from it. Of course he's his own master and can do whatever he likes.

I think the rest of us would bear up against what was coming if he took some other way than the one he has.

However there is nobody to blame but himself. As I said to Mrs. Tuberfoot : ' where a person's bed is made, there they must lie.' You do not know Antony, but it is true. Ham's in love ! "

"Thunder and 'ounds ! " exclaimed Firfag, straightening himself in his chair, as if he had been shot in the breast by means of the implement in the lady's hand,

You don't tell me ? "

"Indeed he is ; to his neck and ears in it. I never heard of the like. If he was only a boy it would be the less matter, but a grown man such as he is, with a fine prospect before him ; and waiting for a government appointment besides, it deprives

us of all patience to think of it. Of course, poor fellow, it may not be his fault, such things come without being sent for sometimes. A person does not know how soon he may meet misfortune himself, so that he ought not to be too severe on others."

"An how did he take it, ma'am?" inquired Antony, avoiding any comment on the last insinuation of Mrs. Rinser; for he saw in it a desire on her part to defend her brother's course notwithstanding the apparent disapproval observable in her remarks.

"We don't know. I suppose when his mind was bent on foolishness. He saw her one day he was out hunting; and by the same token *you* were with him; and from that moment up to this he's not himself. To be sure gentlemen must hunt whatever is in the field; nor would I blame Ham for the pastime, if he would only remember how much we have doted on him; and not give us the cold shoulder altogether.

No doubt she will turn out to be some useless doll of a thing with light hair and small hands; delicate as a bird, not able to go down on her knees and scour the kitchen floor nor cut as much grass with a reaping hook as would fodder a cow let alone a dozen of them."

Fearing least she imagined he was cognizant of the fact just mentioned, or concerned in urging Ham to it previously, Antony hastened to unburden his feelings on the subject. He began to think it certain now, there might be dreadful things in store for him, at this conference. It was possible Mrs. Rinser while making some terrible revelation, would inadvertently drive him into speechless wonder and thus expose him to ridicule. This last cut, so to speak, which she made, implying he had been more or less concerned as an accessory to her brother's conduct, came so close to him that he actually raked his thin jaw with the tips of his fingers, as if some sharp instrument had grazed the skin; emitting at the same time a groan audible enough to be heard by her. He said:—

"May I be as stiff as the paper in your hand there, before I leave this, if I ever heard tale or tidings of it.

Wasn't I bent on match-making for him myself; and the master thought the same.

There's not a family in the country good or bad but I know. I could find a wife for him sooner nor any other man this side of the mountain."

Mrs. Rinser resumed: —

"It is not all finished yet, Antony. He only saw the girl.

There will have to be something like a match made up for them. You can do a great deal. Indeed, we do not know what way to take. Of course, he must be encouraged. It would not be right to go between him and what he likes. As it has happened in this way we must be content to stand by it and not against it. Maybe it would turn out the best thing ever happened to him, if not the worst. As I said to Mrs. Aloes, when we draw from the lottery of life we may find something we did not bargain for, or a prize."

"In what side of the country is she living?" asked Antony.

"I believe it is somewhere on the estate, in the eastern side. Of course they will be poor people. I forgot, when I told you I did not know where she was, I heard of the place, and may think of it yet. Yes, to be sure, I recollect. It is called Footford."

Antony on hearing this statement, slapped his knee with his open hand, intending to create as great a sound as possible, exclaiming:—

"I have her, Mrs. Rinser; I have her!"

"Isn't that nice," replied the lady. "Ham will be so glad to have found a person who will assist him and knows the girl he is in love with. You can clear up all the difficulties, and arrange with him about everything. I always thought you were very valuable, Antony; and I did not disguise it from others either. Not that it becomes me at this time of life to praise any man, much less mention it."

This unexpected thrust, from a quarter not previously known, like the fire of a masked battery, brought a peculiar light into Antony's eyes. His lips essayed to speak; but could not; presumably on account of being tongue-tied for the moment; and he moved his head several times from shoulder to shoulder in that jaunty style adopted by persons who, having received a great compliment, cannot give expression to their feelings in words. When he spoke he touched lightly on his own merits, without forgetting the matter in hand.

"Oh, there's not much left of me now, Mrs. Rinser; but it wasn't easy to get my likes one time. I'm obliged for your good opinion and hope it won't be lost. If I'm greatly reduced from what I was, I can follow the hounds yet with the best of them; aye, and sit up of a night match-making without taking a feather out of me. I ain't all bones neither, Mrs. Rinser, nor broken-winded like a horse turned out to die. Howsomever that is not the *pint*. The girl as I think master Ham likes is nice enough to be a lady in any place in the world."

"Oh, of course. How else could it be? He wouldn't select any other kind; poor foolish boy. The Boggletons must go after handsome people; to be sure, and why not. They must air themselves before beauty, if you please; as if the sun shines only for good-looking jades. Nothing else will do. No doubt, if she comes here, we'll all have to wait on her; and after that she might think we were not good enough to be in the same room where she was. I don't know what possessed us. We had the same idea exactly. Handsome men were the kind we wanted. We thought we'd be in paradise if our husbands had small noses and thin lips. You would imagine Rinser could walk on eggs without breaking them, so light of foot was he. I found afterwards he was light-fingered as well. He got into the clutches of the law on that account and never escaped. But you should have seen his thin waist and long neck. I thought him very beautiful.

Aloes was a hackler by trade and Tuberfoot a peddler, both of them given to roving.

What need I talk. If there were ninety-nine Boggletons instead of five, not one of them would have sense enough to look for a plain person like himself.

It's fate or infatuation, or something worse than either, I think."

"Look at that," said Antony, retreating to his first position; but perceiving that sad memories had been instrumental in calling a halt in Mrs. Rinser's language for a few seconds, he continued:—

"I'm in doubts if we can make a match there, Mrs. Rinser. The father is a strange kind of man. He's proud and *larned*. They say he's wonderful. That he cures what he lays his hands on; and stops the witches from taking the butter with them. I know the family. We were over the ground several times. They're in distress now; an' *he* passes a most every day searching for something to eat. He has a terrible look in his eye, I can tell you. I wouldn't want to be the person to speak with him about it. He'd as lief fasten me to the road like a mile-stone, as anything else, maybe; or turn me into a hare."

Mr. Rinser was non-committal on questions of superstition. She was too practical to lean very closely to visionary views, yet ignorant enough to be influenced by the stories of her acquaintances relating to the marvelous. On the present occasion her interest was arrested on account of her brother. The strangeness of his taste in choosing the daughter of a necromancer — for the person described by Antony could be nothing else — far exceeded in foolishness the mistake of selecting a person on the score of beauty. She imagined the climax had been reached by the Boggletons long ago, whereas this last movement on the part of one of the clan threatened to eclipse the entire history of the family by its astounding nature. Yet

Antony's remarks portending failure to secure whatever Ham desired seemed to claim her first care. She resumed : —

"I should think they would be glad for one of them to be raised out of poverty. They cannot pretend to be genteel, I'm sure, living in rags, nor proud on nothing. What is the name, Antony ?"

"Marlband," replied Firfag. "*Her* name is Amby."

"Marlband, Marlband," repeated Mrs. Rinser, meditatively. "I wonder if they're related to the Marlbands of Greenplains or Fishport ? I have an idea that they're friends of ours on the father's side ; very distant and far removed, of course, but relatives, for all that. The Boggletons, poor as they appeared, happened well in matches. They married into purty good families ; and some of them got the upperhand where one would not expect."

"These Marlbands *is different*," said Antony.

It wouldn't be so bad if there was nothing to be said about them but poverty and larnin'. We could stand them well enough ; but there's more nor that, Mrs. Rinser."

"Oh, I'll engage there is. Where there is one thing there is always another. It's his luck. It would be useless to take pains to avoid things like that ; for us anyway. They'll come in spite of all. To think that Ham would involve himself with such a family ! "

Antony perceived that fear of some terrible revelation had the effect of neutralizing the volubility of Mrs. Rinser's tongue. Had he any important concessions to demand as a diplomatist, the weakening of his associate indicated the time at hand for making them. He saw his power, and was too badly schooled in etiquette or gallantry to resist a malicious desire to astonish her into complete silence, if possible. Bending forward, after having looked hastily around the room, as if in fear, he said : —

"It's thought he's a rebel, Mrs. Rinser ! "

"A rebel, Antony ? the Lord bless us," she said.

"Yes, ma'am. He'd no more give his child to any one inside these walls than drown her in the river."

Mrs. Rinser clasped her hands together as if about to offer a supplication before the throne of the Infinite, while her lips moved inarticulately. The desire to speak was there, but probably some contraction of the throat due to excitement, would not permit the use of language.

Antony, far from being discomposed by this exhibition, seemed rather to enjoy it, as he continued in the same strain: —

"He didn't do anything of late, an' what he *done before*, nobody knows. The people in his neighborhood like him; an' I heard said in private, he could raise the whole country-side in rebellion, with one word. There was lots of night-work there, I can tell you, before the hard times; but now the men is scattered from one place to another, if not dead. Oh, he was *that* without doubt. More betoken it isn't known where he came from. He was a stroller when he went to Footford, without head or tail to his business."

Mrs. Rinser's discomfiture was only temporary. The shock occasioned by unexpected news of a disturbing nature passed away from her breast like the recoil of a bullet on a parapet. The Boggleton theories of life which she rigidly adhered to, supported her. These were to make light of difficulties; regard not the interests of others in any transaction, and attempt the performance of the impossible even for self and the family. Hence, the mention of Marlband's opposition to the suit of her brother, instead of causing her to think of failure in that direction, rather impelled her towards an opposite course, regardless altogether of the supposed objectionable character of the family to which the young lady belonged.

"Yes, Antony; but what will Ham do? It cannot be expected he will suffer disappointment simply on account of these poor people. It would be too bad, you know. We will not be able to do anything with him if he is refused. Indeed, Antony, he must *not* be refused. I will insist that you man-

age it so as to have the match perfected. We'll put up with her whatever she is, on his account, the hussy ; after all it will be his business, not ours. Don't tell me you cannot do it. It will be the best thing ever happened to her, at all events. Exchanging a life of poverty for one of good living. Oh, Ham will not suffer refusal ; nor will I. Do not think of the like, Antony. Of course, it is to be regretted that things took the turn they did in his case ; but what's the good of unhappiness? As I said to Mrs. Tuberfoot, what cannot be avoided must be met and make the best you can of a bad market. When there is no butter eat your bread dry."

As Antony's head moved instinctively on hearing this remark, as if he were examining the prospect for buttered bread or the dry commodity, as the case might be, Mrs. Rinser always on the alert to interpret physical signs, opened the side-board cupboard and spread out on a card-table in front of her guest a luncheon of choice viands, flanked by a bottle of brown stout. The smile overspreading Antony's features on hearing the pop made by the cork when extracted by Mrs. Rinser, far exceeded in richness what might be inspired by the strains of distant music or the roar of a waterfall. This movement on the lady's part did not prevent her from talking. She per-ceived by the man's silence the field was all her own ; and like a wheel freed from all obstruction spun away with a fierce velocity in harmony with the power intended to produce the motion.

Firfag was conquered. After the appearance of the victuals he made no further sign ; but while indulging the desires of a sharp appetite, meditated profoundly on the danger attending this new enterprise in which he must take a leading part. Even as he raised the last draught of the stout to his lips and turned up his eyes to look at the bottom of the tumbler, a groan escaped him, caused by a sudden thought that any interfer-ence with the rebel's daughter would finally lead to his utter destruction.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MYSTERY CLEARED UP.

ANTONY Firfag's experience in match-making, extensive no doubt as it had been, never presented any case so intricate as this one of Ham Boggleton's.

Indeed, to his mind it appeared an impossibility. He knew too well the character of the enmity existing between the upper and lower classes of the people to judge otherwise. If Marlband had been an ordinary peasant, a compromise could readily be effected; but on the contrary, he was suspected of being a person not only capable of leading others to revolution, but a dictator of principles as well. It would be idle to approach him on the subject. Besides, Ham's genealogical antecedents, as well as the low standard of his mental capacity, were not such as would endure close examination. If both parties belonged to the same class the difficulties pertaining to dower might be easily overcome by the addition of a few calves or an article of furniture; whereas in the present case, no offers, however valuable, would be tolerated.

The adjustment of the business went immeasurably beyond Antony's ideas. He felt incapable of making any movement towards a successful issue in it; and hence his despondency caused him to regret he ever acknowledged being a matchmaker.

Mrs. Rinser viewing it through the narrow light of selfishness, insisted in placing the responsibility on his shoulders; and her brother, destitute of mental strength as he was, looked

also to him for what he considered relief in this the greatest emergency of his life.

Under these circumstances, the cares of the world, supplemented by such a terrible requirement, pressed with extraordinary pertinacity on his mind, until he began to imagine he would desert the country altogether, if some other locality favorable to his wants were available. He had asked for time to consider the subject, in order, if possible, to arrive at a satisfactory method of procedure ; but on coming to the actual details, bewilderment seized him. There was an alternative, however, capable of solving the difficulty : carry her off by force, or delude her with some false representation until she consented to accompany them.

The fearful nature of the times would prevent investigation, or other retaliatory consequences, from following as a result of the outrage. Compared with starvation, the action he proposed dwindled into insignificance. No one would be concerned about it, in the face of greater troubles ; as also because such things frequently happened. To carry Amby Marlband from destitution to opulence, even should any dissatisfaction be exhibited by her on that account, must be reckoned commendable instead of censurable. On the other hand, the family was not likely to remain together ; and if she survived the ravages of the famine her future portion would probably be some menial position in a scullery or an attendant to a whimsical old woman.

Of course, he must avoid meeting the father. He had an idea if Marlband detected him while in the execution of the project or afterwards, his sudden and ignoble death was sure to follow. Even the castle might be in danger ; for with such power at his command, as the man was reported to possess, nothing would be safe against his vengeance.

The more he reflected on the feasibility of his plan, considered as a whole, the better it appeared to him. Mrs. Rinser need not be informed that a resort to force was contemplated ;

nor would it really occur; for he had been an adept at falsification in the past and intended to adopt it as an aid on this occasion. She might be employed to act with them as one bound on performing a mission of mercy. Good and evil came so near each other on this ground as to cause the line dividing them to be imperceptible. Ham Boggleton, however, must be made to take a full share of the responsibility, and consequently initiated into the details of the part he must play in the transaction. Antony sought him soon after he had determined on the course to pursue in order to complete the arrangements for the abduction of Amby Marlband.

It was the first time a serious question came up for discussion between Firfag and Boggleton, and considering the character each possessed for reasoning, it is fair to conclude there were terrible efforts made to promulgate sound opinions on the occasion.

Antony found Ham in the drawing-room of the Castle, an apartment forty feet square, furnished in the most gorgeous manner, and decorated with rare works of art. As he approached, hat in hand, the jocular gait he sometimes assumed became conspicuous, and the light through the front windows glistened on his pate in a remarkable manner. Boggleton seeing him, broke into a laugh. He said:

"The deuce take me, Firfag, if I'm not glad to see you. You look so much like a stage character in a comedy as to compel a fellow to be merry at your expense."

"I'm obliged to you, Master Ham, for that same. Your honor is improvin' in the larnin' considerable. More be token, as you have come the upper hand on us nicely, when we all expected to make a match for you."

"Oh, that's it, is it? The deuce. Take a seat, Firfag. She's a stunner, I can tell you, and no mistake."

"That's the talk, your honor. Troth you said it there. I know her myself this long time."

"Then you can post me on all about her."

"Yes, your honor, an' all *not* about her as well."

"And what may that be, Firfag?"

"If her father ever gets a grip of you, your honor, he'll grind your bones as fine as the dust on the rim of a cart wheel."

"The deuce. We must be careful to avoid that extremity. As a father-in-law he would not be a success, Firfag. How about a love letter? Do you think sending a deuced strong one to be advisable?"

"No better nor a latitat. They'd be frightened a'most to death with it, your honor. It's not the way that coortin' is done in the country. They'd think it was a process. Moreover, the letter carrier would be in danger of his life."

Firfag here stated briefly the history of Marlband as related to Mrs. Rinser, and also intimated how he proposed to overcome the difficulties in the way of carrying Ham's intended bride to the castle.

Boggleton was delighted.

He arose from his seat laughing, and danced around Antony like an inferior spirit in the presence of an infernal god. On resuming his seat the dialogue was renewed. Firfag said:

"Did you ever speak to her, your honor?"

"No, old fellow. What occasion was there if I love her?"

Antony put up his hand to his head as if intending to catch something, no doubt the difficulty arising in his mind on account of his companion's last remark, but as a matter of course not being able to reach it, continued:

"She don't know you from a crow, your honor?"

"The deuce take me if I think so."

"We'll have a terrible time with her, to reconcile her to your honor. Maybe she wouldn't take you, no how."

This view of the case appeared to make Ham grave. It was only for an instant, however, as he resumed good-humoredly:

"Don't frighten a fellow in that way, Firfag. I can wait until she gives her consent, if it was to be all my life."

"That's the wisest thing I ever heard you say," said Antony.

"Treat her in a respectable manner, an' if you have a chance at all, it will come then."

After this conversation some of the details of the plan not already related were communicated. The time of the party leaving home that Amby was to meet on the mountain road became known to Firfag. Every circumstance pertaining to the place and opportunity was noted with the accuracy of a chronometer. Marlband would be absent as usual from home, but to make sure of this a confederate would be stationed at a proper place for the purpose of making the necessary observation.

A carriage containing Mrs. Rinser and a mounted party some distance behind it were to be the constituent parts of the detachment, with Antony commanding. He would wear his red swallow-tail coat, black velvet cap, green breeches and top boots, and to all appearance make it understood he and his friends had been examining the country for the purpose of selecting ground for the next hunt.

The day of Amby Marlband's abduction was favorable for such a scheme. The principal fact in the transaction was studiously concealed from all persons with the exception of Mrs. Rinser and Ham Boggleton. Other denizens of the place were informed the carriage was going out for the purpose of conveying to the castle a young girl left wholly destitute by the famine, whom Mrs. Rinser had consented to protect and educate.

Mrs. Aloes, Mrs. Tuberfoot and Miss Mussy were instructed to accord her a flattering reception, and surround her with that delightful concordance of sympathetic voices for which the Boggleton tongue was so remarkable.

The start occurred before daybreak. Knowing how tedious it would be to get Mrs. Rinser away from the business to which she was so much devoted, Antony suggested that Ham accompany her through the halls of the castle to hasten matters; at the same time to post a servant behind the principal entrance, so that when she stepped out it was to be closed, and by this

method shut off further parley. Boggleton approved of anything with a spice of humor in it, and readily consented to act as required. When everything was in readiness, and Mrs. Rinser still lingered, Ham said :

"Come, Allie, come ; our people are all waiting."

Mrs. Rinser continued, addressing Mrs. Aloes, who would be in charge during her absence : —

"And the bacon left of the last year's cure, hanging in the storeroom back of the kitchen, is what will be used first. Give it to the cook in time to be steeped in water and thoroughly cleaned. Instead of cabbage I wish you would have a dish of sprouts cooked. The young thing might like the taste of them better than the other. Of course, the chickens killed yesterday will be skewered to-day. Mind that girl when she's doing it. Stand over her. The last ones she did were not puffed enough in the breast to please me, and the giblets were broken in the draw. Don't let her put the beef in until the water is boiling. You will have cauliflower, my dear. Mind the celery for the sauce and the milk for the stewed turnips."

Ham taking Mrs. Rinser gently by the arm urged her forward about six paces, but as she was closely pursued by the other woman, felt no inconvenience on that account. She resumed : —

"The lilac room next to Mussy's is the one we'll give to Miss Amby. Take out the sheets early so that they may be thoroughly aired ; and before putting them on smooth them with your hand, so as to find out if the airing has been sufficient. I remember several persons taken sick after lying in damp sheets ; there was Major Brindler who died a'most on account of it. To be sure, some said he drank too much ; but I always laid it to the sheets. Well, as I was saying the pink lined curtains that used to belong to my lady's bed will be put on ; and the rose water in the right-hand drawer of the bureau should be laid beside the dressing table. Let all the windows stand open the whole day. 'Tis well enough to talk about

warm rooms ; but I like air. Have the girl go over every bit of the room for dust and cobwebs."

" For goodness' sake, Allie, hurry up or we'll be late," urged Ham. " You take a deuce of a time to talk on these matters."

Mrs. Rinser moved slowly forward, and continued : —

"And now that I think of it, the night-caps and the other things may want overhauling. Put the seamstress to work at once and get her all the help you can. Of course, we'll have to fit dresses when Amby comes. We must see the size of her body first. Yes, and before I forget it again, save some of the buttermilk until it gets thoroughly sour ; we'll want it for the bread. If the ranger brings in any rabbits have them skinned and skewered and put in cold water ; they can be cooked to-morrow. He said he could get us a couple of hares at odd times. If one comes make soup. It can be served in the brown tureen with the white ladle. The fish-knife —

"Allie, I can't stand any more of this ; the deuce take me if I ever felt so bad on account of the business in hand. For the sake of all the Boggletons, dead and alive, will you come? " said Ham .

This earnest appeal had the effect only of causing the lady to glance forward, as if calculating the distance to be yet overcome, while she resumed : —

" The fish-knife can be on the table without having fish. It will only show the implements for all the courses are there, if wanted. Of course there will be no criticism from strangers."

Being now at the front entrance, Ham made a motion to Mrs. Aloes to step back, and taking Mrs. Rinser by the arm passed quickly through the door, which was closed suddenly behind them according to pre-arrangement. Mrs. Rinser, however, had not finished.

"And, Aloes, the fire irons "— she said, but perceiving her sister had disappeared, placed her hands together resignedly while she turned a volley on Ham : —

" One must say something on an occasion of this kind. You

men are always hasty about things; and it does you no good. As I said to Mrs. Tuberfoot, a hasty pudding was the only dish I ever knew to give satisfaction with anybody in a hurry. I had something on my mind to say to Aloes just now, if this door was not closed."

"Firfag," said Ham, "won't you assist Mrs. Rinser into the carriage?"

Antony who had been a silent witness of the scene since the party reached the porch, stepped forward with all the gallantry of an old courtier and offered his arm, while Boggleton held the other side; lest she should by any chance be diverted from their present purpose. Ham attended to the opening and closing of the carriage-door, determined now to carry matters with a high hand, and giving the order to the coachman to proceed, turned away just as he heard sounds from the inside, as of one delivering a stump speech on a political platform.

The mounted party followed; and long before the inhabitants of the town began the business of the day the entire cavalcade had dashed through the streets and joined the road eastward in the direction of the mountain.

At the time Amby Marlband met her acquaintances, the immigrants, for the purpose of saying good-bye, Firfag's party was completely under cover. Indeed, the caution exercised by the man would have done credit to a military genius of any rank. Wrapping a light overcoat around him to conceal the gaudy colors of his dress, Antony stood at a convenient point waiting the decisive moment. At last it came. Amby having parted with her friends, was returning slowly towards the end of the path leading through the fields to her home when Firfag appeared before her. Touching his cap, he said hurriedly:

"Your father, Miss, met with an accident on the road near the town, and he wants to see you on the spot. A good lady who saw him fall is here to take you in her carriage. We cannot wait an instant. He may be dead if you do not hurry."

Then he waved his hand and the vehicle came forward at full speed.

The girl knowing her father to be weak and liable to be incapacitated for further labor on account of the nature of his exertions, believed the report instantly. She grew wild with grief. She looked in the direction of her home in order to communicate with some one there ; but as none of them were in view, she concluded to go at once with the party so as to show how promptly her energies were made to respond when called to perform services for her father. It would not make much difference as she would return in a few hours. Hence, when the carriage door was opened she unhesitatingly stepped into it, while Firfag securing the panel in the usual way, ordered it to move forward. Then retreating to the squad on horseback, mounted his steed and lead the party into the road at a pace calculated to keep the carriage in sight. He said to Ham in a low voice : —

"The bird is caught, your honor."

To which the other replied :

" Firfag, you're the deuce of a fine fellow. Clever. The deuce take me if this isn't the boldest thing I ever did see. No disturbance either. I'll reward you, Firfag, you may be sure, when I get the appointment."

While they continued to converse on subjects most agreeable to them, Mrs. Rinser proceeded to quiet Amby's fears as best she could. In the first place, she surprised that young lady by showing she knew her. This had the effect also of giving Amby confidence in her companion.

"You are Miss Amby Marlband we heard so much about. My name is Mrs. Rinser, my dear ; and I have three sisters, Mrs. Aloes, Mrs. Tuberfoot and Miss Mussy. We wished ever so much to see you. Indeed, you are really a beautiful girl. Of course the Boggletons never had the like. Before we were married they used to call us the Boggletons, Miss Amby."

"Is my father much hurt ?" the girl ventured to ask through her tears.

Mrs. Rinser having been told previously by Antony the nature of the deception he was about to exercise on the innocent mind of the girl was prepared for the question. She replied with some hesitation :

"Well, now, that you speak about it, I do not think he is. It is nothing new, however, for one to suffer in these hard times. We should be always ready to meet with accidents, they are so numerous. Look at the accident that occurred to me shortly after I was married ; my husband was taken away by force and I never saw him afterwards. It was the will of God. Oh, I am resigned, you may be sure. Don't cry so. You will come with me where I live, and I will give you everything you desire."

"I must return with my father," Amby said abruptly. "I do not care for anything."

"Yes, my dear ; of course, when you are rested. Consider we are your friends. Indeed, as I said to Antony Firfag, I believed we were related to the Marlbands almost to a certainty. My sisters are the kindest creatures in the world, don't you know."

"Did you see my father, ma'am ?" asked Amby.

"I thought I did, my dear."

"Was he wounded or weak from traveling ?"

"Now that you remind me, I think it was a strong weakness he took. Perhaps disease of the heart, so many die of it. Our doctor used to say *affections* of the heart were very destructive."

"Do you think we will find him in time to afford relief ?"

"Let us hope for the best. If not I'll send a messenger to bring us news about his condition. No doubt they have carried him somewhere by this time. Don't be in a hurry, my dear, your father will be found at the proper time."

Besides the vague answers here recorded, Mrs. Rinser avoided any mention of her brother. She felt instinctively it would be

out of place, as well as perhaps cause additional uneasiness to Amby.

The carriage was drawn with all speed to its destination. Before coming to the town, Mrs. Rinser drew down the curtains on the windows so as to hide the view from her companion; and sitting near her, continued to speak in the most affectionate manner possible. Thus the journey was accomplished without notice. It was not until they entered the avenue leading to the front of the castle when Mrs. Rinser pointed towards the attractive features of the grounds, that Amby first began to suspect deceit. She was seized with an unaccountable fear and began again to cry bitterly.

When arrived at the entrance the carriage was dismissed, and they stood a few minutes before the door to await Antony's arrival, as Mrs. Rinser said he would have news of Marlband.

Soon after he made his appearance and began his report.

"Your father, Miss Amby," he said, touching his cap, "will not be able to come out for a couple of days. He is not far from here. The people carried him to a neighbor's house. He just fell on the road, and couldn't walk no more."

"Oh, sir, did you tell him about me, and how I came to see him?" said Amby.

"That I did, Miss, every word of it. Moreover I said you was mighty uneasy about him."

"Oh, what did he say, sir? Did he not send a message to me?"

"Then indeed he did. He said, Miss, to stay with the friends that brought you here, until he came for you himself."

Amby felt disappointed on hearing this message. It bore little resemblance to any one her father would dictate, yet it was possible to be his on account of the altered conditions which surrounded him on the present occasion. No amount of representation, however, true or false could appease her grief. Before any one suspected the nature of her movements she fell on her knees before Firfag, and burst into a passionate appeal

for pity. Her hair had fallen over her shoulders, the lovely mass being disturbed picturesquely by the passing breeze, while her arms were extended to their full length as if the attitude was intended to touch the hardened nature of the man. She said:

"Oh, tell me where to find my father. He will come home with me. No sickness or injury could keep him in a strange place when I appear in his presence. I have a power of which you know nothing, but perceptible to his mind. I can exercise it in his welfare. If he were dying it would stay the hand of death until he had acquired time to send by me a message to his home. Will you not understand how nature invests some persons with the charm of strength in times of need? My father has a loving heart. His soul will gain additional power if I but touch him. The essence of his being is different from that of other men, sweeter, more gentle; like the dawn above the darkness, or the sparkling fountain beside a stagnant pool. Oh, pity me. I am unworthy of your friendship. See the signs of poverty that are here. My garments consist of the poorest material; my cheeks are pale with anxiety and hollow from want. Surely one so lowly in station and appearance can be of no value to you who are so rich in worldly possessions. If you knew how bitterly they will grieve at home for my absence, you would let me return to them. Are you not human, endowed with kindly feelings for others, and sensible of their needs?

Perhaps riches have altered your nature? I heard strange rumors of this kind; but did not believe them. I must go. I will make inquiry. Some of the people, poor as myself, may direct me."

Amby arose and ran along the avenue toward the gate, sobbing. Mrs. Rinser, very much disturbed by this unexpected scene, followed her.

During the time the poor girl had been kneeling Ham Boggleton approached and stood silently behind Firfag; who on

his part was stricken dumb with remorse. The two men were intensely mortified, unable to communicate their thoughts to each other and fled from the place without making any attempt to soothe her, leaving this business in charge of the woman. As Mrs. Rinser knew the custom prevailing in regard to the preservation of the grounds, their security from trespassers, she did not make any noise or undue haste to overtake Amby. The gate was closed as securely as that of a fort during a siege. Above the iron bars was an arch of stone rising many feet and constituting a part of the boundary wall.

When Mrs. Rinser arrived near this point, she found Amby at the base of the wall, insensible; as if she had fallen after struggling vainly to get out. Lifting her in her strong arms she returned once more in the direction of the castle; being joined in the meantime by her sisters who had come to render all the assistance in their power.

Then ensued a clattering of tongues, such as may be heard sometimes among a flock of sparrows while discussing a great bird question in the garden bushes, modulated of course to the tone of the Boggleton organs.

Before this introductory extravaganza terminated the party passed through the grand entrance of the castle, the door closed behind them, with a ponderous sound and Amby was caged.

CHAPTER XV.

LIVING IN HOPE.

THE Boggletons appeased Amby's fears by false promises. It is wonderful how much solace may be administered to the human heart by lying. If the deception can be supported during life the persons thus deluded may enjoy temporary happiness with as much pleasure as if it were the soundest truth. Some delusions are supposed to be true; others known to be false.

Only a very small fraction of mankind live according to principles acquired by themselves in the pursuit of knowledge.

Firfag's species of misrepresentation was very common in the times of which we write. Its disuse or rather the disfavor by which such criminal proceedings are now regarded indicates an improvement in that direction.

No crime, perhaps, appears so cruel as that which is inflicted on the innocent and helpless.

When you defame or betray a good man, an innocent maiden or a virtuous wife, you strike directly at the heart of nature: the love of God, and earn such chastisement thereby as shall embitter your life as long as you live.

There were mitigating circumstances in the case of Amby Marlband as already mentioned. The Boggletons believed their action in the matter meritorious. They did not perceive how the sensibilities of the girl were outraged. While *they* considered it a lucky incident in the career of a young lady to be transported from a mean cottage to a castle and accorded all

the privileges to the highborn, Amby, on the other hand felt nothing could compensate her for the loss of her friends, poor as they were. Yet the kind words spoken in her hearing by women who appeared to be good and well meaning, had had a beneficial effect, in allaying excessive grief. There were other agents, too, operating favorably on her distressed mind.

The bedroom designed for her use with its requisite arrangements and decorations demanded immediate recognition. She felt pleased with it; because though rich, like her own mind it was tempered by good taste and chaste associations. When she slept, the air was pure through the medium of a good system of ventilation and hence she recognized a sweetness of feeling on awaking quite new to her; but exceedingly charming. A delightful fragrance also pervaded the place, arising no doubt from the grounds surrounding the castle.

Miss Mussy Boggleton entered Amby's room about seven o'clock; so as to prepare her for breakfast and be her companion. Mussy did not possess a frame as strong as the other Boggletons, yet lacking little of their disposition to be agreeable. She was about the medium height; a little fairer than her sisters, had a short instead of a family nose and was nearsighted. In dialogue she could keep pace with the most distinguished of the crowd. To Amby, she was very attentive; chatting good-humoredly on various subjects until her companion felt quite cheerful by the time they were ready to descend to the apartment where breakfast awaited them.

The main stairway of the first floor was a grand passage nine feet wide, the balustrade being composed of marble. The hall into which it led resembled a museum and conservatory on account of the variety of its decorations. Even the lofty ceiling possessed charming features. The parlor where breakfast was served bore relationship in form and dimensions to the drawing-room previously mentioned. The tables, chairs, bureaus and other movable articles were designs executed from the richest mahogany, ebony, rosewood and other rare species

of wood. The brilliant polish on all the furniture was maintained by manual labor under the directions of Mrs. Rinser.

While awaiting a few moments to examine the prospect before them the breakfast bell rang, and presently Mrs. Rinser, Mrs. Aloes, Mrs. Tuberfoot and Ham Boggleton appeared on the scene. Each of the women came and kissed Amby on the cheek, greeting her very affectionately. Then Mrs. Rinser introduced Ham.

"Miss Marlband this is our brother Ham Boggleton: Ham, Miss Amby Marlband." She continued addressing Amby:

"You need not mind *him* my dear, he is little better than a cowboy, amusing himself at hunting, fishing and concocting some plan for mischief with Antony Firfag. Although I must say of him that he is good-natured." Boggleton had arranged in his mind a short speech to be delivered after his introduction to Amby. Something above the commonplaces, about the weather and the crops; but this unexpected language from his sister choked off all utterance. He was thrown into confusion. His mouth opened mechanically as if to speak but failed to produce the necessary sounds and he retired to a seat blushing like a school-girl.

Mrs. Rinser sat at the head of the table, the east end of which was so reckoned, having Amby on her right and then Miss Mussy; while Mrs. Aloes and Mrs. Tuberfoot were seated on the left. Ham sat at the other end facing Mrs. Rinser. Everything was delicately arranged, so as to make it as pleasant as possible for their beautiful guest.

Mrs. Aloes and Mrs. Tuberfoot were tall women; dark complexion, high cheek bones, prominent eyebrows and lank cheeks. Knowing how necessary it was to permit the appearances in the castle to impress themselves favorable on Amby's mind, but little was said at the breakfast table. Mrs. Rinser went over a few remarks in a low voice about the quality of the food and the relationship existing between the Marlbands and the Boggletons. As the tone of her voice indicated her

engagement with some special subject about which she seemed very particular, the others remained as silent as Boggletons ever did under any circumstances.

It was understood that Firfag had made arrangements to report the condition of Marlband periodically ; thus giving the daughter an opportunity of acting according to his instructions. Pending Antony's arrival, which was expected about noon, Miss Mussy conducted Amby through the castle on a tour of examination or inspection. It proved very delightful to her. Then for the first time she saw how wealth and art contributed to the comforts of the rich. The walls of the rooms were tinted in various colors, and handsomely bordered by gilt fresco work; the windows hung with curtains in several shades of the richest patterns. Pictures from Rome and Paris were suspended amid the beauty of artistic painting. The carpets resembled a picture gallery where the artists of the world were contending for superiority. The marble mantel-pieces gave the apartments a classic air peculiarly attractive. There was a timepiece in the arbor of Zerlin's bedroom that formerly belonged to a pope. The interior works of course had been renewed.

Everywhere at intervals of space appeared some article with a history apart altogether from its individual beauty.

From the windows the glow of the sun and the sheen of the landscape might be seen dancing side by side.

While there appeared a lessening of Amby's sorrow as a consequence of the magnificence here exhibited, still her grief was very poignant, when the memory of her friends came suddenly to her mind.

Indeed, it would be true to say, some pangs were intensified when she reflected on the awful contrast existing between the castle and her former home.

When Firfag made his report she was weeping afresh, and could not be consoled.

He brought news of fearful times. A weekly newspaper among other things, corroborated his statement in this respect. Amby read the accounts of the destitution prevailing in the country in it, and became convinced of its certainty. Inquiring for her father, Antony said he had returned home ; which indeed was true; but before leaving directed that she should be told to remain in the castle during the winter, and that he would come for her in the spring. Resignation to her present position was the only course she could now pursue properly; so after a few days she tried to be cheerful and enter into the plans of the Boggletons in regard to dress, music, and other accomplishments intended for her.

It is remarkable how efficacious fine clothing is in creating self-esteem. Some persons live for this alone, without regarding other equally fascinating acquisitions.

Amby was proud in her new dress. With the appearance of sadness on her countenance there was intermingled a lofty air as of one who felt capable of moving naturally through exalted stations. The well-fitting garments created a buoyancy of person sufficient to overthrow grief for a short period at least.

Cheerfulness is the rule of life, intended by nature for individuals; sorrow being the exception.

Ham was delighted with her appearance.

He said to Mrs. Rinser : —

"She'd be good enough for the doge of Venice or the king of Botany Bay. I'm afraid to speak to her, do you know it ? Whenever I try, I feel as if Antony Firfag had caught me by the throat and shut off my wind. It's deuced queer."

"Well," returned his sister, "wait until you're better acquainted. You are only a boy yet. If you want the ladies to think anything of you, show courage. Be like a man. Who knows what your thoughts are ? How could you expect her to come and say: 'Ham Boggleton, I'm dead in love with you, my boy.' She won't say it. It would be too much against the grain of a woman."

As time advanced, Ham learned to pay attention to Amby. When she and Miss Mussy went into the fields or the garden, he usually followed with a basket for flowers, or carried some of their wraps in chilly weather. Then he would amuse them by mimicing other people; and became so expert at it that they laughed for hours almost every day.

This improved condition in Miss Marlband's mental bereavement was viewed with great satisfaction by the Boggletons. They all liked her, not only on account of her beauty, but because of her amiable ways. They loved her dearly; and by that mysterious process of nature which brings reciprocal feelings to the hearts of those who are beloved, Amby felt a regard for these people springing up in her breast whose influence she could not resist. Thus the winter months passed.

With the first signs of spring she renewed her solicitude for her friends. Bolder now than when she first came to the castle, she insisted on having a messenger sent to her home to ascertain the condition of her relatives. It was agreed that Antony Firfag would make a special trip on the occasion when pleasant weather appeared, and give a full account of what he saw.

The inclement weather and the danger attending persons traveling in the neighborhood prevented him from knowing how they subsisted recently. As a matter of fact Antony dare not approach Marlband. He saw him betimes looking wildly about as if in search of something. On these occasions Firfag became afflicted with an awful fear. He would retreat under cover with the greatest dispatch, as if bullets were flying in the air. His conscience made him tremble. The day appointed to receive his report he was as pale as a ghost.

The mental strain produced as a consequence of his false testimony in the present case, inflicted terrible punishment on him.

He seemed to be sick.

On appearing at the door of the drawing-room where the Boggletons and Amby were assembled to listen to the news he

brought, everybody was shocked. Mrs. Rinser and Ham divined the cause of the change perceptible in him, the others imagined it was due to travel or age.

Amby arose and came near where he stood. She resembled a beam of sunshine admitted suddenly into darkness. There was a refinement in all her movements that made the Boggletons look hideous. Antony placed his hand on the back of a chair to support himself, for the superb demeanor of Marlband's daughter increased instead of diminished his distress.

In a sweet voice, whose plaintiveness sent a pang to his heart as if it had been pierced by a dagger, she questioned him:

"You crossed the river, Antony?"

"That I did, Miss."

"The house was just on the other side."

"Yes, indeed."

"No doubt it appeared poor in your sight."

"Very poor, Miss."

"Of course my father was glad to see you?"

"Well, yes, Miss; that is, no, he wasn't either."

Mrs. Rinser turned a sharp look on Antony, as if to inquire how he come to give such a blundering answer, while exclamations from the others assured him his words were critically noted. Recovering himself somewhat, he continued:

"He was, that is your father, Miss, put about about something or other."

"Were they all well?"

"Hem! There was trouble somewhere, Miss."

"Oh, I can readily see how it is with them; they are dying or dead, while I am here in opulence, callous hearted and proud. I will not endure this any longer."

The Boggletons rose to their feet as if lightning had struck the windows of the apartment. The women surrounded Amby for the purpose of pacifying her while Ham spoke to Antony in an undertone of voice so as not to be heard.

Antony muttered in reply:

"I'm doin' the best I can, your honor. I don't know what in the world to say, I'm so befoundered."

Amby resumed:

"And the village, Antony?"

"The village, Miss? the village? the village," he repeated, unable to say more, for it appeared his mind began to lose its power of recollection.

"Why the deuce don't you answer the lady, Firfag?" said Ham. "What has come over you?"

"The village was there?" continued Amby.

"The village was there, Miss," he replied.

"My father sent a message with you to me?"

"He said, Miss, not to stir out of here until he came for you himself."

"Always the same. It is impossible, unnatural man, to convince me further of this. These are not my father's words. I know his heart. If he knew I was here he would break through your boundary wall in one hour to come to me. Do not attempt to represent his noble nature. You debase it and expose your own treachery!

I am the object of some plot. Let it be continued if you will, but release me so I may see my friends. The treasures of this castle are nothing compared with the beauty of my brothers and sisters. Their voices are sweeter to me than all the music of the world. I would rather have my brother Clare's cheek against mine for a minute than the amusements witnessed here for years. Will no one help me? You Mr. Boggleton? Will you not render me some assistance to reach my friends?"

This was the first time Amby made direct appeal to Ham. He felt the importance of it at once, and his manner became grave. Indeed he was deeply affected by her words. His better nature predominated over every consideration as coming near her he said:

"Whatever you wish, Miss Amby, I shall perform."

"I want to go home. I must see my people before they are all dead."

"Very well, Miss Amby. I will have preparations made for your journey and examine the country myself to find out if it be safe to travel; so be content a little while longer," said Ham.

The women looked up in wonder at the boldness displayed by Boggleton.

Finding he had created a sensation among them, he assumed an air of command, for his blood was up. He continued:

"Firfag, wait for me in the garden, I will be there presently."

And as Antony retired, he said to Mrs. Rinser:

"I will insist on this lady going wherever she has a mind to. We can have the carriage and you to come with us.

Miss Amby, don't be afraid, I'll see to things. I would do more for *you* than anybody I know of. I'll do anything to please you. I cannot find words to tell all that is in my heart, but I am sure I'd be content to work for you during my life."

Amby did not anticipate this speech. Ham Boggleton's manner had pleased her because it was amusing; but a thought of loving him never entered her mind. Hearing how emphatically he declared his intention of serving her, she blushed and thanked him in a few kind words.

Ham repaired to the garden for the purpose of talking over the subject with Firfag. He seriously contemplated taking Amby home if he could perceive how a reconciliation with Marlband might be effected.

"What did you really see, Firfag?" he said. "You made a deuced mess of it before the women. I thought at first you had eaten a strong dose of garlic, or had been tippling in the public houses."

"I'm old, your honor. I couldn't find in my heart, bad as I am, the way to go on, telling lies to Miss Amby, an' she so

fine as she is. The Lord forgive me for what I have already done. I'll never get a sight of heaven if I don't own up and ask her to pray for me.

My heart is sore, your honor. I'm broke all to pieces. I'd rather be dead nor suffer in this way."

"What did you see in Footford?"

"I didn't go at all, your honor. There's nothing to be seen in that place any more. I heard all the news the people brought when they left it. Her father, your honor, wasn't on the road this long time. I think he is dead as well as the rest of them. The wife and children died first; then the old man. That's what the people say, your honor."

Boggleton turned pale on hearing this news. His love for Amby carried the hardships of her family near his heart, and he felt as if the case was his own.

This was the time when all had terminated with the Marlbands; when the father died in the cave, and Zanthon made his celebrated journey through the night to the town unperceived by any one.

Seeing the necessity of attending to this business himself, Ham, dismissing Firfag, proceeded to the stables, called for one of the best horses, and mounting him, rode down the avenue on his way to Footford, determined to find on his own account what the condition of society was in that precinct.

In the castle, Mrs. Rinser and her sisters endeavored to console Amby. Mrs. Rinser said:—

"You surprise me, Miss Amby, to take on so, and we so kind to you. If we were not related it would be the less matter. My dear, the country is in an awful state. To be sure, you have a proper regard for your family. Why shouldn't you? We all have; but one must save one's self. Is it not better to remain here until the times mend than go where you will be burdensome to others? If some of your friends die, it is only the fate we all shall meet. You could not save them, do your best or worst."

"And Rinser," said Mrs. Aloes, "remind the dear sweet lady how fond we are of her. Miss Mussy is never tired of saying something in her praise. As to me and Tuberfoot, we could kiss the ground she walks on."

"We couldn't get along without you now, my dear," remarked Mrs. Tuberfoot to Amby.

I'm sure since you came to us we enjoyed more pleasure than ever before. Nobody can tell what it is to have a beautiful creature near 'em until she is there. Then they see. You have grown into our hearts, my dear. It will be a dark day to us when you leave."

"Your kindness has made me love you," replied Amby. "Ingratitude is no part of my nature. I would willingly work as a menial in your service just to receive your words of encouragement; but the feelings of my heart demand another course. I must devote my first thoughts to my kindred; especially as they need my sympathy."

"Miss Amby is right," said Miss Mussy. "She is always true in what she says. I glory in her. I hope she will let me go and help her to take care of her people. I'd love them, every one, on her account."

Thus the sisters condoled and reasoned among themselves regarding their guest during their brother's absence.

In the mean time Ham made an inspection of the country in the vicinity of Footford. What he saw changed his mirth to sadness. He did not leave the place until he knew the condition of Amby's home; then while returning a close observer could perceive he had grown older by years than his appearance indicated at his coming.

The lines of his face were drawn away from the position usually occupied by them.

Experience made him reflect; for face to face with desolation, his powers were whipped into their utmost capacity of thought. There was no one in Footford with whom he could communicate by oral language.

He was at a loss to know how to act on his return to the castle. If he disclosed the whole truth, Amby would not only be shocked, but insist on visiting the place to see the remains of her old home in any case. Besides, he felt it would be impossible to give a description of it in her presence. His account might be discredited. His delineating power was not of the first class, and attempting anything of the kind would expose him to ridicule.

It was best he thought to remain silent about all the details; but say the people had deserted the village. Amby might be accompanied by Mrs. Rinser, Miss Mussy and himself as if out for a pleasant drive. Reaching the mountain road, the party could easily gain the house by the path from the fort, and after she had seen its condition, she must return with them as a matter of necessity.

Having finally determined how to proceed, he rode rapidly in the direction of home.



CHAPTER XVI.

HOME AGAIN.

AMBY Marlband recognized a gloom pervade the household after Ham's return, which she ascribed to her contemplated departure; for there was no doubt of the genuineness of the good wishes of the Boggletons in her regard. In reality, however, it was due to the disclosures made to Mrs. Rinser, and by her to her sisters, respecting the desolation prevailing in the country as witnessed by Ham.

She did not understand why her efforts were not seconded with enthusiasm while collecting a few trifles designed as presents for those at home, such as might show the character of the place where she had resided since leaving them.

Of course, there was acquiescence to this on Mrs. Rinser's part, but with certain features wanting in it indicating some trouble approaching whose character that lady did not think prudent to divulge.

These signs carried fear of some new danger or misfortune to Amby's heart, causing her to exhibit a degree of nervous action appalling to those who witnessed it. She was gay, yet apparently aware of an impending trouble. The depressing influences operating in the case forced themselves at intervals before her mind; but anticipating a joyous meeting at home, her spirits invariably rose above them. Thus it might be observed her voice assumed several tones beyond its usual compass as if forced to do so by extraordinary feelings. Her loquacity appeared remarkable to those who had invariably witnessed her timidity and reserve. The power of her imagina-

tion seemed to break through the difficulties attending ordinary speech and glow amid a torrent of words such as her father often used.

Her companions were astonished at her conduct, not being well schooled in the phases of nature. They began to regard her as some superior being whose brilliant speech silenced their noisy prattle, lest the contrast should expose them to the ridicule of their own minds. The fine display of intelligence on Amby's part was new to them. They stood in awe of it as one would in the presence of a great waterfall or a snow-capped mountain. Previously it never entered their minds she possessed such attainments.

At the front entrance before taking a seat in the carriage, the sunbeams greeted her as if she were their queen. There was a halo of purified light around her, caused by the glow of her beauty in contrast with the splendor of day. Her head glistened as if the luminosity emanated from it without external aid.

The folds of her dress seemed to possess a refined appearance, leading to the conclusion, that the material of which they were composed assumed a portion of the majesty of the individual ; out of respect for her.

Ham imagined there was no lady in the world possessed of such exquisite charms. In conducting her to the carriage he was afraid to speak fearing the irregularity of his speech might dispel the free exercise of her spirit which the occasion called forth and deprive him of a sensation whose peculiar sweetness he had not felt before. As the party journeyed along the avenue en route to Footford she continued to speak without interruption, she said : —

"Oh ! I have had a dream of home like the view of a distant landscape glowing in the colors of spring. May was leading the others through the fields and woods. I saw our home too, but it appeared to be lonely as if they had neglected it while enjoying the pleasures peculiar to the place. Several

times they looked back expecting some one. I could not help thinking it was *I* they sought. I believe they imagined it time I should go home. What does this vision of their happiness signify? It cannot be real. Perhaps they have been relieved unexpectedly by unknown friends?

You will see Mrs. Rinser how beautiful they are. Like the glory of heaven in the summer.

And mild! Oh! the evening in the Autumn when the winds have ceased to blow and the purity of God is in the sky is not more serene. Why you could not help feeling happy in their presence. How could my mind possess peace away from them? As well might you expect day without a sun. Here with you we have poverty; there we had wealth.

I cannot think of other subjects; because their voices are ringing in my ears and their bright features ever present before me."

In this strain did she speak as they proceeded.

The carriage coming along the identical way it pursued on the occasion of her being kidnapped, she did not see the changes which had taken place in the village; for the mountain road, as will be remembered was some distance east of it. The fort being the first object worthy of note coming into view stimulated her to renew her observations:—

"I imagine the fort has grown diminutive. In other days I used to think it the finest exhibition of nature, which it was possible to behold anywhere. Now it is insignificant. The land around it is poor; and to me looks as if it shared in this poverty. The trees are stunted things compared with their condition in former times.

I wonder what has produced these features in it? Perhaps it was always so; but it is I who am changed. Now we will take this path to the house. I shall walk first; for I want to see them at a distance. Miss Mussy; Mrs. Rinser then, and Mr. Boggleton.

The river has lost its musical tones methinks. The banks appear to have come closer together than formerly; perhaps

because they are in sympathy for the departure of its glory. The serpentine course wears a melancholy appearance, like one whose days are numbered. A little more change and it would be altogether obliterated. Oh ! how I loved this brook. Its sweetness came imperceptibly to me like a dream in the night. In my youth it was a friend faithful and true, like the star to the evening. It spoke a language I understood ; for my spirit was soothed by it and finally I delighted in its tones. I remember its voice as of an echo from the depths of Time, designed to comfort me. Coming from a mountain home, at an unknown distance, it seemed ever anxious to tell of its journey through picturesque valleys and beautiful hills.

There is a stillness in the perspective appalling to my senses. Is it the doom of the end which has appeared or a sign that the country shall be no more inhabited ? Not a sound is heard. There must be death among the people where nature has been awed into silence in this manner.

No one playing ; no one in sight. Hurry after me ! My heart will break if this dreadful suspense continue. I am wild with some unaccountable fear."

As they approached the house, the appearance of desolation became more perceptible. Amby hurried on. She grew demonstrative and occasionally uttered half stifled cries. It was dreadful to witness her precipitate flight aggravated by exhibitions of terror and despair.

Nothing could attract the attention of those present, while her magnificent figure appeared to view, disturbed by the most intense emotions known to the human mind.

The Boggletons never saw anything so strange.

The silence too, lent a solemnity to the occasion which impressed their spirits with fear such as was entirely new to them. They began to realize what real sorrow meant.

Coming near the house Amby cried in a high tone : —

" Father I have come back !

Father ! May ! Clare !

Will no one answer me?
Where are you?"

The effects of emotion stopped her. She grasped her throat with her fingers, to relieve the choking sensation which threatened to strangle her. Then she stood at the door immovable, like a statue and gazed in amazement on all that remained of the home of her childhood. The silence of her terrified soul only reflected the silence within.

She did not speak or weep or move. Intelligent thoughts were suspended. She could not reason or understand, as if her senses had been paralyzed.

As her friends came to the front door she moved to the interior, gazing listlessly at everything in view.

These few moments wrought great changes in her features. Paleness overspread them.

They became elongated and haggard: and what was worse she could not weep. The intensity of her grief, or perhaps the shock of it, dried the fountains of her tears.

After a little while she began to speak, at first slowly and solemnly, then in a passionate manner; the awful occasion preventing the Boggletons from uttering a word.

"No one to meet me! Poor dears you are all dead! I am alone, I was not worthy to die with the rest. As if I were an outcast or one on whom vengeance should be inflicted without mercy.

Homeless now, indeed. No love to greet me such as this pitiable house once sheltered.

What is there left in the world worth having?

The face of nature will no longer smile for me because all that were dear to my heart have departed never to return.

My brothers and sisters were like children of the sky, designed to be objects of love and contribute immeasurably to my happiness. It may be in harmony with such a plan, that they have merely returned to the place from whence they came.

Oh ! will no friend of my youth look on my desolate soul and pity me ?

My senses refuse to be appeased by external agents.

What have I done to Providence ? Sinned, perhaps, unknowingly : If such were guilt would it entail dire punishment like this ?

Oh ! no. God is more considerate. Have my simple ways fomented the envy of inferior spirits, so as to cause them to operate against me ; or has some wish of my friends saved me from the fate of those I loved only to inherit a more dreadful one ?

It is impossible to know. All is inexplicable, mystery and suffering.

I will become mad.

I, too, can die without regret. Let me pray for death :

Oh ! thou imperishable Power, thou infinite Force, Superior Glory ; Impenetrable Essence, Master, Creator, God, strike, I am ready ! Where hast thou hidden my friends ? I must reach them even through the portals of death.

I will be content to suffer the most dreadful torments if permitted to look upon them once again.

I am not afraid of the unknown, in the dark recesses of eternity.

I have the courage of innocence, the power which shall ultimately procure peace.

For the love of my heart which thou hast made pure, take me to the eternal home, where those I seek reside.

For the subserviency of my intelligence, which I offer thee, strike the vital forces of my being !

Oh, how foolish I am to suppose I could enlist the will of the Great Power in my favor.

Nothing answers, as if the void had become deserted of its operating spirit ; or else that I am too insignificant to move it to action in my behalf.

The power of the invisible will not recognize my petition; because, perhaps I do not know how to present it.

Oh! the misery of being deserted is frightful.

The consciousness of abandonment is like a threat of some dreadful death; like a precipitate plunge into the bottomless pit where no hope ever comes.

The fineness of my garments but intensify the awful feelings of my soul. Even the light of day glorious as it is, exposes my destitution and wounds me.

I often imagined I possessed gentleness sufficient to move the pity of other beings in my behalf.

Perhaps my waywardness has displeased Omnipotence?

I am not proud; or willingly offensive. I can be submissive too, for submissiveness is productive of great advantages.

Let me pray again, it seems to be so much a woman's part. I have loved the beauty of thy face, O Lord! in the glow of the summer; and the sweetness of the evening made me feel the presence of thy exquisite benevolence.

I have listened for thy footsteps on the glistening sea; and saw the mystery of thy design in its immensity.

Thou dost bend thyself to the flower from the wings of the storm: thou givest shelter to the forlorn bird.

The night hears thee and is silent; like a child it is soothed in thy presence.

It decks itself with silver-tinted garments for thy pleasure; and thou hast crowned it with the Aurora.

Thou art the friend of the savage; the serpent knows his path through thy domain and is glad. The north wind musters his strength fearlessly; thy arm protects him through the intricacies of his journey. I am but a wanderer seeking rest, with my beloved friends. I perceive it will be only a little time until it comes.

I am reconciled to patience. Accept my homage, O Lord! for my heart feels the justice of thy power made manifest everywhere."

When the phase of grief impelling her to solicit the divine assistance began to grow less, her attention became fixed on the grave in the center of the floor. The awful spectacle made her dizzy. She gasped for breath and her lips moved, as if imploring some one to give her water.

With a sharp cry, such as persons occasionally utter at moments of supreme joy or grief, she fell upon her knees; and burying her fingers in the mould, began to clear away the covering above the dead.

Up to this moment the Boggletons remained inactive; silent witnessess of the scene; but Amby's fearful maneuver struck them with horror. Mrs. Rinser and Miss Mussy rushed to the place where she was and raised her to the upright position. They then began to calm her disturbed feelings by words such as the Boggletons knew well how to command.

In attempting to lead her from the spot she resisted in a wild manner, saying:—

"I will not go. I shall die here. Leave me to myself."

"My dear Amby," said Mrs. Rinser, "it would be useless to remain where there is nothing. Moreover, nothing will come in to fill the vacancy."

"The memory of my friends is more valuable than gold," she replied.

"One must have bread to live," resumed the woman. "As I say to Tuberfoot when she talks sentimentally about past times; the mountains looking down at you won't feed you. It is well enough to have feelings such as yours, my dear; but what can you do without provisions?"

"I want my friends. I am abandoned and do not care to live. Oh! can we not find some of them?"

"Doubtless Antony Firfag will give us all information about them. He is very accurate. If any are left he will know where they may be found. Come my dear, we will take care of you."

"I cannot depend any more on the charity of others."

"But you need not my dear child. We will get you a position in the castle."

As Mrs. Rinser continued to hold Amby in her arms employing, at the same time, words of pity for her great affliction, the crude nature of extreme grief gave way, like the snapping of a cord and she began to weep.

Her grief was bitter and desperate. The tears came in torrents. Mrs. Rinser thought her fair companion would break her heart; and Miss Mussy taking her by the hand began to smooth the back of it with her own.

If the whole truth must be told, Ham turned away from the place to conceal his emotion, for his eyes were full of tears, and he could not have uttered a word if necessary to save his life.

The statement made by Mrs. Rinser that Antony Firfag would procure all information about the Marlbands, if any of them survived, afforded slight hope to Amby.

But for this circumstance it is not known how she would proceed or what extravagance her grief might lead her to commit.

Her companions were not slow in profiting by the advantage gained on perceiving the change wrought in her on account of the information mentioned.

Turning to the doorway, Mrs. Rinser and Miss Mussy pressed their charge gently forward. Amby yielding unknowingly, perhaps, to it, began the movement with them. This was the more natural because each woman held her in an affectionate manner, and possessed the same idea of inducing her to return to the castle.

When they gained the outside, the pace at which they went was accellerated.

Amby seemed afraid to look at the familiar places surrounding the old house.

Her grief was too intense, and instinct warned her any addition to it might prove disastrous.

With her face concealed in a handkerchief, which was held on both her hands, she sobbed passionately.

Thus the party moved slowly away, Ham following as if he were only a footman.

During the time occupied in reaching the road where the carriage awaited them, few words were spoken. The Boggletons were too much elated, in secret, at the prospect of Amby's return, to compromise it by unguardedly expressed opinions, which might tend to alter her decision. While she wept and walked along with them, they were satisfied.

Before entering the vehicle she looked up through her tears at the landscape, part of which they had just quitted. The view only induced a fresh burst of grief.

Motionless, barren of culture, its habitable dwelling places deserted and in decay; noiseless like a dead object in which an observer would expect to discover life, the aspect of the place reminded her of the remains of a dear friend whose spirit had departed forever.

There was a sharp pang at her heart as if a cold missile had descended suddenly by some means, and struck the tenderest part of it.

To her companions she was frigid, as if her thoughts had become bound up in her individuality by extreme grief. Seeing this, Mrs. Rinser made no effort to converse, but deliberately preserved silence as a compliment to Amby's sorrow.

This may be considered a great concession on her part.

After entering the carriage and the journey homeward had begun, Marlband's daughter still continued to weep. With her pale cheek against the side of the vehicle near the window, and her eyes turned upward to the sky, she meditated on her woeful fate.

"Were they all lost?" she mentally inquired. "How they must have suffered, and I ignorant of it. I could have begged and borrowed for them, poor things, without inconvenience to me, if I had had the least idea they were in such dreadful need.

I know my father must have done wonderful deeds before his death for the preservation of the family.

My mother was patient and silent. May would sell her life for them. Orfa must soon after be afflicted by death on account of his delicacy.

Valine and Clare might live; but did they? Could they be found? On these and kindred subjects was her mind engaged during the return trip to her new home. Although Mrs. Rinser had heard of Marlband's deserted house, she did not fully realize the dreadful nature of the case until brought face to face with it.

She censured herself on account of her negligence in not instituting inquiries before this time as to whether or not any survivors of the family remained in the neighborhood of the dwelling; but on serious reflection she concluded, if still alive, they could be readily discovered. Hence, in an undertone to Miss Mussy, she said among other things that she would have all the information collected about the Marlbands, as soon as possible, by Antony Firfag and Ham.

Full of this laudable intention, when the party arrived at the castle, Mrs. Rinser gave instructions to have Antony summoned in the usual way.

Mrs. Tuberfoot and Mrs. Aloes were delighted at Amby's return, but distressed with her grief when matters regarding it were explained to them.

Amby went to her room immediately and remained in it until Miss Mussy came and accompanied her to supper. She did not care to eat, it is certain; yet as a matter of form she complied with the wishes of her friends. She desired, besides, to hear what Firfag had to say, and if he held out hopes of the recovery of any of her relations.

When, finally, the man made his appearance, she scrutinized his features keenly. The haggard look they bore did not forebode encouragement in the belief that any of her friends lived, yet she still hoped some of them would be recovered.

Before Antony's mental summary of the situation was concluded, having had to glance rapidly from one to the other of the Boggleton force as well as Amby, Mrs. Rinser disturbed the silence by language very loudly and forcibly expressed :

"I would not be in such a hurry with it, Antony ; but at the same time it must be done.

Miss Amby lost her relatives, poor dear, and of course you know where to find them. Ham will start to-morrow, because he would do anything to please our dear charge. Bring him to the place and he can see for himself.

I think it was very ill-natured of you not to have told me before, more especially as you knew my disposition. It is always the case, however, with those who want to do right ; they never can because prevented."

Antony looked round the apartment in startled wonder on hearing these broad assertions, which he knew full well to be untrue, but his silence remained as the woman continued :

"Don't wonder at it, man, we'll excuse you. The dear girl fretting her life out on account of your delay ; dilly-dallying for nothing ; but I assured her all would be well. That reminds me I used to say to poor, handsome Rinser : the well of Time is full of human cares ; but that's not here nor there.

Answer her, Antony, when she speaks to you, and don't be so reticent as you are with *me*. It's sinful. One would imagine you hadn't a tongue in your head any more than a tooth. Don't keep back things as you have been accustomed to do. Of all the hateful doings possible, that is the worst."

Firfag displayed considerable uneasiness during the progress of Mrs. Rinser's speech. At its termination he groaned audibly, notwithstanding his cautious manner ; for her audacity in ascribing faults to him he did not commit, made every fibre of his body tremble.

In the mean time Amby inquired : —

"May I hope, Antony, that your valuable assistance will prove successful in discovering my friends ? "

"I'll try every way, Miss. That's all I can do."

"Are you sure some of them live?"

"Well, Miss, it's this way. If they left the place before they died, you may be sure we'll find them; but contrarywise, if not, it'ill be very hard to do that same."

Mrs. Rinser, looking in astonishment at Antony, said to herself: —

"The deel take the villain; isn't he cautious."

Amby continued: —

"The grave in the floor proves, not only death, but that the survivors were unable to carry the remains buried there to the cemetery. It is of the survivors we must speak, because they may require our first attention. Do you know how many were they?"

"I have an iday, Miss, that there was two or three in it maybe."

"What makes you think so, good Antony?"

"Why, Miss, there's nothing said to the contrary; and more betoken it is just what we would like."

Mrs. Rinser, on hearing this, groaned derisively, which made the others look inquiringly at the man, causing him to become more confused.

Amby resumed: —

"Are you certain there was even *one* left?"

"One left, Miss! more nor that I think."

Amby advanced suddenly, and clasping her hands, exclaimed: —

"Tell me what you know of them, Antony. and I will — I will — reward you. Oh, do not deceive me. Did any of them escape? I can bear the truth. Have you no heart, no pity for me?"

A murmur of wonder went round the apartment, and Firfag trembled like one afflicted with palsy, while he removed the perspiration from his forehead with an old cotton handkerchief.

Mrs. Rinser interposed.

She arose and enfolded Amby in her arms, soothingly, then conducted her to a seat.

"You see now," she said to Antony, "what trouble you make all at once."

Before she could proceed further the man staggered from the room, lest the bitterness of her words would make his punishment unsupportable. As he reached the open air, he muttered : —

"My life isn't worth an old hat under her, the barge. That's what I have got for doing too much. I've put upon myself until my sins feel like a heavy weight round my neck.

They'll smother me in the long run, I doubt. The lies I told for that woman would thatch all the houses in the barony, and she has nothing to give me for it but a scolding tongue and abuse. Poor reward, God knows. The world is bad any way. All bad!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SEARCH.

THE disquiet of the previous night seemed to disappear from Antony Firfag, as borne on the back of a noble steed he chatted gaily with Ham Boggleton early next morning on their way to Footford.

The determination expressed by the young man of making a thorough examination of every place and circumstance tending in any way to lead to the discovery of the Marlbands, induced him to enter fully into the spirit of the undertaking, well knowing it would be pleasing to his master.

He felt, too, that Ham's earnestness stood a fair chance of meeting reward, inasmuch as Amby had returned to the castle with the prospect of remaining there; and he concluded therefore it would only be a matter of time until she consented to marry him.

As they rode, hunter fashion, across the open country, there was presented the best opportunity of observing its destitute condition; but as both had witnessed it before, they were not surprised.

Antony led the conversation and acted the part of adviser and informant. From experience he knew Ham to be unacquainted much with the world's ways; and a very limited possessor of knowledge in general; hence he assumed an air of patronage towards his friend, which he considered very becoming and meritorious.

Having discussed arrangements in regard to the employment of a couple of men and a wagon for the purpose of removing

the remains in the floor of Marlband's house, besides other duties of a kindred nature, Antony was silently reflecting on his own importance, when he became suddenly startled by Ham remarking boldly: —

"Firfag, another famine like the one just passed would carry off the remainder of the poor inhabitants; at least it would destroy as many as the first."

As this appeared to contain an original thought, independent of any suggested by the lackey, Antony replied: —

"Sure any one would know that; but as I was thinking of telling you, master Ham, there's worse comin'."

"The deuce you say, Firfag!"

"There *is* then, for certain."

"Worse than the famine?"

"Yes, indeed; worse than anything."

"What can it be Firfag?"

"War, your honor, bloody war! The Lord between us and harm."

"Amen," said Ham fervently. "The Lord between us and *it*.

How did you come to discover the fact?" he continued.

"Every way you could think of, let alone what I heard."

"Oh, where did you hear it, Antony?"

"Ah, master Ham, that's the question. *Where* did I hear it. Then I'll tell you *one* place.

When I was behind the garden wall one night; and by the same token a cold night it was, *that's* where I heard it."

"And what did you hear, Antony?"

"Oh, then there was enough said to frighten a score of men, let alone one. The men that spoke did not know I was listening to them. Says one man, says he: —

'Haven't the people died in the ditches like rotten sheep?'

'They have,' says another.

'Then we must take revenge,' says the first man, 'through fields of fire and rivers of blood,' says he.

"Them were his words, Master Ham, as sure as I am a livin' man."

"What else did he say, Antony?"

"He made a long story of it. He said the war would come; the rich would be all killed, and the fine houses and castles burned to the ground."

"Bless us, Firfag," said Ham. "How terrible that will be."

"Sure enough; and woeful besides."

"You don't believe it, Antony?"

"Then, indeed I do, Master Ham. Maybe not in *my* day, but the rebellion will come in yours, if you live long enough."

"On my word, there's not much consolation in that, Firfag."

"I seen lots of things myself, as much as telling me 'twas nearly to the fore."

"Oh, you did?"

"I seen the wisps on the road whistled round and round, until you'd a'most think they were crowds of men in battle.

I seen the rooks falling down from the sky, like they were shot. I seen two hawks fighting a whole day and clawing each other in the air."

"On my honor, these are great wonders, Firfag."

"No, Master Ham, not near so much as what I heard."

Here Antony looked around as if afraid of the presence of a third party; and riding near to his companion, continued:—

"I heard the cry of the old woman of the house."

"The deuce you did," said Ham in surprise, well knowing the superstition attached to Antony's words.

"Yes, indeed; under the wall, as you'd go in from the garden to the front of the castle. There she was a crying and watchin' the place, just as if it was goin' to fall on her."

"Did you see her Antony?"

"No. No one ever does. They hear her, that's all. I wouldn't doubt she follows places as well as families."

"What was she lamenting when you heard her?"

"Maybe one thing and maybe another. There's no knowing."

"*You* know, Antony, if anybody does. On my word I believe the knowledge of the whole world is in your head."

Thus flattered the man responded solemnly : —

"Its the castle, master Ham ; and nobody else she was bemoaning."

"How ; do you mean her cry signified the destruction of the castle ? "

"That's what it means, sure enough."

"Do we deserve to be treated in that manner, Firfag ? "

"To be sure not ; but you see the people of late got a hard rub of it, and it will be *our* turn next."

"We are too rich for evil of this kind to come near us."

"Nothing will stop misfortune," said Antony.

"You might do your utmost, both ways up or down or across ; but the bad luck will come all the same. But that's not here nor there. As I was saying the ballad singers have a deal of insight into the future. I heard them singing about ships upon the 'say' coming with soldiers to make rebellion here and how the rebel chief Merraloon will rise out of his grave to be at the fight."

"On my word, Firfag, you make me very uneasy. If I knew without doubt that such things would come to pass there's no knowing what would become of me."

"Besides, Master Ham, I heard more. I heard the sea myself moaning and the wind in distress, like a person, the Lord bless us. Something must rise out of all this or I am not Antony Firfag. Did you ever dream ? "

"Dream, Firfag ! why yes, quite frequently."

"Me dreams are awful, Master Ham. They pint in the same way as what I seen and heard. I dreamed of the picture of the country made of stars in the sky ; but they were gone from the head of it. Then I seen two moons, one trying to pass the

other, till the sun came in the long run and quenched their light out."

"What might these strange signs signify, Firfag ?"

"Death to the rebel cause, your honor. The stars that were wanting in the head stand for the leaders of the rebellion ; the moons, the factions between themselves ; and the sun the government."

"You possess wonderful powers, Antony ; on my word and honor you do."

"Then again I heerd great noise like mountains tumbling down. That was the rebellion sure enough."

"Tell me, Firfag ; for you know best, how there will be war without enough fighting men. The famine has cut them mostly all off, you know. Do you perceive ?"

"I persave they aint all dead. Besides they'd gather from the four quarters of the world, Miraca, Frank and Spain, bad luck to them. Youngsters grow mighty fast, Master Ham. They're worse nor the old men. The famine was fine times, *we* were safe anyhow, but in the war we would have to hide in holes in the ground for fear of being caught by the rebels. Oh, it's awful to think on it, Master Ham !"

Ham regarded Antony's predictions on the present occasion lightly ; for he carried an incredulous smile on his face ; yet he meditated a little on what he had heard as if it contained a moiety of truth which might possibly lead to serious consequences.

Dismissing further discussion of the subject, both men turned their attention to the business in hand in real earnest.

Along the mountain road they sped, the clatter of their horses' hoofs resounded far over the plain. At the base of the mountain they found a few survivors of the famine.

It is strange men seek companionship with lofty eminences, as if assured of a greater amount of security than they could find elsewhere.

The remnants of three families dwelt here in huts. By liberal offers of pay two men were engaged to disinter the remains in the floor of Marlband's house and convey them to the cemetery. So many incidents occurred during the famine that Marlband's movements had not been closely observed by any of the people now spoken to. It was noticed, however, he visited the burial-place, two or three times on which occasions he seemed busy with the dead; members of his family no doubt; but how his own life ended on one knew.

This constituted the essence of all that could be obtained regarding him.

Antony reviewing the facts in his mind felt himself unable to decide whether Marlband might be dead or alive. Coming into the neighborhood of the old house, sometime before the arrival of the grave diggers, he seemed to imagine it easy to solve the difficulty; yet nothing met him but mystery and silence. Ham felt instinctively that his companion was chagrined. Hence he forebore to press his conversation, but contentedly shared the gloomy contemplation of the old retainer.

Firfag remained a long time silent, endeavoring to reach a conclusion regarding the disappearance of Marlband.

At length a gleam of intelligence more acute than the rest suddenly possessed him; for muttering an oath he wheeled his horse into motion and rode in the direction of the old fort, Ham keeping by his side.

"That there old man, Master Ham, was too knowing to let this place alone. They said he used to talk with the fairies in it, sure enough. Maybe they brought him into it in the long run. They turned him into one of themselves, the Lord save us. Anyway he went in there dead or alive. It's just what he'd do."

"The deuce you say, Firfag," replied Ham. "'Pon my word I would never have thought of it. Indeed no."

"No; nor of manys another thing that I told you," resumed Antony. "Didn't I put you on your guard again the mountain hunger?

Didn't I tell you how to keep out of the way of the white boys ; an' to walk across a fair ground without being molested?"

"Indeed you did, Antony."

"Didn't I larn you to dance the reel of three?"

"Yes, upon my word."

"Who, but me said, dead men didn't tell stories?"

"I heard you say so without doubt."

"Was there anything I didn't make known or beknown to you?"

"I learned more from you than ever I did from the schoolmaster."

"Then be convinced of one thing more, Marlband is in the fort!"

In a short time afterward they arrived at the place mentioned. A careful examination gave all the evidence they needed to obtain: the aperture under the projecting stone.

"Now really there is a passage here," said Ham.

"In course," replied Antony. "How could the good people bring him in, except there was?"

"Quite right, Firfag, quite right; but are you sure he *is* in?"

"I'm as sure of it, Master Ham, as that the world is as flat as a pancake. The man was sharp and proud. He wouldn't trespass on anyone. He worked hard for the family but he'd rather die than be a burden on anyone's hands. No doubt he stayed out as long as he could, maybe until he buried the last of them, then buried himself."

"He must have been a good man," said Ham musingly.

"Oh, a great rebel, your honor. He might be good in some things, but he couldn't go to heaven."

The young man made no remark on this subject. The expression on his face, however, indicated an unbelief in the truth of Antony's assertions. Moreover he began revolving in his mind what course most appropriate to pursue in the present case.

Looking wistfully at the aperture he said : —

"In faith we must find some one to go in Firfag !"

"Is it under the ground you mean ?"

"Indeed yes."

"Why, your Honor, the man that would do such a thing would n't be sure of his life a minute after. If a fairy stone did n't strike him in the middle of the forehead at once, he'd go deranged."

"Here goes Firfag," said Ham in desperation disregarding his companion's words, as he began divesting himself of his coat and hat preparatory to entering the subterranean passage.

"Whatever happens I will go in on Miss Amby's account."

Seeing this Antony proposed to ride to the nearest house and procure a light.

When he returned fearing Mrs. Rinser's wrath, if he permitted Ham to go alone he announced his intention of following him into the cave.

Both men entered the well-known retreat of Marlband without much difficulty.

They were considerably agitated on seeing the remains of the unfortunate man ; but consoled in some degree by the reflection that they had discovered his fate for a certainty.

Fear as well as undue exertion caused Antony to yield profuse perspiration. He trembled in the presence of the dead, conscious that if living, Marlband would have given him a warm reception.

After carefully examining the other apartments to ascertain if any members of the family had died there, they hastily retreated to the outer world with the conviction that Marlband was alone.

Ham appeared gravely sensible of having performed an important deed. His breast swelled with pride.

He tightened the girths of his saddle like one who possessed power not only over inferior animals, such as the brute before him ; but the higher order of mankind ; for he resembled a

warrior preparing for battle whose path would be marked by terror and death.

Mounting in haste their horses, the two men returned to meet the grave-diggers at the deserted house where they witnessed the disinterring of poor May's remains.

Ham now informed the workmen they must also remove the remains of Marlband from the old fort; and as the compensation offered them for so doing was ample they readily consented.

Thus the transfer of the two bodies to the legitimate resting-place was performed before the going down of the sun. The evening was far advanced when Ham and his companion turned their horses' heads homeward.

Westward towards the sun they went, the thoughts of the younger man, being imbued with deep sadness on account of the character of the work in which he had been engaged, while Antony in spite of his endeavor to appear gay was evidently affected in a like manner. The spirit of the dead had overshadowed their souls like criminals conscience stricken.

In this predicament Ham's mind turned to the future.

The first consideration presenting itself was how the news of the loss of the entire family would be communicated to Amby. He determined to conduct the next dialogue with her; for Antony had expressed fears of meeting the young lady when they returned as she would be so much disappointed on learning that the hopes he had inspired in her, were mere illusions of the mind. If possible he would have halted at his own house and permitted Ham to ride to the castle alone; but the etiquette peculiar to servants obliged him to go on; apart, altogether, from the wholesome dread of Mrs. Rinser whose disapprobation of his conduct in this regard would be sure to meet him at his next visit.

When they arrived, after the horses had been turned into the stable, Ham directed Antony to seek refreshments in the attendants' dining-hall while he sought his own apartments

preliminary to his giving an account of his mission during the day.

As he entered the family dining-room just as the last supper bell was ringing there was a look of expectancy on every face. As might be imagined Amby was peculiarly alive to the importance of the occasion, while Mrs. Rinser, as well as the others, appeared exceedingly anxious to hear good news.

Ham sat down heavily in an armchair, but refrained from proceeding with the supper as if desirous of communicating his thoughts before eating.

Amby divining his purpose, did not hesitate to question him.

She asked :—

"How many did you find Mr. Boggleton ?"

"Two dead Miss Amby ; a middle-sized girl in the grave which you saw in the floor of the house and a man in the old fort.

Upon my honor, on the inside where one would not expect to find him ; but Firfag you know said the fairies or as he called them the 'good people' had carried him in there while living until he died. It is quite strange upon my honor."

"May and my father," said Amby pathetically. "Poor father," she resumed, "he buried himself last of all to hide his condition from the world."

"We were informed also Miss Amby," said Ham, "that your father was seen several times in the cemetery, as if engaged in the burial of some one."

"Do you know how many times ?"

"No, upon my honor, excepting several, perhaps, that is many times."

"And was there no word uttered or sign given whereby a hope might be entertained of meeting some of them alive hereafter ?"

"'Pon my honor I believe not ; that is it may be so. We did not hear so or see so Miss Amby.

It was deuced hard to find any tidings where none could be given. At least I mean, I fear you may be offended ; where none was. Firfag searched. I searched.

' Pon my honor I first went under the earth for — to — with you *for* you. I said to Firfag ; 'tis deuced queer to find nothing that is, no word of the living when we expected something ; to which he replied : —

'The fairies your honor turned their heads again it, you know, an' nobody cannot do nothin' in coorse.' "

"I declare to my conscience," said Mrs. Rinser sharply, and anxious, evidently, to cover Ham's deficient narrative," I believe that Antony Firfag is too outspoken about these things.

Never you mind his sayings Miss Amby. To think the good people would combine to defeat the search for your friends my dear ! I do not believe it ; nor never will. It is an invention of his own I'll be bound. Besides what does he mean by it ?

While I allow he has great foresight about the people and even the fish in the river, he must be stopped when he says he knows all about the fairies. Nobody ever does let alone *him.*

Mullander, the tailor, who tried to find it out by going listening at the fort in the dead of the night, when we lived in the country, got blind in his left eye and went crazy in the end, just on account of his inquisitiveness.

I could tell Antony Firfag many a thing if I had a mind to, that would keep him from talking like *that ;* but, my dear, he is very knowledgable and of great service around the castle."

Amby resumed, turning to Ham :

"Then we may conclude to a certainty that I only am left, and must bear my burden of earthly woes forever alone ! "

"'Pon my honor, Miss Amby, yes. I mean no. That is, you are not alone in the true sense. If ever, or properly, when you say — when you said — the deuce take me if my thoughts — or words —"

"My dear Ham," said Mrs. Rinser, interrupting her brother, "you want to tell Miss Amby she will never be alone while

along with us, and moreover it will be our pleasure to make her as happy as possible under all circumstances."

"'Pon my honor, sister, that is it; what a wonderful, good person — I mean woman, you are."

Amby remained silent.

The dread of impending sorrow, so long the companion of her thoughts, reached a climax here.

She had seen the deserted house, the grave in the floor, the evidence of the ruin of the peasantry, and still hoped to meet one or other of her family alive; but the testimony offered by Ham Boggleton set every aspiration in that direction at rest.

She was now alone, a dependant on the charity of people she did not care to love, and sick at heart, as if suffering from some bodily chastisement.

Poor Amby!

CHAPTER XVIII.

SEEKING A REMEDY.

AS with other phases in the domain of nature, the laws of circumstances are exceedingly strange.

The attainment of any particular object in life is never identical with our previous conceptions of it; because our knowledge of the future is insufficient to direct circumstances to fulfil our desires, or enable us to deduce correct conclusions.

The realization is sometimes greater, no doubt, than our expectations, but more frequently less; thus verifying the truth of the proposition that the *ideal* belongs to another order of things and quite different from the *real* or actual character of the event or object sought.

No one ever felt the force of this conclusion with such keen discomfiture as Ham Boggleton, while considering his relationship with Amby Marlband.

Now that she was living under the same roof with him, he was unable to proceed with his love-making. Cowardice appeared to thwart his designs.

Whenever he thought of speaking about the affection he entertained for her, and how faithfully he would try to protect her from the dangers of the world, his utterance became inarticulate; the invisible caught him by the throat as if to strangle him where he stood; and his heart grew weak in such a manner as to precipitate serious bodily sickness.

It was strange the agent most antagonistic to his plans should emanate from his own heart. Moreover, he did not

appear to reason so as to gain power by knowledge, because there was none in him of that character capable of relieving the difficulty. The majesty of Amby's presence shut him up as effectually as the man on whom the section of a mountain falls.

The influence of position and stratagem lately exercised in his behalf was of no avail. Even the fact did not prove of any value that her friends were laid low in the dust, incapable of affording her protection, powerless to retaliate as the grass of a well-trodden lawn.

How inexplicable did it appear to the shallow mind of this aristocratic boor bent only on selfishness, that a poor, defenseless girl should really be stronger than all the power in the gift of wealth!

The golden fancy, which had urged him to pursue his dream of bliss, was evidently treacherous and delusive; and the vanity of self-conceit blinded him to the truth, as if it were his worst enemy.

Mrs. Rinser soon discovered the dilemma in which Ham found himself on account of these weaknesses.

It was a terrible menace to her authoritative nature, but she was not frightened; only surprised because of its sudden and unexpected appearance.

Holding a grand consultation with Mrs. Tuberfoot, Mrs. Aloes and Miss Mussy in the drawing-room, it was resolved to proceed immediately to the discovery of some means whereby the difficulty in question might be overcome.

For this purpose it was determined to consult a woman supposed to possess occult knowledge of unknown things, living about fifty miles distant on the eastern side of the mountain range already mentioned.

This woman, whose name was Mrs. Timbertoe, had long been famous as a dispenser of charms, an interpreter of omens, and an adviser to persons having domestic problems before their doors, whose solution was thought well-nigh impossible. She

operated exclusively for the inhabitants of lordly castles and princely fortunes, deeming it beneath her notice, as well as derogatory to her profession to be found serving the poor.

On this account she was handsomely paid.

The world of the opulent was not all sunshine. It had its superstitions, its terrors of unearthly phenomena and secret crimes, unexpiated, as well as that of the poor. Where there was a difference of wealth only, the degree of ignorance possessed by each must be near the same standard!

The method of procedure having been satisfactorily settled, Mrs. Rinser summoned Antony Firfag to her presence.

Instead of going herself in search of the necessary information she would dispatch the henchman on a finely caparisoned horse to bring Mrs. Timbertoe to the castle, where comfortably cared for within its hospitable walls she would procure all the knowledge required without any third party knowing of it.

When Antony entered the back parlor where Mrs. Rinser was seated, he made a low obeisance in his usual manner; but it might be observed from his cautious demeanor, he was evidently determined on preserving silence, so as to obtain a clear understanding of her instructions, as well as to convince her of his desire to forfeit all present and future claims to eloquence such as she possessed.

As the woman was speaking, Antony, without more ado, turned one of his ears towards her in a listening attitude, and assumed a glance of concentrated inquiry on his face, which brought the semblance of a smile into that of Mrs. Rinser, in spite of the gravity which generally overspread her features.

"The more's the pity; what's not worth having is not worth remembering. The dear knows, Antony, things often take a turn one did not expect; besides, who knows. Perhaps if the snow of last year will not come again, we'll have other equally as cold."

"That's the talk," said Antony, as if roused to some moment-

ous occasion by a trumpet blast, and felt it necessary to affirm in emphatic terms his commendation of it.

"We are going to have Mrs. Timbertoe. She is great in her way, of course; quite genteel and neatly dressed. Not that I ever saw her; far from it. Her ladyship knew of her; and she knew from some one else. It is the way that great folk have. There is no knowing their intentions."

"What does she do, ma'am?" inquired Antony.

"The world, Antony; the world, she does the world," repeated Mrs. Rinser, avoiding a direct answer to the question.

"She is thought much of, and no doubt it is right; why not? If the shadows of yesterday fall across us to-day, must we stop to find out who sent them there? By no means; therefore Mrs. Timbertoe has her place. Pompey's pilla r was in Rome, Mrs. Timbertoe is here."

Antony looked around the apartment to ascertain if the lady referred to was not domiciled already within its walls. Seeing which, the woman continued: —

"You will bring her to the castle, Antony. That's why I sent for you. A horse can be got in readiness with relays for the journey. Start at four o'clock in the morning with your breakfast; make six miles an hour, and get to her place about one o'clock in the afternoon. Nobody can tell *you* your business. It would be out of place, of course. Horses and roads were always your favorites. As I said to Mrs. Tuberfoot, when men know what to do, they should never be crossed; and it's hard to find the one acquainted with the right turn. Now, there could be made a fine display on the horse. It will look well, and show the person you go to that you come from the nobility. The pillion with the crimson lining will be the best to bring, and anything else that may be necessary."

"An' where will I be findin' her place, ma'am?" said Antony.

"Yes; they call it the well o' the World's End," replied Mrs. Rinser.

"The Lord be good to us; the end of the world is a bad place to look for, ma'am. If the fairies is under the hills all around us, the deel himself must be *there*. Howsomever I heerd tell of that same woman. Oh, be the powers they say she's"—

"I know what they say," hastily responded Mrs. Rinser. "They say many and many's the thing that has not the least truth in it. The poor malign the rich and the rich malign the poor. As I said to Mrs. Tuberfoot, when two things are opposite what can happen? what indeed? Don't tell me, Antony. No one escapes the tongues of people, not even myself nor the master that's dead in his grave."

"There's more truth in them words, ma'am, than green blackberries in a wind puddin'," said Antony gravely; and after a few more exchanges of sentiment, the conference ended.

Antony made a great show of preparation during the rest of that day.

In the stables he spoke with the authority of a master. The persons with whom he associated knew whenever an expedition was contemplated, Antony's word became law. Hence prompt action was the order of the hour. In the harness-room every accoutrement necessary could be found available for a mounted man. Top boots, overcoats, helmets, fur-caps, spurs, whips, sword-canes, pistols, powder-flasks, and shot-bags, haversacks, canteens, leather belts, drinking-horns, and a large assortment of other articles.

At supper time Antony received his final instructions.

He sat composedly at table in the back parlor or servants' hall contemplating with a smiling face the soft curling steam arising from a large tumbler of whisky toddy which Mrs. Rinser had placed before him, to finish with.

He was satisfied with himself not only on account of his surroundings but also because the preliminaries of this journey were all settled.

He was like many other men, thoroughly absorbed in the *present* with little thought of the past and none for the future.

Long before daybreak next morning Antony was far beyond the town on his way to the well of the World's End.

He rode a splendid horse. An overcoat considerably worn had been selected by him as best suited to his condition. Knowing the times to be disturbed he possessed a wholesome fear of robbers or indeed numbers of the peasantry who were leagued against the aristocracy and would not scruple if chance offered to attack him on that account without much cause. He did not therefore court display, although an ardent lover of it when fully protected from interruption and assault.

The rest of his attire indicated the huntsman ; cap, top boots, spurs and light whip.

While the entire outfit was sufficient to attract attention ; yet the garb might be that of a friend as well as a foe.

Antony's thoughts concerned the intricacies of the road.

Every public highway in that part of the country had been imprinted on the tablets of his memory as clearly as the Appian Way was known to Rome.

Every branch which lead to or emerged from the one on which he traveled received as much attention from him as if he had paid for its construction. There were places even where he believed the civil engineers must have committed errors in their plans which he could readily correct if afforded an opportunity. Nor was his power of observation confined to places as we mentioned previously ; but extended to people, events and business as well.

Antony was a great worldling ; on that account he loved life. His cogitations on the present occasion having been pursued extensively over a large tract of country but recently depopulated, his mind was agreeably diverted from it on perceiving a pedestrian journeying in the same direction some distance ahead of him.

At this place the mountain range became awe inspiring. One could feel the presence of a great agent of nature as perceptibly as a ship within the influence of a whirlpool.

Upward the eminence tended until it appeared to touch the sky.

The road ran in the direction of the base of the mountain and into an immense gorge or pass through it; where might be seen two great plains on either side connected by this picturesque highway.

The pedestrian before noticed, carried a stick, doubtless to assist him in walking.

He was small of stature; but strongly built; easy in his gait, quick in perception and confident of possessing physical power. The plainness of his dress might assign him to almost any station; indeed seeing that he traveled afoot Antony supposed he must belong to the peasant or artisan class.

No doubt he was one of them. When Antony rode up within speaking distance he observed the stranger had bright eyes of a gray color and features rather comely. His age might be about thirty-five.

The greeting common to the times having been exchanged between them, Antony reined in his horse so as to show his desire to be communicative and social with his new acquaintance.

"Off an' on," said he, "twenty times I came through this here gap an' every time it makes me look at it, pleasant like."

"It is attractive," returned the stranger with a quickness that started his companion. "It is hard to imagine that one so well mounted as *you* would feel any interest in the dull earth."

The sarcasm apparent in this remark made Antony feel the superiority of the stranger and his own inability to controvert arguments emanating from a learned source. He resolved therefore to pursue a course of conciliation as being one well calculated to avoid trouble.

"As we're goin' the same road," said he, "you might jump into the pillion behind me, an' I'll give you a lift a few miles of the way."

The stranger accepted the offer with alacrity.

Antony resumed: —

"The most thing that bothered me when I first came through here was the blowin' of the wind. There's never a quiet day in that spot. No wonder the people call it the 'Windy Gap.'"

"It might prove another Thermopylæ: in an emergency," said the stranger as if speaking to himself.

"Eh! What?" inquired Antony, not understanding the allusion of his companion.

"The atmosphere is in a hurry to get through this pass from one side or the other thus causing the wind you speak of," was the reply.

"That's the way it is," said Antony, "I persave you're mighty handy at knowin' things. And after all its only natural the wind *would* run through the place like a chimney!"

"You come from some neighboring castle no doubt?" calmly inquired the stranger.

"Oh, then, indeed I do."

"You are the servant of an aristocrat?"

"Retaynor."

"Member of a retinue?"

"A ferryman; sportsman; follower; an' to carry arrands."

"You omitted the greatest of them all."

"Maybe so."

"Merryman."

Antony laughed.

The stranger resumed:

"What is the name of the residence?"

"Dawnford Castle."

"Is the owner titled?"

"He's well nigh on to it."

"Is he a lord?"

"I'm blest if I know. We call him 'your honor.'"

"Pooh! a mere squire with a diminutive affix attached: an upstart."

"Oh! he's full of wealth."

"I presume you have been in his service all your life?"

"Off an' on; one way or another I have been with him an' his father, most of the time."

"You like the position?"

"Indeed they always gave me full and plenty."

"*You* would never ask for a change?"

"Then indeed I wouldn't. Why should I? If they changed me what could I do?"

"The people died by the thousand in the recent famine."

"Yes; an' many more of them left the country."

"Who is responsible for this?"

"Oh, the Lord knows."

"It was the *system* instituted by men that made the famine a terror and a means for destruction of human life. The men who have attempted to govern the country are responsible."

"They say the bad times came for punishment."

"Was it deserved? What crimes did the people commit?"

"Oh, then indeed they done many a thing. Fightin' and quarrelling with themselves; playin' pitch and toss and tricks at wakes, the likes of them was never known."

"It is a slander promulgated by the rich against the poor."

"Shure the famine came in the ground; no one could prevent it."

"Perhaps the conditions originating the blight could not have been stopped by any human power; but you should remember that other food might have been provided by the people if the government were fully interested in their welfare and safety."

"I persave."

"Where industry was absent poverty came in."

"That's the talk."

"No labor, no breakfast."

"Sure enough."

"The withdrawal of capital from the business of a country resembles the going down of the sun, leaving a hemisphere in darkness."

"Look at that."

"If the governing body protected the industries of the country, making it safe for capital to be profitably invested, the poor could get plenty to do and be fairly paid for their labor, thus preventing distress arising from scarcity of food."

"I believe you there."

"Therefore the governors are guilty of murdering an innocent people."

"Hem! maybe so; an' what brings *you* into these parts if I make bold to ask; or to spake as you do?"

"A little business related in some way to the subject we have been talking about. I am in search of a family."

"How many in family have you, my good man?"

"It is not *mine* I seek, but one very much needed at present."

"You couldn't thin meet with a better man nor me, for if I don't know them, I heerd of everybody from mountain to strand."

"Who are you?" demanded the stranger, sternly. "Are you true? Whom would you serve, God or the d——?"

"The Lord between us an' harm," responded Antony, piously. "God forbid I'd ever belong to the last one any way. The master knows well enough I served him, an' his father before him, as well as a man could with a halt in his leg. Everybody a'most knows me, Antony Firfag."

"I referred to patriotism. How would you act if there was an uprising of the people?"

"A rebellion?"

"Yes."

"Faith, I'd hide in a hole in the ground. I know plenty of places like that, where they couldn't find me."

"You are better with your master," said the stranger shortly, then resumed :

"Antony, did you ever hear the history of Merraloon ?"

"Merraloon, the rebel ?"

"Aye, Merraloon the chieftain."

"Then indeed I did, upon my conscience."

"Listen. The work he proposed to execute in his lifetime remains unfinished.

It was rumored that one of his sons, the only surviving one, went into obscurity where he lived in self denial of his rights and privileges.

It was also said that this boy married in his hiding place ; that a family of sons and daughters grew up to him, but remained ignorant of their true lineage. It is this family I wish to find."

"Merraloon ! Merraloon !" repeated Antony, musingly. "Begad, I never seen him in our side of the country. No ; he wasn't there. Wait a bit ; did he carry his own name ?"

"No, certainly."

"There might be one like him. Poor, oh, no, 'twas not."

"Speak !" said the stranger eagerly, with a voice full of sternness and command.

"I thought of a man that I knew once in Footford, but it couldn't be him."

"What made you imagine in the first place that there existed any relationship between them ?"

"Sorrow go from me, if there wasn't one thing more nor another ; the poor man was learned. Marlband they called him, an' thunder an' 'ounds, why did I forget it ; sure enough he was a rebel as well !"

"Tell me all you know about this Marlband," said the stranger excitedly, placing his hand on Antony's shoulder as a reminder that he would not be trifled with.

Without hesitation the messenger from Dawnford Castle related all he knew of the history of Footford's remarkable

peasant, omitting the part pertaining to the abduction of Amby and her present residence. When he asserted positively that Marlband was dead, the stranger groaned involuntarily.

"Did you see him die?" he queried.

"The life was out of him when I seen him."

"Did you place your hand on the body and feel the *rigor mortis*."

"I felt the *death* without doubt before I touched him. Wasn't he a'most in pieces."

"You said he had sons?"

"I did."

"Have you seen their lifeless bodies, too?"

"No, then; the father brought one to the graveyard himself, for he was seen."

"And the other?"

"The other — the other — the other —"

"What became of him?"

"There's no tale nor tidings of him unless he was put in the ground without anybody seeing him."

"He was not with the father's body?"

"No, then, he wasn't."

"Can you name any person who saw him?"

"Nara one."

"Is it possible he might yet be living?"

"Oh, then indeed it isn't."

"I presume the girls, his daughters, shared the common fate of the others."

"No; yes, they did, every one; yes, shure enough, them all."

"All dead," said the stranger solemnly, to which Antony made no reply, for his thoughts of Amby smote him with remorse making him tremble in his seat, lest his companion should by any means divine the truth.

A long pause ensued.

Antony's inquisitive nature, however, soon broke the silence as he remarked :

"You're related to the family by marriage, maybe ?"

"Nonsense !" exclaimed the stranger with a laugh. "The relationship is due to patriotism, not marriage. Family ties concern small circles, whereas patriotism seeks to bind the people of a nation into an entire brotherhood. The division of classes which we see here is adverse to national prosperity ; therefore, we will endeavor to rectify the condition by reorganization, so as to give the poor a better way of living."

Antony feared to trespass on this ground as he did not fully understand the import of his companion's words ; but a few moments' reflection convinced him that the man was no other than a rebel, as terrible perhaps as Marlband himself.

"If Merraloon was to the fore, or his son, or his grandson, what would ye do with him ?" resumed Antony.

The man smiled before answering.

"We would teach him to assume the leadership of the new movement."

"What would he do?"

"Prepare for war, holy war, bloody war !"

Antony groaned so audibly that his horse attempted to stop believing, no doubt, some dire catastrophe had taken place.

"Worse nor famine," said he.

"Great wants call forth great remedies," promptly replied the stranger.

He continued :

"Antony Firfag we will soon part. My road leads to the right to where you see yon curling smoke ascend into the clouds, while you move to the left. You have been a follower of the aristocracy all your life as a means of earning your bread, and therefore excusable to some extent.

Be advised by me, turn your thoughts in these latter days of your life to sympathy for the poor. You cannot do much for you are old ; but you may accept the new idea with favor.

Are you willing to hope for a better state of things in the country of your birth than what you have witnessed heretofore?"

"Oh, then indeed I am," said Antony, trembling; for the stranger had jumped off the horse to the ground and stood with his hand on the bridle rein.

"Then we part as friends," he continued, "Should you live long enough you may hear from me again.

My name is Ribbonson and you are a ——"

"Don't say it;" said Antony excitedly as sinking the rowels of his spurs into his horse's side he dashed off at full gallop leaving the stranger in the center of the road to pursue his way as best he could.

Ribbonson turning to proceed in the direction of his own destination muttered to himself good-humoredly: "You would make a poor rebel Antony without doubt; and a worse soldier."

CHAPTER XIX.

PAYING FOR KNOWLEDGE

WHEN Antony Firfag slackened the pace of his horse, after escaping from the strange man who called himself Ribbonson, he launched into a well timed and impassioned soliloquy as if intending to relieve his mind of a subject it was unable silently to carry with patience.

"Oh, the schemer! the rogue of the world, the desaver. Bad luck to the hour I met him; with his galavantin' wag an' high-folutin talk. He has the art of the d—— himself, I'll be bound.

I'd not think nothin' of it if he didn't try to swear me in, and tell me I was a ribbonman, God bless us, for surely that's what he was agoin' to say, the villain. In the latter end o' my days to be made *that*, is beyant belief. Not but that the ribbonmen, the Lord between us an' harm, is as good as the rest of 'em; but I never went no further nor match-makin' an' never will. I am too old. I'd rather stay sittin' at the fire, discoursin' about the craps an' takin' my comfort nor out through the country at night work.

What would I get I'd like to know, if the master was hunted from his place and a spalpeen put in?

Cowld comfort I'm sure. I'd be oblidged to beg my way and get Thurlough's payment ——, more kicks nor hapence, besides.

I won't stir an inch for them, the blackguards; not an inch."

Antony might have continued speaking had not new scenes risen to institute in him new trains of thought. The divergence

from the regular highroad led in the direction of a valley and through its center along the bank of a winding stream, where wild flowers abounded, making the atmosphere feel as if its perfume had come from a paradise richer than that designed for man.

The birds were singing in the woods, situated and extending far to the right and left of the way. The water with an easy motion, occasionally broke into soft murmurs, as if intending to deliver a discourse on the deep mystery of its being; and many a huge sycamore cast an inviting shade across the wayfarer's path.

The serenity above and the beauty beneath harmonized.

The majesty of the Infinite stood forth conspicuously, so as to fill the heavens and the earth with glory; and make it understood to the most diminutive form of life how admirable and incomprehensible is God!

The fretful mind of the man soon became tranquil.

As he rode forward quietly the meditative mood lay heavy upon him. His frame, in the sitting posture, was slightly bent; the head seemed to fall in between the shoulders in an undue manner; the knees were pulled up on the horse's sides and the face turned wistfully from point to point as if expecting to behold some extraordinary vision.

Viewed from the rising ground on each side of the road, one might imagine they beheld in him a representation of the foul fiend searching for the abode of mankind.

As the traveler proceeded the view became more picturesque. The uplands gradually neared each other and became higher until they terminated in a gorge or glen, leaving space only for the passage of the road and the river through it.

Still meditating on the incomprehensible ways of human life, Antony entered this pass. He paid no attention to the garrulous stream, or to the notes of a solitary bird perched on a tree near the wayside, the mystic sound of the east wind which threatened to disclose some secret to his ear, the verdure cover-

ing the bluffs or the blue sky above, so thoroughly had the conduct of Ribbonson frightened him into the employment of profound thought.

About five minutes' ride brought him round a sharp turn and behold his destination appeared to view ; a semi-circular space on the right bank of the river, probably five acres in extent, on which were situated a handsome cottage, a garden surrounded by tall trees and numerous hawthorn hedges.

An avenue west of the house led by many a fantastic curve to the base of the bluff, where a stream of clear water poured from the rocks, laid bare at that point, and fell into a deep tank of stone artificially placed there to catch it. The tank was covered by an arch of brick but one part was open admitting those who desired to draw water from the enclosure.

This was the well of the world's end.

The country toward the east was easily discerned, the land being open and rolling beyond the garden.

Rose bushes grew up to the windowsills of the house ; three or four large sycamores stood in line between the front of the domicile and the river where birds and bees came betimes to gather the honey from the leaves and fill the air with the melody peculiar to their kind.

Several beds of mignonette and other fragrant plants in the garden contributed their share of perfume to the atmosphere. The calmness prevailing was remarkable and Antony rousing himself into activity, felt that if permitted to choose a place on earth for his home this would undoubtedly be the spot.

For an instant horse and man remained immovable before the door, to which they had rapidly advanced, thus completing a picture that previously belonged, for the most part, to the beauty of external nature.

The noble bearing of the horse, the richness of the material composing his caparison as well as the fantastic dress of the man, harmonized very well with the deep-tinted parts of the scene.

Antony turning his head towards the house, beheld a woman who had just then come to the front entrance to ascertain the purport of his visit.

A thin figure, tall and curved, though quite active in her movements. It could not be said she was advanced in years if the dark color of her hair indicated youthfulness.

The look of her eye was sharp and penetrating, as if she had been selected by some of the members of the "fourth estate" to watch the actions of mankind unperceived by them.

The features were distorted by wrinkles and muscular contraction; the lower part of the face being twisted a little in the direction of the left side and the forehead and cheek-bones appeared hard like a tree stripped of its bark and discolored by the inclemency of the weather.

Antony suspecting that the individual here described was no other than the far famed Mrs. Timbertoe of whom he was in search, assumed a jocular air and launched directly into pleasant banter, a phase of speech rarely if ever found to be unpopular with friends or strangers.

"Faith, Mrs. Timbertoe, for its yourself that's there, you have a snug place of it; an' much good it may do you. Far be it from me to say you arn't deserving; bad luck to the man that would say so; an' may I never sin if I'd not whip him to an inch of his life on sight."

With a smile that indicated incredulity the woman made no reply, but waited until Antony had dismounted, secured his horse to a post and advanced towards her with a letter in his hand. She then asked sharply: —

"Where did *you* come from?"

"Oh, then, the world knows that, ma'am. Havn't you heered tell of the great castle near Kindleton to the left as you go down, an' by the same token its on your right if you cross over."

"Dawnford, eh?"

"Yes, indeed. A mighty fine place, an' many a warm corner it has in it; an' many a bit an' sup is taken at its table."

"Come in; I'm Mrs. Timbertoe," said the woman with a grave air, such as is assumed by persons having great responsibility on their shoulders.

The interior of the cottage was well furnished and scrupulously clean.

Instead of Mrs. Timbertoe being what some might imagine a lone hag in a dilapidated hovel, she possessed not only large worldly means but was also surrounded by a numerous family. Her children seven boys and five girls were full grown. They were all very talkative and jolly but each had the counterpart of the twisted countenance and copper-colored tinting of the mother.

In one corner of the principal apartment, snugly secured in a large arm-chair sat *Mr.* Timbertoe sadly afflicted with imbecility. He no longer paid any attention to the other persons in the room, as if his perceptive powers had departed, leaving only mere life, as a preventative against corruption.

His movements even had terminated, excepting when he turned his eyes from the floor to the window, or other point within the scope of his vision.

The stillness of his frame was awful. It seemed as if Death designed to keep him quiet and silent while decrepitude came slowly over him, enveloping his spirit in its embrace before accompanying him to the grave.

The withered hands, the attenuated limbs, the inclination of the shoulders to droop towards the breast, the hollows in the sides and front of the head and the thin white hairs remaining on it, were evidence that Timbertoe had fought, but was conquered.

It could not be satisfactorily established, however, that he had had many battles with the world so called, seeing how conspicuously his wife maintained the leadership in the household since their marriage.

Much of the money obtained from the "quality" as she called the aristocratic people, as wages for her craft, went to purchase the family homestead.

In other things she would not tolerate the least interference and as the number of her children increased, her ability seemed to become greater, until nothing transpired within or without the house that did not owe its origin to her indomitable will. Hard-fisted in money matters, shrewd in calculating chances; assuming that no one was her superior in the drawing of logical deductions, and far seeing into future results, Timbertoe's commonplace opinions only exposed him to her ridicule and contempt.

He soon found it convenient and easy however to adapt himself to her rule. He dressed in the cast-off clothing of a lord, amused the children by cat calls or mummery and walked occasionally in the garden with his hands in his pockets, regarding complacently the laborer at work on the vegetable patch without attempting to render the least assistance. Whenever the mental strain of the wife made her unusally irritable and wrung from her admissions of being sorely burdened with responsibility, Timbertoe would propose the execution of great projects.

"I could travel for one of the leading business firms of the capital," he would say, "or if it would please you better, I might become the manager of a large newspaper at a salary of four thousand a year. I know I could do either capitally; yes capitally."

To persons who came to procure water at the well of the world's end, he communicated praises of himself while exhibiting the beauties of the place.

"What a world of work I have done on this place," he said to a visitor one day. "Nobody knows better than I do how hard it is to raise a family like mine. I often hear people boasting about their usefulness and the amount of labor they

perform in a given time ; but for a man like me that says nothing, few are deserving of more praise ! "

Mrs. Timbertoe heard all these observations either personally or by report with calm indifference. Two or three times while unusually angry she essayed to turn the man out of doors in order to make him attempt to earn his own living ; but as often did she relent, and finally became fully resigned to the situation.

Timbertoe's imbecility, therefore, although felt by the family as a misfortune, was not a dire calamity such as the loss of the wife would entail.

While the stillness almost of death prevailed with *him*, everything else in the household proceeded as usual. Mrs. Timbertoe's voice rang out at all hours of the day, clear and in commanding tones, but was governed by a musical melody that made it rather pleasing than otherwise. The boys went to work in the field, the girls to sewing or knitting. The meals were served at the proper hours, and evening brought the family together to talk over the fashions of the aristocracy, the poverty of the poor, and other subjects pertaining to the times.

Mrs. Rinser's letter to Mrs. Timbertoe was long and carefully considered by the latter. In doubt as to whether the writer of it was eligible to be classed with the set she attended, the interpreter of omens was particularly attentive to the business in hand, lest her visitations to inferior people might injure her status with the gentry.

In connection with this idea she questioned Antony at some length concerning Mrs. Rinser and other leading subjects supposed to be within the scope of his knowledge. Then she withdrew to a private apartment, and placing the letter in a drawer with others of the same kind, said to herself :

"We'll make her pay for her high-toned notions, and give her little for it. *That's* what we'll do."

Mrs. Timbertoe's preparations for departure with Antony Firfag were soon made.

A black shawl on her shoulders over a black dress; a high black bonnet trimmed with crepe on her head; black gloves of a material like serge, and a black parasol having a dragon's head at the end of the handle, composed her costume.

Before leaving, she gave the instructions to her daughters usual on such occasions regarding household duties; pointed with the end of her parasol to a few pictures and statues presented to her by some of the nobles she had served; and turning finally in the direction of Timbertoe said:

"My husband loves rest, and let him have his way."

"Upon my conscience," replied Antony, "its more nor many would do, an' signs on you, it will stand to your credit."

Under the enchantment of this praise, Mrs. Timbertoe, preceded by Firfag, moved briskly through the front door and was assisted to her seat on the pillion behind the man. Then amid the adieus of the children, who shouted, laughed, danced and otherwise displayed emotional concern for their mother, the ominous looking pair, borne by the noble steed, started on the journey to Dawnford Castle.

"You said, I believe," resumed Mrs. Timbertoe, addressing Antony after they had cleared the glen and were well into the direct route westward, "that Mrs. Rinser is not a born lady."

"Faith, ma'am, I wouldn't go that far for anything. I said she is an' she isn't," replied Antony, cautiously.

"Hem! very vague indeed," said Mrs. Timbertoe, as if speaking to herself.

"Howsomever," resumed the henchman, considerably puzzled as to what he *would* say, "she's next door to it."

"To what, may I ask?" inquired his companion, assuming a frigid aspect, the better probably to induce the man to give a full explanation of the case.

"If her mother wasn't a lady, ma'am, her mother's brother, not far removed, was a gentleman," he replied.

"Oh! quite another thing, you see," said Mrs. Timbertoe, "but how came the brother to be a gentleman?" she resumed.

"The easiest way in the world, ma'am; he got money by hook or crook, put up a fine castle, an' kept his hands in his pockets."

"A mere upstart," said the woman, contemptuously. "Do you mean to tell me," she continued, "that *any* creature doing those things would be a person of quality?"

"In troth I do, ma'am, there's no denying it."

"Why, fellow," said Mrs. Timbertoe, loftily, as if Antony's remarks had goaded her into a hostile attitude, which her ordinary precaution could not control, "people must be born ladies or gentlemen, or money cannot make them such. Small hands, small feet and small ears do not come upon them for nothing. Whoever saw a penetrating look in the eyes of a common man? A butcher's boy may gain wealth by attending strictly to business principles, but even when he dresses in the garments of a gentleman, the lubberly habits of the butcher may still be detected in his conduct. I always thought and I think so still that the gentry have the protection and sanction of Divine Providence."

Antony began to understand it would be idle to cope with Mrs. Timbertoe on these questions. He was not acquainted with the genuine aristocracy excepting by hearsay; but he entertained a fund of prejudice against them, and was well versed in the stories related by the peasantry to their detriment. He was afraid of clever people like his companion, but wherever opportunities permitted he would endeavor to defeat them by quibbling or sophistry. Hence, at the mention of Divine sanction, where he saw a chance for debate, he laughed derisively, uttered several groans and other exclamations bespeaking doubt in its truth, shrugged his shoulders, turned his head to one side as if to intensify the acuteness of his words, and said:

"Oh, then, Mrs. Timbertoe, without contradictin' you, ma'am, warm is the corner that some of them will get.

Shure many an' many's the poor girl had to lave her home, with shame be it said of her, on their account, the villains; an' so signs on them; didn't there rise a great storm the night Lord Pinktosser was dead, the likes never was seen before; an' when the breath left him, the half of the house was carried off with his soul, the Lord bless us! That's as true as you're there, for I seen it with my own eyes. Wasn't old Count Garlic seen at night in the woods walking near the big house after he died, cold as ice, poor man, but in course he had to be there for penance for his sins.

They say, an' its true, that Lord Micklebone hung himself in his own room, where no one could sleep ever after. He used to be seen with his face inside the window looking out at the night before twelve o'clock; of course, after twelve all spirits disappear; they have to go. Besides, they heard him in the hall, his night-gown rattling again' the wall like a blast of wind. Oh, Mrs. Timbertoe, ma'am, the Lord has no hand in them things, I'll be bound."

Mrs. Timbertoe made no effort to controvert this ingenious method of abusing the aristocracy. She held her head high in the air, showing her contempt for the low opinions of the peasantry; and choosing rather to bear in silence the stings of outraged feelings, than deign to bandy words with their ignorant representative.

During the rest of the journey she confined her remarks to the weather and the crops, notwithstanding Antony's endeavors to move her into a recital of the mysteries of her calling.

It was long after dark when they reached the castle. At the outer gate the man pulled a horn from his breast and blew a loud call such as the inmates had been familiar with.

In harmony with this precaution the woman found the housekeeper and other members of the Boggleton family in waiting at the great entrance and peering through the darkness to ascertain, no doubt, what she was like.

Mrs. Rinser's entertainment of Mrs. Timbertoe was of high order. It included a grand supper that night; a conversazione in the drawing-room, at which Amby was present; and a breakfast the next morning, whose variety and costliness would have astonished the greatest epicure of the times.

As a matter of course the object of the present meeting was to be kept a secret. On this account and to guard against interruption, Mrs. Rinser conducted her guest during the forenoon, into a suite of apartments on the north side of the castle, overlooking a picturesque portion of the country through which the river sped to the sea.

Here the two women gracefully falling into immense chairs which stood designedly, adjacent each other, began the deliberation for which they met.

The most amusing feature connected with the proceedings was this. Ham Boggleton's curiosity having been aroused by the mystery surrounding Mrs. Timbertoe's visit, he determined to know the significance attached to it. For this purpose he followed the parties closely; but without being observed, until he finally concealed himself behind the folds of a large table in the room next the one in which the conference was held. In this situation, with the aid of the open door, he heard all that transpired on the occasion.

Mrs. Rinser's preliminary statement would fill a volume nearly as large as the United States Statutes, in which she dilated on the relation of the Boggletons with the aristocracy as far back as the beginning of the Christian era; and other favorite themes too prolific of sentimentality to be reproduced in these pages.

Mrs. Timbertoe followed calmly. She went the length of saying that her office was of more importance than the possession of blue blood itself; for she kept lords and ladies where they were; that is when any of them were threatened with destruction an appeal to her art warded off the evil.

"And now, my dear," she continued, "let me tell you what to do for Miss Amby.

Fasten two pins crosswise in the lining of her dress, near the nape of the neck. Although it may not come to anything it is always good. Extract from the head of a herring the bone called the tale teller ; and conceal it in her hair ; if she mentions your brother's name within the hour following this act, it may be considered a lucky sign.

Go to a fireplace alone, where the fire is on the hearth ; sweep the ashes away from the front of the fire and place two pieces of alum each the size of a small bean, about four inches apart on it in the name of the persons concerned. When the heat melts the alum and causes the parts to move about ; if they come together with a rush it will be very significant and may be relied on as meaning a hopeful state of things.

Send Mr. Boggleton, at midnight to the stream which separates two counties, taking with him a handful of wheat grains and standing on the bank cast them upward on top of the water, invoking the name of his sweetheart, at the same time. Then as the grains come down the stream let him catch all he can ; and repeat the movement three times. The number of grains caught finally will be the number of years until he is married to her. Should he fail to catch any the case will be doubtful."

When Mrs. Timbertoe had enumerated three or four other remedies of equal force and efficiency with the foregoing, she turned abruptly to the question of payment.

"As you may prefer to pay in goods instead of money," she said, "we can arrange this transaction so as to be quite satisfactory to both sides.

I will expect to get a bolt of linen, fifty yards long, of last year's bleach and plain ; six ladies' dresses, not the worst of the wear ; three bonnets as good as new ; five pair of boots and shoes, common or patent leather ; ten new muslin handkerchiefs hemmed and bordered ; twenty-five yards of drugget ; a stone of feathers and a case of butter."

"That is very moderate," said Mrs. Rinser, "as indeed, of course, any professional person could make it."

She would have proceeded as usual in this strain, quoting instances of professionals having frequently given as little as Mrs. Timbertoe to obtain as much, but the thought of parting with her linen of last year's bleach and the drugget she had taken so much pains to have manufactured, fairly stopped her further utterance.

As the two women arose to quit the apartment, Mrs. Rinser resumed as if driven to speak by some desperate impulse: —

"Is there anything else in the world, Mrs. Timbertoe to tell me, before leaving, that you know might assist me in the present difficulty?"

To which her companion, after a short pause answered, placing her lips near the ear of the other woman as if afraid of listeners:

"If your brother cannot court the lady himself, *you* court her for him."

Then she gave Mrs. Rinser a push with her hand, winked her right eye knowingly and added: "You understand."

After this Mrs. Timbertoe gathered a portion of her dress in one of her hands, closed her lips and descended to the hall through which she walked to the door where a light vehicle was in waiting to convey her home.

Ham mystified beyond conception as to what it all meant came out from his hiding place saying to himself:

"The deuce take her if her charges are not the heaviest I ever heard. Upon my honor I believe Firfag would say as much, I do, indeed."

CHAPTER XX.

THE FIRST FRIEND IN THE NEW WORLD.

ABOUT the time the dawn began to appear around the great church where Zanthon was sleeping as described in the tenth chapter of these pages, a muffled figure approached the outer door of the sacristy, or investment room, situated on the east end of the edifice and communicating, through other doors, with the sanctuary within.

The figure held a key in one hand and after opening the door, entered.

When the wax taper, standing in an old candlestick on the mantel-piece, was lighted, and the new arrival began to come out of the large incongruous wrappings at first noticed, the walls of the room if they had had eyes could have seen a woman. Moreover they would have beheld a person in physical aspect as near a monster as it seemed possible for nature to attempt to mature, in view of the well-known beauty of the gentle sex.

The woman was clearly six feet in height; massive in all sections of her frame, with an unwieldly gait and ponderous tread. Her feet, always bare, were of huge growth, flat, bulbous and horny. The arms, also naked, showed that peculiar discoloration of the skin known to be caused by the action of the weather; and the hands might be taken for formidable bludgeons, if closed to resist aggression. Her shoulders, high and square like those of a man, appeared the best shaped parts of the body.

Towering above all, supported by a short thick neck, was a head whose capacious lineaments might be studied with advantage by those calculating on the production and representation of an Indian Sphinx. Prominent cheekbones, immense eyebrows, red eyes, a nose of the pug order ; but large and endowed with extensive irregularities at the end and a mouth bearing a relationship or proportion to the head that a great cavern does to a mountain whose entire lower front is involved by it.

A mass of tangled red hair surmounted the top in a most conspicuous manner, undivided and uncombed, like wool on a sheep's back.

The dress worn by this woman was composed of a number of rags stitched together and fashioned into a gown. As a matter of utility it fitted closely about the neck and waist, the skirt being short so as to prevent it touching the dusty or muddy ground.

It was evident from all these appearances, that, the person here described belonged to the lowest class of society ; more of course on account of the accidents of birth and surroundings than any fault of her own.

Her preliminary arrangements having been completed in the sacristy, she passed through a side door into the church. Besides the light, she carried a sweeping brush and a cloth for dusting the seats and rails in and out of the sanctuary in preparation for the morning services, at which many pious people were accustomed to attend.

Almost the first object coming into view was the form of Zanthon extended on the steps of the altar.

The woman, in great surprise, raised the light above her head and glanced wildly around, to ascertain if there were other persons in the party ; for her first impression was, that a forcible entrance to the sacred edifice had been effected by unauthorized people.

Failing to discover the appearance of a second individual she approached the boy.

He was, indeed, an object capable of exciting pity in any human heart, no matter how rough it might be. Covered with dust from head to feet, making it evident he had traveled far and was a stranger; his old clothes rent into tatters, his feet swollen and stiff from fatigue, his hair in wild disorder and his whole person appearing as if it meant to sink into one chaotic mass, he presented such a demonstration of misery as shocked even the callous mind of this woman. She stood irresolute in action, contemplating the subject of her thoughts.

Dull as nature had made her, yet on this occasion her reflections became far-reaching and varied.

Sympathy caused her to tremble.

Physical power, such as she possessed, stood forth ready to offer its services in the protection of this helpless waif. Of course the condition of the times would justify the entertainment of any conclusion, however, extravagant.

She thought that:

Having no friends, he came here to die.

Maybe bad men killed all his family; and he alone escaped.

Perhaps he ran away from hard work or cruelty.

Why did he come in here; or *how* did he get in?

Was he sent? was he brought by some one else and then abandoned? Oh, *she* knew. It was this: God had a hand in it. *That* was easily seen!

Holding the light nearer his head she continued her observations:

This was a well-shaped boy; no doubt he possessed a comely face. Would she disturb his deep, stertorous breathing, poor, helpless thing?

She hesitated. It would be a crime to do so; perhaps a sacrilege. Yet what would time develop?

Her indecision was merely momentary on reflecting how soon the place must be thrown open to the morning worshippers and

the necessity which obliged her therefore to proceed immediately with the work she had come to perform.

Urged in this manner to avoid further delay, she began to smooth his hair wlth her large hand, at first lightly ; then gradually increasing the pressure until it became sufficient to awake him.

This method was successful, without being harsh. With a sigh resembling a moan, the boy suddenly awoke, then sat upright and began rubbing his eyes with the backs of his hands.

The woman straightened herself and waited until consciousness in the boy became fully established, knowing from experience that this precaution was essential before speaking.

The recollection of his home and friends first recurred to Zanthon's mind ; but seeing a light and an individual present, he turned his eyes sorrowfully upward in the direction of the woman's face. A slight shock might be perceived agitating his breast and shoulders as their eyes met, on account of the woman's hideous aspect ; otherwise the scrutiny on both sides was characteristic of great wonder.

The effect of this study on the woman seemed to increase her sympathy ; for her face became elongated and the traces of grief on it assumed a clearer and more profound outline.

She essayed to speak ; but found it too difficult because of the emotional contest within her, which involved the organs of speech as if they had become paralyzed.

Besides she was at best a poor speaker. However, as time again forced her to action she said to the boy :

"Ef yer pecture was an the wall et 'ud be a lovely saint."

This expression was probably meant as a compliment to Zanthon's clear lustrous eyes upturned as in paintings of saints and to the general regularity of his features.

As he smiled faintly in return for this gratuitous encomium the woman continued :

"Yer mother ?"

"Dead," replied Zanthon.

"Fa'er ?"

"Dead."

"Everybody dead ?"

"Everybody."

"Same as me," said the woman, turning the tips of her fingers towards her breast, she continued :

"What's yer name ?"

"Zanthon."

"Ha ! ha ! too much. I'll call ye baby. You'l be me baby."

"Who are you ?" asked Zanthon in some alarm at this sudden confiscation of his person and name.

"Sorrow one o'me knows," answered the woman vaguely : which answer might represent, either the profound ignorance of the most unlettered ; or the most philosophic admission or truth of the erudite of mankind.

"What do the people call you ?"

"They call me big Nancy."

"Why do they call you *that?*"

"The sorrow one o' me knows," said the woman shaking her head.

After a little reflection the boy continued with an assumption of confidence in his manner :

"*I* know why ; it is because you are *big* and because you are *Nancy*."

The woman laughed outright.

Perhaps reason had never previously approached so near to her understanding as now ; for on this occasion its brilliant flash was perceived by it, unmistakably. She again questioned the boy :

"Where 'ill ye go ?"

"Into the world."

"Where ?"

"Straight on. When I go out I will not turn to the right or to the left; but in a direct line forward."

Nancy gave another loud laugh, forgetting altogether the sacredness of the precincts in which she stood. Zanthon's replies being so much out of the common order, that she felt an uncontrollable desire to be merry at every fresh idea emanating from the boy.

"Wont no one come to fetch ye?" she resumed.

"No," returned Zanthon with a shake of his head indicative of melancholy.

"There is no one left to me. I am quite alone. I thought every person in the world was dead. I did indeed."

"Ha'nt ye nothin t' eat?"

"Nothing. I am not very *very* hungry; but a little weak in my bones. I fasted a long time."

The woman moaned on hearing this; no doubt to express sympathy for the boy's great sufferings. Then as if she had resolved on the performance of something difficult she extended her hand to him saying: —

"Comb I ha' money."

The boy stood up and accompanied his new friend to the sacristy where she provided him with a comfortable seat to await her return, as she was obliged to complete her work in the church.

No one knew where Big Nancy was born. As a baby she was found on the steps of an orphan asylum, where having been taken in she was nursed carefully and remained until about the age of twelve years. Then she voluntarily left the institution to work as a scullion for her daily bread. Her lot fell among a class of persons, sympathetic enough, but unable or unwilling to pay wages. Usually Nancy was employed by the day to perform some heavy job of work, such as washing for a family of ten; scrubbing the floors of new houses before the intended occupants began to reside there; cleaning apartments occupied by the sick and infirm; and even hauling manure by

means of a large basket on her back, from the dunghill to the garden !

Now at one place, then at another. First east, then west. To-day in the north, to-morrow in the south end of the town, she became as well known as the chief constable.

As she grew to be very strong, was always ready for business, and exacted no other recompense for her labor than food, her services were always in demand.

She loved hard labor, indeed, it might be said that she was work personified.

It appeared too, she had no regular time for sleep. Often after working over a wash-tub all day, did she watch by the bed-side of a sick woman or dying child through the night, resuming work on the following morning as cheerfully as if she had slept the equivalent of the time allowed other people. Even when invited to stay over night to rest at places where she had been engaged in toil she would refuse all ceremony and conceal herself in some obscure corner of the house, sleeping soundly on a little straw with her shawl wrapped round her head and probably an old quilt for covering.

A stranger entering the town and hearing the citizens speak so frequently of Nancy, would imagine she exercised greater influence on the period than a permanent institution with its architectural designs, endowments, dissolute students and professorships.

If a wife complained of having too much work on hand, the remedy was soon told : —

" Call in Big Nancy."

If a family intended to remove to another residence which involved extra labor such as packing and the readjustment of the furniture in the new house ; this proposition was invariably announced : —

" We will of course have Big Nancy."

When all other means failed in the dispatch of important messages, where life and death were concerned, one

consoling reflection rested comfortably on the minds of the people : —

They could send Big Nancy.

Parties organizing for a day's pleasure in the country, if by accident they found some of their packages too heavy, always reconciled the difficulty with the hopeful conclusion : —

"Big Nancy will carry them," and further:

"We can put the child, when he gets tired on Big Nancy's back.

The bottles, we thought could not be packed with the other things, may be carried in the side pockets of Big Nancy. Why, yes ; and the can of lard and the sugar and the basket of eggs as well.

Nancy can carry a pail of fresh water on her head and a dipper in her hand so that we may have means to quench our thirst on the way.

But what will be done with the keg of cider ?

What indeed ! why Big Nancy will carry it of course."

Nor was this all. It was not uncommon to see Nancy yoked to a hand-cart, laden with provisions for the supply of persons working in the suburbs of the town. Such labor she seemed as willing to execute as any other of a lighter kind.

No one appeared to sympathize with this human slave ; excepting poor women occasionally who said words of commendation or pity in exchange for her help. Nature had made her hideous, and many imagined that this was a clear passport towards the withdrawal of all those tender feelings and acts which make life in society, pleasant for most people.

It was supposed, indeed, that she did not understand the difference between praises and censures, for she laughed equally at both.

Seeing the extent of her great strength, her acquaintances imagined it would be preposterous to pity her for weaknesses. As she always relieved the distresses of others she did not need

assistance for herself; but like a god was sufficiently endowed to make her condition eternally independent.

Whatever her own reflections were regarding human kindness and the like, none knew.

Young and old, rich and poor flattered themselves with the hope of one day reaching a happy period in this world; Nancy never: for during holidays and seasons of amusement she had most work to perform. Rest and peace came to all in some shape; but to Nancy appeared only unrelenting hardship!

No vision of human benevolence ever appeared to the instincts of her soul. No feeling such as is begotten in the heart by the charity of others, ever made itself conscious above the darkness of her intelligence.

She stood alone, like a rock in the midst of the sea, buffeted on all sides by tides or waves or winds.

Like the eternal clatter of a mill-wheel or the never-ceasing roar of a waterfall, she manifested her power before the whole community without cessation.

It is singular how unwritten law exercised by unseen power, sometimes, aye, indeed, always, finds a means of being equitable to the unfortunate.

Nancy was denied a place in society; but the Infinite raised her into the region of the great and good. What the people despised they were forced to admire.

That which they oppressed with the burden of many tribulations was at the same time founding a fame which would outlive all others in the community.

Individuals of all classes placed Nancy in a line with the institutions of the town. Strangers on inquiry found that the people recognized three institutions of learning, one orphanage, a county hospital, a jail, a court-house, a custom-house, a post-office, two newspapers, ninety-nine saloons, three idiots roaming at large who amused the inhabitants, a little blind woman, a denizen of the bridge and Big Nancy.

Many a town, of larger proportions would be glad to boast of being so well provided in these acquisitions.

As a matter of course there were a number of second-rate celebrities, persons, for instance, believing themselves of great consequence but in reality were of no consequence whatever; others who attempted to acquire fame from having acquaintances living in the capital; the gentry who owned property in the district, the small-minded shop-keepers and a few office-holders; but Nancy's record appeared far above any of these.

Although Nancy had attained the age of thirty-two, at the time of her introduction in these pages, there was no incident of her life so momentous as the finding of Zanthon. It awoke a train of feelings to which she was before a stranger. No doubt, there was a terrible disturbance in her mind to come at a clear understanding as to what some of these feelings meant, but she finally concluded that to feed this homeless child with a portion of the food which she earned daily, would be meritorious and make her feel happier than she had been heretofore.

The very resolution, even before the execution of the deed gave out an earnest of what might result from it; for it infused a kind of peculiar light into her eyes that indicated gladness of the heart. This occurred while she was engaged in dusting and arranging the grand seats in the church. When the work was finished, she re-entered the sacristy, invested herself with divers handkerchiefs to conceal her head and neck; and finally having drawn a shawl over all, lead Zanthon out into the gray light of the morning, carefully locking the door behind her.

After leaving the church grounds, Nancy and Zanthon directed their steps towards the south bridge; the one, indeed, over which May had passed, on a former occasion; but as it was early, there were no persons walking there; not even the little old woman who used to beg for one cent coins.

Although the boy was far from being fully refreshed, yet the pure air revived him considerably; besides he was supported by the strong arm of his new friend.

Everything appeared so strange and agreeable, that the terrors of the previous night which still exercised a depressing influence over him, gave way to pleasure.

He stood for a few minutes with the woman, on the center of the bridge to gaze admiringly into the valley of the north.

They saw the woodland in the distance, the placidity of the water; the lordly castle of Dawnford and the blue sky, as if breaking through the clouds, to assist the powers in decorating the day for those who loved the study of celestial things.

Nancy wondered why Zanthon seemed to admire a prospect she had never examined so long before, not thinking it worthy of notice; but concluded it must be on account of his being specially endowed by heaven, where his parents now resided.

From the bridge they walked into the town.

The first street, of course called Bridge street was narrow and crooked, the houses on either side irregular in height and far from prepossessing. The lower story of each house contained a shop or store fronting on the street where dealers in soup, boiled meat, bread, and various other articles of food or drink, catered to the wants of the country people especially on market days.

Nancy, glancing along the line of these stores observed that the bakery was open and thither she directed her steps. In the meantime she took from her bosom a small roll of cloth tied with a piece of tape. As this was unwound or opened, it revealed at every turn a pocket or purse suitable for holding money or notes.

It was quite fashionable during the period of which we write, and this one had been given to Nancy as a gift.

As Zanthon had heard the woman say she possessed money, he became very much interested in beholding the formidable receptacle for it which she held in her hand, imagining her wealth to be considerable.

"Is this where you have your money, Nancy?" inquired Zanthon as she held up the curious device before his admiring gaze.

The woman nodded her head to express assent, grunting, "hem; hem!"

Then Nancy invited the boy to search the first pocket and see what he could find.

He did so; but it was empty.

"This is like a lottery," he said, "where most people get disappointed."

Nancy smiled good-humoredly and inserting her hand into the last pocket of the series drew from it a single copper coin of the value of one cent, saying as she held it up before the boy's face:—

"I ha' money!"

"Is that all you have?" said Zanthon, utterly confounded by the woman's simplicity and ignorance of pecuniary gain.

To which Nancy promptly replied:

"That's all baby; ain't it enough?"

Then they entered the shop of the baker.

Nancy asked for one cent's worth of bread as she deposited the coin on the counter; and the man reaching to the shelf behind him, took down a loaf and taking up a large knife prepared to cut off the required quantity.

Before doing so, however, remarking the extraordinary contrast existing between the boy and the woman, whom he knew very well and having at all other times seen her alone, said:—

"I never thought you had any in family, Nancy?"

"I ha' family *now*," replied the woman.

"You don't mean to tell me," returned the man boldly, "that this boy is yours?"

"He's mine. I whound him," she replied.

"Did you find him in the usual way, my good woman?" retorted the man, fiercely drawing the knife across the loaf severing at one stroke, the part required.

"The us'al way?" inquired Nancy in a high tone; but not comprehending the significance of the expression, picked up the bread from the counter and giving it to Zanthon said:—

"Here baby, he's breakwast," then taking him by the hand they passed into the street together.

It is not known how long Nancy had held the coin in her pocket. It is certain she attached very much value to its possession; and that she voluntarily gave it up to relieve the distress of a half-starved boy, showed the greatness of her sympathetic nature. Indeed, this act coming from one in the lowest class of human life, would have done honor to a god.

CHAPTER XXI.

SWEETNESS AND BITTERNESS.

THE bread given to Zanthon by Big Nancy had been taken from the oven about midnight. Fresh and palatable it emitted that rich flavor peculiar to bread made by efficient workmen.

To the senses of the boy it was delicious.

It filled the whole atmosphere around him with an odor whose delicacy and sweetness appeared to equal the accumulated perfumes of all the flowers he had ever seen congregated in one place.

His limbs grew weak beneath him with excessive pleasure. He thought for an instant, this place might be the land lying near the entrance to the abode of the blessed, or at least to the far-famed domains of the rich.

Never before did he taste food having such extraordinary virtues as this seemed to possess.

He was almost intoxicated with the liquid which came into his mouth while eating the bread, as it resembled a sweet principle of honey, irresistible in its power to charm the human heart.

At this stage of his entertainment tears filled his eyes. Every crumb was as precious to him as if it were a diamond.

Ah! if he had his sister or his father now by his side, how eloquent he might become while praising the newly discovered joy pervading his being.

He did not eat fast; such action would terminate too abruptly his immense gratification; but he held the bread up occa-

sionally, before his face twisting it in the air in order to obtain a view of its appearance in several positions, before venturing to snatch another mouthful.

Nancy viewed all these antics of the boy with infinite delight.

This, her first independent effort to perform a magnanimous act was so successful that her pleasure deprived her of the power of speech.

She could only produce extravagant sounds resembling the grunting and snorting of some of the lower animals.

Like an imperfect geyser, she bubbled from the effects of internal commotion, making it appear probable that she might burst at any moment.

If the value of the copper coin was held to be great the pleasure derived from its investment, in the manner herein described more than compensated the woman for its loss; nay she would not have exchanged the sensation with which she was now imbued, for a thousand such coins. To be the owner of such a boy as baby, she thought, would make her happier than the richest woman in the land.

Every movement made by Zanthon caused a continuation of Nancy's mirth, and when he finally exclaimed: —

"Oh, Nancy, did this bread come from heaven?" she stood on the sidewalk and pressing her immense hands down upon her sides laughed outright until tears filled her eyes and her face presented a fearful picture of contortion. Then as the boy continued to wonder and look in her direction as if expecting an answer to a plain question, she answered: —

"Noo, baby, fran the baker."

She was positive in believing that no quibble could intervene between her and *this* truth at least, knowing how recently she had made the purchase.

Zanthon then knew that his companion's knowledge of abstruse questions was very limited and that, hereafter such information as he might require must be obtained from other

sources, besides his own researches backed by the memory of all he had heard from his father.

The route pursued by Nancy and the boy was along the principal street in the center of the town which they entered soon after leaving the baker-shop. Here the houses on each side were handsome structures of cut stone, three stories in height, besides having basements with elaborate grating to admit light from the street above.

The side-walks were covered with broad stone flags, the roadway thoroughly macadamized and altogether it was the finest place of its kind Zanthon ever beheld.

They had come this way in order to afford the boy an opportunity of seeing something that would astonish him, before proceeding to the place where Nancy worked, for she had no home.

It must not be supposed there was much time lost in this divergence from the direct road. The woman kept moving as if impelled by a secret motive power.

From the moment they left the cathedral their journey was rapid and continuous excepting the period spent on the bridge and in the bakery, although it did not feel distressing to the boy, on account of the entertainment afforded him along the way.

The internal monitor which was trifling with Nancy's mind and predominating menacingly over her newly found pleasure was, work.

"How dare she be away from her work!"

When this idea gained full possession of her thoughts, she began to exercise her arms by swinging them by her sides, to accelerate motion onward. It was while they were walking in the grand street and Zanthon enjoying himself, that this dire reflection came uppermost in the woman.

No doubt the person for whom she worked on that particular day was also reflected on her mental vision, and induced her to cut short the enjoyable perambulation she had ventured to take.

At the end of the street there was a road to the right, down which they sped to the lower bridge over the river. Having crossed this bridge, Nancy lead the way through a path from the main road into a large open space lying adjacent to the cathedral ground, and indeed not far from the point from which they had started in the early morning.

Here they discerned a house located against the boundary wall resembling a shed for the keeping of cattle, although otherwise it appeared suitable enough, being clean and commodious. As it had been built by the voluntary contributions of the poorest class of the people for the poorest office-holder, namely, the parish sexton or clerk, the architectural design proved to be of the plainest kind. Indeed, when the fact became known, no one seemed surprised at the angular and ungainly spectacle presented by it.

At the time we speak of, the sexton was absent from his home engaged in looking after some young cattle, which he had placed on pasture near the mountain, and in which he speculated, in order to increase his little store of worldly means. In the meantime, Nancy was employed to perform a portion of his duties in the church and assist his wife in such other labor as the needs of the household demanded. Thus it came about that Zanthon was discovered by Nancy on the steps of the sanctuary, a circumstance that tended, no doubt, to shape his future career. It did not lighten the woman's labor, however, to be left alone with the sexton's wife. Ordinarily, indeed, such a situation would insure for her extra food, and a larger share of pleasant words than she was accustomed to receive ; but in the present case, *she* had to be the magnanimous party and patiently bear her employer's tirade of abusive speech.

The sexton's wife was a scold ; not an individual of that class with medium ability, but one rising to the supreme height of chief in the generation surrounding her. Nature, no doubt, was partly responsible for this condition of the woman in con-

centrating too many virulent principles in one person, instead of extending them over a larger field of human energy.

Besides this she was childless. It is well known the average scold has intervals of peace in which she attempts reconciliation with those whose feelings she abused during the periods of passion; but the woman here described never sought any other than a hostile mood, or knew of any term of warfare so well suited to her intentions as "no quarter." There was an eternal scowl on her features which abated not even in sleep; and her tongue clattered like a mill-wheel from sunrise to sunset.

The tone of her voice was sharp and high, varied occasionally by derisive laughter and interrogative exclamations.

Through the gamut of sounds she ran with the ease of a vocalist, while sarcasm flew from her mouth like a shower of sparks from a blacksmith's anvil.

She would delight an elocutionist, at a distance of course, or an actor intent on studying emphasis and significant gesture, indicating hostility.

She opposed every proposition made in her presence, on principle. In this way, habit, aided by the predisposition of her mind, impelled her finally to wage war against the human race, notwithstanding that she had many friends who forgave her on account of what they called her failings.

This virago was about the medium height, sharp featured, with a skeleton frame, dark hair, dark skin and bloodshot eyes, which emitted from the iris a peculiar expression or appearance, terrible to behold. It meant fight from the first encounter.

The powers concerned in producing speech in her were immense; she never tired of scolding.

If alone, as was frequently the case, she went abroad and attacked the horses, cows, pigs and chickens in the neighborhood of her house. Should they neglect to show a sufficient interest in her remarks, she usually forced them to begin a

retreat by an attack upon their main position with the broom handle or rocks gathered hastily at the scene of action.

These movements were supplemented by appropriate expressions rich in sarcastic denunciation.

On the occasions here referred to, the most satisfactory engagement usually occurred with the pig, whose uncouth body lay at ease in the sunshine before the door. Upon the completion of a sentence by the woman, the pig gave a responsive grunt, which conveyed to the speaker's mind the idea that the lower animal understood the purport of the language and dissented from its conclusions totally.

This imaginary insult on the woman's judgment increased her wrath ; but as the pig still kept up its side of the quarrel by the process of grunting, there appeared to be no other remedy than to seize a club and belabor the unfortunate beast, until with many extravagant sounds and puffs of excited breath, it made its escape to more congenial quarters.

The character of the reception awaiting her was fully understood by Nancy. When she rounded the corner of the bridge, and saw in the distance the woman standing in the door-way watching her, she felt that there was a stormy time approaching.

A new idea came to her at this juncture ; could she save the boy while herself underwent punishment ? For if she who was so large and strong trembled in the presence of the sexton's wife, what would become of baby ? No doubt one well rounded sentence from the lips of the scold would deprive him of speech, aye, perhaps of energy !

In this manner Zanthon's protector pursued her reflections philosophically, as it were, for the benefit of her newly-found treasure, but at the same time felt she had undertaken a task more difficult to perform than at first anticipated.

Oh, how grand it would be, if she were powerful !

She did not seek such distinction for herself, but for Zanthon on whom she had already spent her copper coin, the saving of a decade of years.

Notwithstanding the critical situation now before her she resolved to employ a stratagem which experience taught her would prove successful if wisely handled. She would suggest cruel treatment for the boy, knowing the temper of the woman would impel her to take the opposite course and thus effect what she, Nancy, most desired.

With this plan in view she advanced boldly up to the woman after having told Zanthon to remain outside while she entered the house amid a storm of invective. The sexton's wife closely following at her heels began her admonition in tones far from being friendly, she said :

"I did not think, indeed, that a person as old as you would go into the street gadding so early in the morning. You ought to be ashamed of yourself ; a big hulk like you would be better over a washtub.

My stars ! to think of it makes one forget themselves. You idle vagabone ; and I waiting for you until my eyesight is beginning to fail me ; but of course what did *you* care, you evil-minded romp you."

Nancy made no reply to this ; but began undoing the handkerchiefs about her neck and shoulders before going to work. The woman continued :

"I told you to come back at once. What were you doing in the town ?" here the woman held up her clenched fist in Nancy's face ; while she resumed :

"This is a nice how-do-you-do, to let the whole morning go and not a turn of work done to them clothes, let alone the scutching and the bleach. I'm robbed, I'm imposed upon. There isn't a woman in the world so much abused as I am, by idle skivers that ar'n't content until they waltz into the streets to show themselves off.

If it could do them any good, it would be the less matter, the fagots ! but how could good come out of idleness ? Tell me that, you jade ? You thought maybe you could carry on your sport at my expense without being found out. Oh, you hector !

It is always the way honest people are treated by know-nothings and do-nothings." Nancy was still silent ; but making all haste to begin washing. The woman went on :

" Why don't you answer me ? Why don't you talk to me ? Are you going to carry your spite into my house and before my face and then expect me to be merciful ? If you were afraid that I'd tramp you, soul and body, under my feet you'd treat me better than you do. *That's* what I get for my pains in bringing you here, you sulky thing ; but I won't forget it to you ; mind *that*, *I'll* remember when you think I don't.

Where did you get that brat of a boy I saw with you ?"

" In no place. You won't a let him in," said Nancy, boldly looking the woman full in the face.

" Oh, merciful heaven, do you hear her ?" exclaimed the woman raising her hands and eyes upward.

" She tries to malign me in the open day ; and at my own fireside. When did I say I would not let him in, you beast ? When did I say it, I ask you ? " she continued, raising her voice into a shriek and shaking her fist in Nancy's face ; then proceeding to the door she called in a sharp voice to the boy : —

" Why don't you come in here ? Who is keeping you out ? Did I say you should not come in ? "

" You did not," replied Zanthon, turning up his sad face to meet the gaze of the woman, and smiled faintly while his lustrous eyes shone with peculiar brilliancy and beauty.

The prompt answer of the boy, his calm demeanor, the physical signs of superior breeding which he exhibited, and the high degree of intelligence associated with his manner of conducting himself awed the scold into silence. The phenomenon resembled the calmness of the tempestuous sea by the Supreme Will. Great Nature scored a point in its own favor. An unwritten law came forth to show its power before ignorant people even without the aid of an interpreter.

Nancy never knew this woman to have been similarly affected by any person or circumstance before ; as the scold

actually stroked the boy's hair with her hand and gazed at him intently as if disposed to come on terms of peace and friendship. Being a married woman without children, as has been said, Nancy began to fear she might make an effort to claim the ownership of the boy and thus defeat her own calculations. In the meantime the woman went into an adjoining room while the other pursued her reflections.

The triumph of securing the admission of Zanthon to the house had been skillfully managed.

Was it right or wrong? She didn't know.

The woman soon returned and in an unusually quiet voice demanded an account of the manner of meeting Zanthon, which Nancy gave in detail as best she could.

When the history was completed the woman did not appear to attach much importance to it; especially disregarding all superstitious opinions which might be referred to as indicating the exercise of superhuman power in his behalf. Similar circumstances as those which surrounded him, she said, were liable to occur at any time with the distress now prevailing in the country, although it was getting less gradually; and boys or girls were gathered in at all points who had been left wholly destitute.

When Nancy intimated her desire to maintain the boy on the food saved from her meals, the woman gave one of those derisive laughs peculiar to her.

"The boy will earn his own bread," she said sternly. Nancy did not understand how one so young could do this; besides, she thought, in her simplicity, if she volunteered to procure him support it should not concern anybody else.

The woman, however, explained on the general principles that everyone must do something to maintain themselves sooner or later; and hence it would be wiser on the part of those interested in the boy to begin at once rather than indulge him in idleness.

To this proposition Nancy readily agreed, as the woman's influence poor as it was might help her in laying plans for his future benefit.

Moreover, the boy was invited to remain in his present quarters until further provision would be made for him by his friends; but now a new difficulty arose in Nancy's mind.

How could she overcome the prejudices and objections of the *man* in regard to baby?

By a master stroke of ingenuity, she had won his way into the good opinion, perhaps even the affection, of a woman almost outside the reach of human sympathy, but the *man*, the husband, the superintendent of everything around these precincts, could not be turned by such a trick. *He* was pious, learned perhaps, skilled in all the ways of great men about town; and frequently held discussions with them on the problems of the times. Nancy could never hope to defeat *him*.

She would not attempt it. One wave of his hand, one lofty movement of his head, one fiery look from his red eye, would lay her project in the dust forever. It would be as absurd for her to speak in his presence, touching the subject at issue, as to attempt to fly to the moon. He would be at home, too, perhaps, this very night and change the whole aspect of her arrangements.

When Nancy expressed her fears on these points, the woman arose in a towering passion. Whether it was the mention of her husband's name which recalled past difficulties with him, or some other cause, was not known; but she stormed around the house like a hurricane.

"Figbit to turn out the boy!" she said. "Why, you fool, if he dares to do *that* against me, I'll brain him with the smoothing iron. I'm poor enough and bad enough to stay here in this dark corner of a hole in the wall, and be called Mrs. Figbit, if you please, as if I cared a button for it, or that it made my place any better; but while I have life, I'll hold my head up without flinching. I'll keep my side of the fire free to myself, see if I don't.

I'll make people know that there is a woman around who will not budge an inch.

When I was a girl I could be married well to a man that was good to look at, and had plenty at his back.

I'm sure he would not have me in a house like this if I joined him. I was a fool then, but I am not a fool *now*. Anyone who thinks in that way won't get along with *me*.

If I'm put upon, I'll resent it. Figbit thinks he knows everything. I would not give a fig for what he knows.

Let him lay a wet finger on the boy, and he will find to his sorrow, I'll make him kneel down and pray for a better conscience.

Don't doubt me in the least. Don't say I wouldn't do it. Why, you trollop, I'd scald him with the boiling water. I'd scorch the beard off his face. I'd pull his eyes out!"

Zanthon heard all this with great concern.

He was terrorized.

The sudden presentation of a contrast so conspicuous as that which existed between his old home and this one, smote him to the heart.

Motionless, like a petrified body, he sat gazing into vacuity, his breathing only showing that he lived. Was the world which he had so eagerly sought to discover no better than this? Where were its chosen bands of civilized men and women who followed great principles for the love of good? Where the fame and fortune which his new position would surely bring?

A few minutes ago he believed Nancy to be the most powerful individual on earth; now she was as nothing before the fiery visage and emphatic language of Mrs. Figbit. Her utter helplessness became apparent by her silence and the manner of hiding her head in the darkest corner of the house whenever she had a chance of so doing.

It was quite apparent he could not calculate on receiving much protection through Nancy's influence; yet it was too soon to complain, for nobody had been unkind to him, or denied him shelter.

If the prospect appeared gloomy in the world at its best, as he then saw it, how would he feel when Figbit came into collision with those who promised to be his friends, and by one powerful movement overthrow their universal efforts in his behalf?

Aye, indeed; then there would be ample cause for grief.



CHAPTER XXII.

FIGBIT.

IF the necessity did not arise of describing minutely all the incidents directly connected with the story of Zanthon, the character of Figbit would have remained a blank.

The few remarkable circumstances or occurrences in his life would not be sufficient to induce the historian to enroll his name on the pages of history; because, if they were not such as did not come into the life of every man one time or another they were, as a whole, insignificant. His marriage to a woman who proved to be a scold did not entitle him to notice.

Attachment to the church, as an employe, might or might not prove a religious disposition in him; while his trading in cattle indicated the selfishness quite common, and perhaps quite necessary in the world. No man could be plainer or *duller* than Figbit; that is, outside the duties he was engaged to perform.

He could no more be induced to examine a new invention or consider the merits of a proposition having the progress of the human race as a consequence or result, than drown himself. He believed the march of time had no more to give, and felt a pride in his steadfast adhesion to the narrow-mindedness of reducing the supreme plan of the universe to a few facts long ago discovered by himself.

Beyond these all was nothing or silence.

At one time he contemplated becoming a religious devotee; not that he was really religious; because no man can be really

religious who is not really just; but the religious character afforded him peace as well as protection from interference by persons of more worldly ways.

Lashed, however, into fury occasionally by his wife's tongue, at his own fireside, the pursuit of religion as a panacea became singularly deficient, and gradually his secret purposes changed.

He became a doubter in things heretofore believed as orthodox truths; and also resolved to resist his companion's furious attacks.

He would invite her anger in various ways so as to produce fits of excitement which would undermine her health. In the estimation of the world he was safe, being regarded an exemplary man; and whatever treatment he gave Mrs. Figbit would remain a secret or pass without comment.

Physically Figbit was about the medium height, light complexion, light hair and limped slightly when walking. He was middle aged.

The first day of Zanthon's appearance in the new world was eventful, as exhibiting human life to him under peculiarly adverse phases; but the climax was yet to come; although the sun had set and the twilight appeared wholly eradicated by the darkness of night.

During the day Nancy aided by Mrs. Figbit had used many remedies to restore the boy to full vigor. She bathed his feet and hands, fed him carefully, arranged his clothing and finally placed him on a large seat near the fire, where he fell asleep.

When her day's work was completed Nancy left the house for the purpose of attending to an engagement in a distant part of the town involving a few hours' labor. She would return in the morning if not sooner. In the mean time Zanthon might rest without interruption.

The charity of Mrs. Figbit's heart was instrumental in producing profound peace within the house; for she was loth to disturb the boy while sleeping. This condition was so strangely beneficial to her that her thoughts pursued a healthful train

almost without an effort for several hours. Nor did her happiness cease when Zanthon awoke; for he entertained her with stories of what he had seen and words of wisdom.

In the midst of these symptoms of joy Figbit returned; and like the snapping of a chord which produced a few musical sounds under great tension, his wife set aside her well-meant reflections and prepared for war.

The purport of her husband's words, however, on entering was not by any means of a hostile nature. Without being lovingly demonstrative, they were kindly spoken, to which suitable replies were given in a like spirit; but when the man turned towards his favorite seat by the fire and beheld it was occupied his demeanor suddenly changed.

Without ceremony he laid his hand rudely and heavily on the object under observation, crying out in a loud voice: —

"Who have we here?"

Zanthon sprang to his feet in an instant and stood trembling with fear unable to determine what course to pursue. Mrs. Figbit interposed:

"This is a poor boy; a friend of Big Nancy," she said.

"I do not care whose friend he is," returned the man sulkily.

"I let him in as an act of charity, thinking it might do us some good," said his wife.

"We do so little of it," she resumed, "that I imagined this once might pass without anybody stopping me. As bad as I am I have some pity left."

The man gave a light laugh. "It is late to begin *now*," he returned with emphasis. "Perhaps you intend to imitate *me*; and appear to the world clothed in the unction of piety?"

"Oh," replied the woman, "I could not be like you in that way, let me do my best or worst."

The man smarted under this retort.

"The boy must leave here," he began.

"To-night?"

"Aye, now."

"But it is dark and he is a stranger in the place."

"What is that to me?"

"He is alone and not well able to make his own way."

"There are thousands like him."

"The poor child will perish."

"Let him."

The woman gave a derisive shout, intended probably as a commentary on the man's cruel nature. "Have I not some voice in this house man?" she said.

"Faith, ma'am, you have more voice, I am sorry to say, than I ever bargained for. It is your voice that prevails here from sunrise to sunset. I am very willing to agree with you *there*."

Mrs. Figbit felt she was losing ground. This half-temporizing method, she thought, would never succeed. She must be bold in the defense of her rights or nothing. Moving suddenly between the man and the boy she resumed with her arms akimbo: —

"I will keep him here to-night, in spite of you."

This defiance thoroughly roused the savage nature in the man. Without further delay, he pushed the woman aside, seized Zanthon by the back, and hurrying to the door, threw him bodily into the street!

Zanthon gave a cry of pain, which, singularly enough was imitated by Figbit. The woman on hearing it believed her husband was adding insult to injury by endeavoring in this way to ridicule the boy's helplessness.

It soon became apparent however that Figbit was stricken with some dire calamity; and that his exclamation proceeded from real suffering.

At the moment of perpetrating the cruelty on Zanthon he felt a fearful pain in his left breast which compelled him to clutch the clothing above it with his right hand and stagger backward towards a seat into which he fell heavily. It was observed too that his face was deadly pale and that he bit his under lip, like a person afflicted with excrutiating torments.

On account of this new feature in the proceedings the woman was undetermined as to the proper course to pursue; whether conciliation or hostility. Therefore an interval of silence prevailed.

It was short, however, for the man began to moan fearfully, to which the woman replied:

"You see now what it is to injure the innocent. I'd never do *that*. I scold, I barge, I bellarag; but I never hurt an innocent person, much less a child. I haven't that to answer for."

"I am afraid," said the man, quite meekly, "I hurt myself seriously in handling that boy. There is a pain in the neighborhood of my heart, as if there was a blood-vessel burst there. If it don't stop I'll die."

"It is consoling to reflect that you are *prepared*," returned the wife, half seriously, although there might be detected some sarcasm in her voice. She continued: "You are always prepared. I am never. Therefore, if death comes now, he gets the right one."

The man gave a derisive groan very much resembling a howl of some wild beast caught in a trap; but without replying to her observations, he inquired:

"Where is Nancy?"

"She is working in the other end of the town?"

"The boy; perhaps the boy—"

She did not permit the man to finish the sentence.

"Oh! no; the boy will give you no help. He may be dead now for all you know or care."

"He might be able to go for the doctor."

The woman laughed hysterically while she continued:

"You're a smart one. If you were not careful for others' sake, why not for your own. You attempted to destroy what you now find would serve your purpose; like a man who blows up the bridge by which his own friends were to escape. No; when you threw him into the street you did not ask yourself who would bring a doctor to *him*."

The hardened nature of the man remained untouched and kept him silent. Still his trouble increased. Finally he began shouting:

"Bring me a doctor! Bring me a doctor! Doctor! Doctor!" until the uproar frightened the woman. Hastily procuring her shawl, she determined to comply with his wishes and carry the message to the doctor herself; but before leaving she asked him impressively:

"Will you not send for the—"

The last word was lost in a hoarse cough of the man as he resumed speaking:

"No! no! no! I want my life saved. I want to live. What is the good of my money, you fool, if I cannot be spared to spend it? I will not die yet. I am not going to die, mind you I am *not* prepared. Oh, no! I am not ready to meet God. It will be a long time before I need the last rites.

You are thinking of death for me, but you will be balked this time, mind you.

Doctor! Doctor! Won't some one hurry for the doctor!"

With this torrent of words ringing in her ears, the woman left the house to summon assistance, while the man remained alone in silence and darkness.

His fight with the dread destroyer was terrific. With no one to console him or witness his departure, the thoughts which crowded over his spirit immediately before the setting in of unconsciousness were doubtless varied and extraordinary.

From the seat he fell to the floor, as if it became necessary to have a straight struggle in the grasp of death through the length and breadth of his home before quitting it forever.

When the doctor and other persons summoned by Mrs. Figbit arrived, they found him dead. He was coiled up in one of the corners of the principal apartment, his eyes staring, his face contorted, and his limbs bent as if he had been run through the machinery of a mill.

The surprise of Nancy on her return to the house about two or three hours later was indescribable.

Such vast changes and hubbub as met her on all sides, and enacted, too, within so small a compass of time were never before witnessed.

Zanthon lost; Figbit dead; a crowd of eager spectators in every part of Mrs. Figbit's dwelling, sneezing, coughing, talking, jostling each other in the doorways, as new-comers went in and old ones came out, some stopping directly in the passages to expatiate on the uncertainty of life and the suddenness of Figbit's taking off.

Of course, the news of his distress and death went through the town like the sound of a thunder-clap.

The doctor, too, was there, diminutive in person, red-faced and tremulous; having two bends in his right leg, one above and the other below the knee. A pompous man withal, and apparently very learned; for without hesitation or fear of contradiction, he pronounced the cause of death to be "endocarditis," or inflammation of the interior lining of the heart.

The blow from the Superior power had gone home!

The space in front of the cottage, dark and threatening at that hour, was relieved by lanterns in the hands of excited men and women, who moved about through it like fireflies intent on examining the precincts of their homes; and from the lanes of adjacent grounds could be heard the whistling of boys as well as the loud question and answer of men in parley, so that altogether it appeared to Nancy's mind as if the whole world was shaken to its very center by this woful event.

When duty, so-called, and curiosity were fully satisfied and the people returned to their homes, Nancy began work. So pressing was the necessity for it, that with all her concern for Zanthon she could not go out to look for him.

Mrs. Figbit, however, quieted her fears by assuring her of his safety; for she had commissioned some boys and grown persons to find him that night or in the morning, and bring

him back; so she was sure it would be done as she had requested.

Nancy worked through the entire night.

Figbit's remains were decently cared for, the interior of the dwelling being also arranged in holiday order for the reception of visitors.

On account of the importance of his position while living, it was determined to have the body in death laid in the church two or three hours before burial and the usual services performed there, so as to exhibit a high appreciation for his memory.

In those days the news, as well as public opinion generally, was retailed on the street corners instead of morning papers, in such towns as the one noticed in these pages; and on the occasion now referred to men appeared to think that the world suffered a great loss by the death of Figbit. His place could not well be filled, nor the sanctity of his character imitated. His disappearance was equivalent to a public calamity!

The superstitious and the envious, however, who disputed such favorable comments on the life of a public functionary, acquired additional ground for their critical opinions through a circumstance which occurred *in* the church where Figbit lay in state.

When the services for the deceased were at their height and the people, in number almost a concourse, with bent heads were praying that his soul might rest in peace, the coffin burst with a tremendous noise, as if it had been cleft by a cannon ball.

This gave rise to a great commotion. Weak-minded people rushed precipitately from the place, and stopped not until they entered their own houses. Many women fainted, and some men attempted exit from the church over the shoulders of the congregation.

To allay the terrors of the occasion, one of the chiefs of the religious order offered an opinion to the effect that the explosion

was due to gas, which accumulated in the coffin, and finally burst it; the undertaker having neglected to provide for its escape.

On this hypothesis Figbit was again closed up in his coffin and hastened to his grave, where it was hoped he would make no more disturbance.

In regard to Zanthon, Mrs. Figbit's friends found him in the doorway of an adjoining street where he had taken refuge. He was brought back soon after Figbit's removal to the church, and made comfortable. Of course, his reappearance was a source of great joy to his friends.

In Nancy's description of the scene in the church which she gave to Zanthon was an item more remarkable than all the others together. She asserted that when the coffin burst she heard a strange laugh in the air; and at the same time the wind blew open a side door and raised a cloud of dust around the platform on which the remains of Figbit rested.

She was certain regarding the laugh, for quite a number of persons suddenly turned their heads in the direction from whence it proceeded, as if to inquire its nature and origin; however, as no one else could remember having heard such a noise, or if they had, did not attach any particular importance to it, believing it might have proceeded from some boys or foolish people in the church, the matter was discredited; but Nancy shook her head solemnly, and taking Mrs. Figbit into a corner of the house, told her something in an undertone of voice, which nobody else could hear, but which had reference to her belief in a supernatural protection accorded Zanthon by some mysterious agencies!

When all the difficulties arising out of the death of Figbit were settled, Nancy began to imagine it possible she could secure a quiet home for Zanthon with Mrs. Figbit, as that lady had shown such interest in his welfare; but her castle building was doomed to destruction on receiving the information that the house must be vacated immediately to make room for the

family of the new incumbent, whose appointment was confirmed on the very date of the dead man's interment.

The change would take place as soon as a wagon could be employed to convey the effects of Mrs. Figbit to hired quarters in the town, whence she would go to live with a near relative in a distant part of the country as soon as all her husband's effects could be converted into cash, or disposed of in the manner prescribed by law.

Zanthon, however, would not be forgotten. The situation Mrs. Figbit contemplated procuring for him, whereby he might earn his own support, was available.

There was a man named Ben Razzo living near the seacoast who wanted a boy, and hearing through Mrs. Figbit's friends of Zanthon's destitution, requested to have him sent to his place immediately.

"What can you do, baby?" Mrs. Figbit asked in one of her variable moods, while the new situation was being discussed.

"I could call a dog or ride on an ass," replied the boy seriously.

In spite of the shadow of their troubles, Nancy and Mrs. Figbit burst into laughter; the latter continued:

"You must polish boots, sweep the floors, wash pots, learn to cook, build fires and do everything. It won't do to be lazy. You will have to move around quite smart, and do things as will be wanted."

"Will there be boys?" asked Zanthon.

"No; only a man. Boys may be seen outside, but it will be best, perhaps, to keep away from them."

"I like boys to play with," returned Zanthon.

"Ha! you must not be caught playing. Playing is idling."

"Oh! but I must play sometime; I must play sometime," repeated the boy, full of wonder at what the woman had said.

"Not while you are in service," returned Mrs. Figbit. "Rich people's children may play, but you won't have time. There will be always work to do and you must do it."

"Will I never get away from the work?" inquired Zanthon, anxious to know at once the limits of his future servitude.

"Never!" answered the woman, with emphasis, fully convinced of the truth of her reply; and she continued:

"Where would you go? What could you do otherwise? You have no money, no relations, no houses, or land, no anything."

"I have Nancy," said Zanthon, emphatically.

Nancy on hearing this was wild with joy; she laughed hysterically, and kissing Zanthon on the cheek, said:

"That's me good baby."

If Nancy had had a sufficient amount of self-will to resist the dictation of Mrs. Figbit at this point in regard to the boy, his future career might have been different; but she knew only to submit; and dependent as she was on the will of others, this submission seemed to her the excellence of life. Hence, she soon reconciled herself to the terms of the proposition of sending Zanthon away.

On the other hand, the boy accepted the new condition of things, with as much faith in its absolute necessity as if it had been prescribed in the book of the Supreme law. He could no more turn aside from it and appeal to some one for aid in order that he might obtain a more favorable means of getting along in the world, than make himself a man before maturity.

The heartlessness of the world, so called, would not hear him effectually, or assist his desires, lest it should be burdened with his troubles. The very fact of Mrs. Figbit's arrangement being perfected with the certainty of success showed she did not anticipate resistance or interference from any one likely to change her plans in the boy's behalf. Her motives, no doubt, were good; indeed, seeing the severity of the times and the helplessness of the people, the interest manifested in the boy's welfare was highly commendable, yet the transition from the happiness of home, to abject slavery, was a terrible infliction on one so young and tender-hearted as Zanthon.

No wonder the father had called aloud for mercy for his son; and nature poised between heaven and earth had stood in awe of the demand, at the memorable conference previously related.

Mrs. Figbit, in order to lighten the sorrow of separation, gave assurances of comfort, independence, and ultimately prosperity to Zanthon, through this method of servitude.

"Baby will get his support at any rate," she said. "To be sure there will be no wages or clothes; but in these hard times people were glad to get a bite to eat with the privilege of working for it."

The final arrangements were then agreed to.

Nancy would accompany Zanthon next morning to the head of the high road leading from the town to the place of his destination which was situated about seven miles distant. Upon his arrival there he was to make inquiry for Seaview, the residence of Ben Razzo, his future master and finally introduce himself to that person as the boy sent by Mrs. Figbit.

Nancy would return to her work; but send occasional messages to Zanthon, and if necessary visit him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A NEW FRIEND.

IT was instructive to see Nancy and Zanthon part. One representing strength the other weakness. The first almost at the top, the second at the bottom of animal force. Two extremes together, and yet powerless to avert separation on account of the dictatorship assumed by Mrs. Figbit over them.

At the head of the road, indicated the previous day, Nancy bade adieu to baby; and with a heavy heart returned to her cheerless drudgery in the town, while Zanthon struck boldly into the broad road before him, intent on the discovery of new scenes.

The features of external nature were there in well defined characters, green meadows, small woods, brooks whose mysterious prattle never ceased, wild flowers, hills and plains and the birds away up in the clear sky singing to the calm beauty of the Supreme Power.

There were not many houses visible, the land on the right being the domain of an aristocrat and on the left those which were seen, had been with few exceptions, deserted.

Zanthon could not resist the influence of nature any more than the brook or the lark. The bitterness of his sorrow gave way to pleasure, allowing his individuality to rise above oppressiveness until he felt himself identical with the spirit manifested in the grandeur of the universe.

Oh, with what profound satisfaction did he lift his eyes to the firmament and behold the glory of the day crowned with infinite azure! where his soul went forth without a shadow of

disturbance or a thought of fear as if it were the home peopled only by his friends.

Before noon he came to see another great spectacle ; the sea spreading out until it joined the heavens on the horizon far, far away ; this was after the route led him through a deep valley and up a steep hill.

Resting by the roadside he beheld the ocean with great wonder and delight. It resembled a continuation of the sky.

If he were in a ship, gliding happily over the surface of this expanse of water, his friends being also with him, he imagined he would accept the situation as the heaven of the just.

How exquisite was its outline !

Aye, mysterious ocean, he thought, what art thou concerned with ? and when will thy placidity pass away under the fiat of universal law ; or art thou eternal ; thy being indestructible ; a witness of the immensity of the power of God !

Between him and the ocean lay a town, Lennabean, not so large as Kindleton, the one he had just left ; but pleasing to the view and quaint. It was a town of the olden times.

This became evident to Zanthon as following the winding highway leading into it he found himself beside some roofless houses whose architecture belonged to a primitive age.

As he advanced he perceived that the streets were narrow and crooked, the houses for the most part old and dilapidated and but little business in progress. Notwithstanding these apparent disqualifications the antiquity of Lennabean made it, if not fascinating, at least, remarkably interesting ; and as it lay on the very bank which was washed by the ocean tide on one side and by rich land on the other, it was after all, a quiet and beautiful place.

It must have been a seaport at one time ; but at present the narrow bay at whose head it was situated was filled with sand, the tide spreading over it to the height of from eight to ten feet.

This bay was but an inlet of a larger one communicating directly with the ocean. All the produce available for ship-

ment in the surrounding country was carried to the larger inland town and exported over the navigable river before referred to while this desolate city lost its trade and prestige, because its inhabitants had not energy enough to clear a deep channel through the sand of their bay for the accommodation of sea-going ships.

The district back of this forlorn town was thinly inhabited, most of the land being held by one or two rich men for grazing stock ; but it was valuable and picturesque. In the suburbs there were some very pretty nooks, meadows and bluffs, which became the resorts of pleasure seekers. The spring water too, excelled in freshness and purity, making superstitious people imagine that a powerful but invisible agent had displayed its privileges by the endowment of these inviting places in the manner described.

Well beaten footpaths led from the road near the town, through the most inviting fields, along the tops of tall green hedges and through ravines hidden from the sun.

The beauty of nature, contrasted with the decay of man's designs as exhibited in the streets of Lennabean, made a wonderfully remarkable picture.

As Zanthon wheeled into the center of the town, for he frequently turned to inspect the view on all sides, its inactivity became very perceptible. It was now noon, yet there were no people on the streets or wagons of any kind, as if they had all gone out to attend a meeting in the woods. A few persons came to the shop doors and looked at him as he turned round and round under the inspiration of the place ; but other than these no signs of life were visible.

When he had examined the prospect carefully and satisfied himself of its features he directed his footsteps to a grocer's shop, the window of which was made conspicuous by red paint, well worn off ; and various articles of merchandise suspended above the door.

Before he had time to make inquiry about his future destination, the grocer, who seemed to have been watching him, said:

"You are the boy expected at Seaview?"

"How in the world did you find that out?" asked Zanthon, very much surprised at the character of the man's remark as showing the knowledge of a fact, he imagined, was known only at the place he had left.

"We know everything here," replied the grocer, "especially the movements of bodies; business being light we can afford to study that part of human life coming within our acquaintance. It is pleasant. Now I have to tell you further, that old Jemmy has been waiting for you. He has just stepped down the street; but will be back soon. He will take you up."

"How did old Jemmy know I was coming?" resumed Zanthon, still anxious to solve the difficulty presented to his mind by such strange information.

"Why how could we miss knowing it," answered the man, "when Mrs. Figbit sent messages to us all, to be on the look out for you; and told old Jemmy, on his life not to forget to be here. Everybody in town knows you already like a book."

"Mrs. Figbit is a wonderful woman," said Zanthon, "and has been very kind to me."

At this the grocer gave a suppressed exclamation resembling the grunt of a hog as he continued: —

"She ought to be a general, or a governor, or maybe a chief of the police forces, or — but see here is old Jemmy at last."

Zanthon looked up and saw coming through the doorway a tall man partly bent by age. He wore a high hat, which from its appearance, must have been in use many years, and a long coat of coarse cloth with capacious pockets; one on each side, the openings being covered with heavy square lapels. The garment was threadbare; but seemed on that account to cling more tenaciously to the body it covered; for the man had it buttoned up in front with such persistence that it fitted him like a glove. His pantaloons were patched in various places

especially at the knees, presenting an incongruous appearance; and his shoes were large, heavy, and it must be added, rent as well, although it was evident that several attempts had been made to renew their strength and usefulness by mending.

Jemmy was about sixty-five years of age at this time; and as there were yet signs of strength in his large frame, it became evident he possessed considerable physical power when in the prime of life. He lived well, or ill as some people would imagine, poverty making for him his bread scanty, and his bed hard.

His cheekbones were large and prominent, his eyes keen. His hands and feet massive instruments of labor. The general expression on his face was not prepossesing, being of a hungry nature, as if he had caught it from a wolf in search of food. The mouth uncommonly large possessed all its teeth with singular regularity; and a slight movement of the under jaws betimes, inspired the beholder with the belief in their owner's capacity for eating a hearty supper. A huge pug nose, the extremity of which inclined to the left side of his face did not improve the expression, but for all that, Jemmy was known to be a very quiet and good natured person.

He wore no beard. The hair on his head was well preserved, tinged with steel gray and worn short.

Jemmy smiled when Zanthon was introduced to him. Then taking the boy by the hand he led him into the street.

"What idea have they in sending you here?" he asked.

"Who?" inquired Zanthon.

"That Figbit woman," replied Jemmy.

"I don't know," answered the boy.

"You never did any work; did you?"

"No."

"Why you are but a child, my son. Your hands and limbs are as soft and tender as a gosling. The nursery would be the proper place for *you*."

"I will do all I can to please everybody."

"Yes, to be sure, my boy; but you cannot groom a horse and clean out a stable before breakfast every morning; however I'll take care of the horse."

While they journeyed through one of the winding streets toward what appeared to be the upper end of town, west from the bay, Zanthon related so much of his history to his new friend, as his instructions from his father permitted; describing also all his experience in the world since meeting Big Nancy.

Jemmy, on his part, endeavored to give Zanthon as much information about his future residence, and in as few words as possible, as the time left them to reach the house, would permit.

Zanthon had heretofore no well defined opinion of the merits or demerits of his master, the place to which he was consigned or the nature of the work he would be called upon to perform. Hence he importuned Jemmy at each stage of their route, as one fully posted in these matters, to tell him all he knew.

Before giving a continuation of Jemmy's discourse we must explain to the reader, that in the country where the scenes of this story were laid, there existed at the time a class of men who held great power over the people on account of the manner of procuring their wealth. They were not landlords nor middlemen, nor squires, nor justices, but Bucks. They made riches off the poor by high rates of usury and by having them work without wages on the understanding that it was their duty to do so for the accommodation rendered them by the Bucks.

For instance a man of this class would purchase a ship-load of guano and let it out to small farmers in quantities to suit them in the spring, charging not only a high price but also high interest; for payment would not be made until the harvest. In the mean time every man who purchased in this way was obliged to work for the usurer; to till his farm, save his hay and even reclaim his waste land without any pecuniary com-

pensation. In this way the lender became very rich, the borrower very poor. As the glory of the one increased, the independence of the other decreased until the wretchedness of some of these people became so woful as to be almost indescribable.

Ben Razzo, to whose house at Seaview in the suburbs of Lennabean Zanthon was now journeying, was a man of this sort; and we may judge in some measure of his local power by the fear with which Jemmy regarded him, and the caution he exercised while instructing the boy in the details of his new station.

"You must find out for yourself the kind of person he is," said the old man. "I cannot tell you."

"And why can't you tell me, Jemmy?" inquired the boy.

"Because I am afraid, and we must bear with everything as it comes. It is the way of the world."

"Do *you* live with him, Jemmy?"

"Well, that is hard to answer, too. I did live with him; that is, I worked about his house and sometimes *in* it; but he wants you now to do the work and let me go."

"What wages was he paying you?"

"Ben Razzo pays no wages to anyone."

"Clothes?"

"Not a stitch, not a rag."

"Did you get good food?"

"Never a bite in six years."

Zanthon caught Jemmy by his long coat and stopped him on the street.

"Tell me all about this place," he said. "It is so strange to me that I do not understand, and I am frightened."

"There is nothing plainer in the world," replied Jemmy. "The people are poor; the parties who tax them are numerous and unrelenting; the sources of income very small; indeed, nothing in the country but a few acres of tillage, and in the town very little wages. Ben Razzo raised himself from poverty to wealth by lending to these poor people. He learned to be close and stingy; hoarded every copper, and he cannot now

depart from the custom because, I believe, it has caught hold of his very soul. I got to work for him by some process of infatuation, like many another man. I thought it would be a great thing to be in Ben Razzo's stable and he in my debt. I got my wish. He favored me for six years, and yet I love to work for him, although I receive nothing in return."

Zanthon meditated for some time on this strange case, and then inquired :

"Why does he think of putting you away, Jemmy ?"

"I don't know. Maybe because he thinks I steal from him ; he is very suspicious ; but for the matter of that there is little to be stolen, not to take into consideration that I have a soul to save as well as himself. Then, perhaps, he believes if I stop with him much longer, I may desire to get something to reward me ; but by putting some one in the place *now* he would not give anything at all. In this way, the old score with me could be settled."

"Had he ever a boy before ?"

"No, you are the first."

"Perhaps he will keep both of us," said Zanthon, earnestly. "I would like very much, Jemmy, for you to be with me."

"He *must* keep us," returned the old man, emphatically. "There is work enough for the two, and as it does not cost him anything for me, he may not complain."

The question of Zanthon's future treatment might appropriately have come up for consideration in this place, if Jemmy had not studiously avoided it, lest the boy should receive impressions before experience taught him, detrimental to the peace of his mind. Besides he favored the boy's inquisitiveness.

"Where do you live ? Have you any home besides Ben Razzo's ?" asked Zanthon.

"I live in an old deserted house near the entrance to Seaview ; but, bless you, boy, I am not always with him. When I do the morning work, I travel. Some people would call it begging, but I get a bite to eat here and there without asking

for it. They all know my circumstances. Ben Razzo is not always at home, either; but when he is there, he sleeps alone in the house."

"And your family," resumed the boy. "Had you ever children and a wife?

"Aye, boy, aye; children and wife are all dead. I have been alone nigh on to twenty years."

"Are you happy, Jemmy?" asked Zanthon, looking up into the old man's face.

"Ah! my son, I could not tell you. Happiness beyond the grave is promised to those who suffer patiently the trials of this life; and such happiness I expect to receive, for surely I have been patient; but as to the world," said the man, raising his head and gazing into vacancy with sorrow depicted on every lineament of his features, "I could never see where it came in."

"You speak very well, Jemmy, for one so poor as you; how did you get to learn anything?"

"Why," replied the man, "I was a fine scholar in my time. I learned it from an old schoolmaster that came from a foreign country, and lived among us when I was young."

"What did he teach you?"

"Almost everything; the course of the stars, the use of the globes, calculation, measurement, and the bridge of asses; but he never touched grammar nor history, and that's what left me out."

"Could you sing?"

"Yes, indeed. I always sing when alone; it is company for me."

"What is calculation, Jemmy?"

"Calculation, my boy, calculation? It is the hardest branch to learn excepting the method of getting rich. They say it commenced in the counting of pebbles, but my own opinion is that it is the invention of scholars to find something you do *not* know by employing, for the purpose, things that you *do* know. I have forgotten a great deal of what I learned, but one fine

piece of calculation I remember yet. It is to calculate the age of the moon any day of the year; it was given to me by the old schoolmaster, in rhyme:

"When fifteen hundred years are past,
Of Christ's age all nineteens cast,
What remains is the golden number
Of that present year remember.
Subtract one from the golden number,
Multiply by eleven placed under,
Casting it into thirties first;
What remains is the epact, just.
Count your months, with March begin
And the month that you are in;
Adding to it as you're in want,
The epact and the day of the month.
All above thirty or behind,
Is the moon's age, you'll surely find."

"That's great learning," said Zanthon, approvingly.

"As deep as a drawn well," replied Jemmy, smiling with satisfaction.

They were now walking over a street inclining upward, having a dead wall on one side and a row of small houses on the other. This was the extremity of the town in that direction.

The houses or huts were mean looking and low; the floors being set in the ground below the surface, obliging a person entering any of them to stoop and take a step downward. When near the top of this street, Jemmy turned to one of the houses, and pushing open a door that had been closed but not fastened, desired the boy to follow him, as this was his home.

The interior of this house consisted of one room without any furniture excepting a bench of coarse boards in the form of a bed, on which were arranged some straw and an old quilt, discolored so as to present no traces of the kind of material composing it. The walls were black from age, the attic-shaped roof being also low, and made of sods covered with thatch. There was no window.

The man and the boy sat down on the side of the bed to afford the latter an opportunity of viewing the prospect of Jemmy's possessions.

It was cheerless indeed.

What struck Zanthon very forcibly, in this connection, was the fearful desolation that surrounded those who were coming forward to meet him as new friends. First Big Nancy, then old Jemmy; for evidently the old man meant to be his friend, and two such unfortunate poverty-stricken individuals could not easily be found on the face of the globe; yet the boy did not, by any means, think less of them, on account of their want of means, he only thought for an instant how remarkable it appeared to be. He forgot to think, however, that there was but one Zanthon whose career had become a subject for scrutiny by the eternal powers and whose future would be twisted into a prosperous line of life, perhaps, by those very agents who now appeared so insignificant. There was no fire on the hearth, no fuel to be seen anywhere in the apartment; or indications, great or small, of the least semblance of comfort.

Jemmy did not appear to be disturbed by this condition of things. He seemed rather to draw extensively on his imagination for the conveniences which were wanting in his home and to feed his mind by contemplation as a substitute for the luxuries which the body longed to possess.

When Zanthon, in wonder, asked him how he provided himself with fire whenever he resolved on cooking a meal at home, he smiled blandly at the boy, as if the question was too preposterous to entertain with gravity and explained: —

"I borrow a little from one of the neighbors at the end of the street and when I can afford to buy some for myself, I pay it all back. I never contract a heavy debt."

"Don't you find it very hard and troublesome to work that way?"

"Why no. Why should I? Is it not the way that every poor man, who means well, will do; instead of borrowing and

paying nothing back like thousands of other people, rich and poor. Mind you *I* think myself very fortunate when I can get acquaintances to lend to me in times of great need. Many there are around us, my boy, who will not borrow, on any account, because they cannot find those who are willing to lend; and remember too, that these persons are very much poorer than I am.

My good child, I'm well off. I'm content. The shadows that fall over my path come from the past, but leave me yet a little sunshine. This house is free. The country at large is my plantation, affording me snatches of comfort now and again; and the people know my requirements and supply them."

Zanthon was cheered by this assurance and smiled at the old man as he met his pleasant countenance, believing too, in his simplicity, that all he had heard was quite true; albeit, the reflection began to force itself forward in his mind; that those who were poorer than Jemmy in the scale of human life, must be very poor indeed.

Feeling the necessity of resuming their journey, Jemmy arose and walked out of the house followed by Zanthon. As they went forward without securing the door, the man stated that he never had any occasion to lock it, as the people in the neighborhood were honest; but he continued, "even if they did steal my property I would not mind it much as I could sleep very well under my old coat."

From the street in which Jemmy's house was situated the road extended in a direct line into the country.

Adjoining the last house in the row was the commencement of a fence skirting the road on one side for some distance. A gate stood in this fence, about two hundred feet from the corner, which on reaching the man proceeded to open admitting himself and the boy.

Zanthon's attention was soon arrested by what he saw on the inside; a green lawn and white cottage, both very pretty.

The lawn was large containing not less than ten or twelve acres, the western end of it being elevated so as to form a small plateau on which the cottage had been erected.

There were no trees or shrubs within the enclosure; and the predominating feature of the place, or the design intended to prevail seemed to be the production of sloping green lawn without further adornment. It appeared common; but at the same time pleasant and inviting.

The house possessed a like character. Its stone and mortar walls were white from a coating of lime; the roof had been neatly thatched with straw; the windows were small and one door in front appeared to be of very common material. It was an unpretentious structure clean in its exterior outline, without any wings or offsets, apparently as suitable for a great, a good, or a poor man, as the residence of a tyrant or a knave. The view from the doorway included many fine points of interest: Lennabean set in a frame of verdant woodland, the lesser and the greater bay and a landscape of hill and dale watered by a bountiful number of crystal streams.

Zanthon's heart beat quicker than usual on taking a hasty look at the house and grounds, for he instinctively judged these to be the places where his first servitude in the great world was to begin; and from the glimpses of character presented by old Jemmy of him who would be his future master there arose some doubts in his mind in regard to the amount of happiness he was likely to possess.

"Now," said Jemmy taking Zanthon by the hand and moving slowly towards the house; "when we go in imitate me and fall on your knees before Ben Razzo."

"Oh, Jemmy! why must I do that?"

"Because it is wholesome. Haven't you never been told before? I am surprised at the ignorance of your people. What better can we do in our poverty than bow before the rich? Besides I want to make a favorable impression for you at the start."

"Thank you, Jemmy."

The man resumed his instructions. "While you are on your knees, repeat after me these words: 'I have come, honored sir, to offer my labor to you, forever, gratis!'"

"Mrs. Figbit," returned the boy, "wouldn't say, *forever;* and I am sure Big Nancy would wish to see me get something."

"Mrs. Figbit has no more power," replied the man, "she was nothing but a brazen barge the best of times; and Big Nancy don't know as much as a big ox. What I'm telling is gospel truth. Few people have studied poverty closer than I; and no one that I ever saw, is so conscious of its inferior position. I tell you it is healthy to know your place when you are poor, and give the wealthy freedom to exercise their temper."

"I will follow your advice in everything," said Zanthon resignedly, which induced Jemmy to continue: —

"After you have said what I told you, bend down your body, so that the top of your forehead shall touch the floor and remain there until you are told to get up."

"I will remember," replied the boy.

At this time they arrived at the door of the cottage.



CHAPTER XXIV.

BEN RAZZO.

BEN RAZZO arose from his seat in the parlor and advanced to the door leading from it into the kitchen where Jemmy and Zanthon had just arrived through the front entrance. He was dressed in fine clothing of dark blue cloth and wore over his shoulders a short cloak of the same material, having a golden clasp in the collar to fasten it when necessary, around his neck.

His shoes had silver buckles in front; besides being composed of patent leather. There was a ring on one of the fingers of his right hand supporting a diamond of considerable value and such portions of his cuffs and collar as were visible appeared scrupulously clean.

Compared with other men, Ben Razzo was small in stature; uniformly proportioned, healthy and strong, vigorous in action and keen in observation.

He possessed dark features, well-shaped on the whole, whose outline displayed pride and arrogance.

The touch of his hand was soft; indeed might be said to be fascinating; but the selfish individuality of the owner neutralized its power with those who knew him.

He was capable of rapid speech, was conversant with three or four languages, could paint a little, execute on several musical instruments and play the popular games of the times, thus making it evident, to anyone, that he was highly accomplished.

Some of the signs of opulence exhibited on his person were gifts from the gentry who though not allied to him by the

similarity of station yet recognized his influence with the peasantry as a circumstance worthy of attention if not deserving reward.

His undisguised patronage of the dominant class allowed the exercise of his jurisdiction over the people without restraint, in petty things; for as a precautionary measure he took special pains to observe the requirements of the civil law, so as to appear just to the world. Nay more, he feigned a religious spirit, often kneeling in prayer before the congregation at church, his voice rising from silence to loud refrain, as if his soul had been moved to its depths by love of God and his neighbor.

In this manner, before he was thirty-five years of age, he became the most important man, not only in Lennabean, but through all the country lying adjacent to it, outside the aristocracy. He inherited all the miserly instincts of his father, who was a poor peasant not distinguished for any other qualification great or small. Ben Razzo never married. On this account, perhaps, as well as others, there was no genial warmth in his soul, which might induce him to pity the helplessness and the poverty of his fellow-beings. On the contrary his pride grew to such proportions in consequence of the slavish deference paid him, amounting almost to adoration that his anger was more to be feared than the fury of a wild beast!

In financial transactions he accepted no excuses for non-payment of indebtedness; in other words he gave no quarter. If a peasant incurred his wrath his fate became terrible, until conciliation had been made by presents such as the unfortunate culprit, so called, could ill afford to procure.

With all these harsh and inhuman traits prominent in his character his favorite subject of discourse was charity; thus deluding himself more than others in the pursuit of a false system of ideas, pernicious in their influence and delusive in their ultimate effects.

As he stood in the door-way looking down at Jemmy and Zanthon prostrating themselves before him, it could be seen

that his black hair had no traces of gray intermingled with it and that his body was remarkably sleek and well preserved. When he spoke his voice sounded harshly on the ear besides being characterized by possessing a nasal tone.

"This is the boy ?" said he, alluding to Zanthon.

As Jemmy had not been told to rise, he kept still and made no answer, Zanthon imitating him to the letter.

"Get up!" continued Ben Razzo, in a loud voice.

Zanthon arising first was scrutinized from head to foot with great care by his master. Jemmy remained some time waiting after regaining his feet before the silence was broken.

"This is a remarkable looking boy," Ben Razzo said at length.

"He's nothing short of it, honored sir," replied the old man; and he continued —

"I was thinking it might be well if some benevolent person had him trained for a higher station, than ——"

"Tut! tut! man," answered Ben Razzo quickly, "I did not mean that. What I meant to convey was that he does not look like those children of the poorest class, to which he evidently belongs, as if his lineage were higher. What is his name?"

As Jemmy had never heard it, he answered in some confusion: "A—I—the boy—" but that individual coming to the old man's rescue replied:

"Zanthon."

At this Ben Razzo contracted his brow, looked darkly at the two persons before him and repeated: —

"Tut! tut! that will never do here; we must abbreviate it to Zanty. What else shall we call him Jemmy?"

"I cannot think for the life of me, honored sir," said the man, stroking the hair on the top of his head with his right hand, "I might be thinking until doom's day and still not improve on your own plan."

As Ben Razzo felt some difficulty in selecting what he would consider an appropriate name he resumed: "We will make no

further change. Let him be called Zanty in future; and Jemmy as he is not strong enough to perform the necessary labor around this house, you had better attend to it yourself, on the same terms as before."

"Thank you, honored sir," said Jemmy; "everything will be attended to as you require."

Ben Razzo was about to turn away, but recollected something which appeared to require settlement.

"We must begin at last," he said, "what was never before performed, or indeed, contemplated: this boy will be fed here."

Jemmy was almost paralyzed with astonishment at these words. The splendid prospect which they evoked in his imagination, must have been more bewitching to him than the view of the shrine of Mecca to a follower of Mahommed.

If Zanthon became the recipient of liberality *he*, Jemmy, would undoubtedly come in for a share, seeing also that his former engagement had been renewed.

When he could speak without visible emotion he said: —

"Nothing, honored sir, can equal the goodness of your disposition in this and all other respects."

"Let me see," continued Ben Razzo meditatively:

"He will be allowed three and a half pounds of meal, per week, which you will procure for him, on my account, at the grocers."

"Three and a half pounds per week," repeated Jemmy, with solemn emphasis, "honored sir, that would be enough for a person twice his size."

The master resumed: —

"One cent's worth of sour milk, might be sufficient for him, for three days, if economically used."

"If economically used, honored sir, it will be oceans," reiterated the old man.

"For," reasoned Ben Razzo, "you know that half a pint being a liberal quantity for him for *one* day, and there being four half pints in a quart, which one cent will buy, it follows

he will not merely be furnished with enough of this delicious fluid for *three* days but have half a pint to spare."

"Undoubtedly, honored sir, there will be half a pint to spare and maybe more," returned Jemmy.

"Let us say then, *two* cents, per week, on account of sour milk."

"A most liberal allowance, indeed, honored sir."

"Anything else which he may require *you* will provide," said Ben Razzo, nodding his head significantly at Jemmy and turning away; but saying to himself: —

"My share is heavy enough."

Jemmy remained motionless and silent as if petrified with astonishment. If the sound of the last trumpet had broken in upon his hearing it would not have filled him with more dismay than this speech of Ben Razzo's.

He, Jemmy, who possessed nothing and had been accustomed to beg to sustain himself, must now partly provide for Zanthon while in the service of this man.

Instead of receiving anything, he was to pay out. Instead of a full measure of gain he would encounter absolute loss. A moment before, he had imagined felicity to be near at hand, through the generosity of the rich master; now, he felt himself falling into an abyss deeper by far than the poverty with which circumstances had previously afflicted him.

He was asked to tread on the verge of the impossible.

First, glory appeared to him; then helpless misery.

Lucifer, surely could not have fallen with such rapid and unprecedented flight from supreme bliss to the eternity of woe as this simple soul at that moment from expectation to disappointment.

However the difficulties must be encountered with patience and resignation, each in turn.

As no one slept in the house with Ben Razzo Jemmy turned his attention to the stable adjoining it; and selected the hay-loft as being well suited to the wants of Zanthon as a sleeping

apartment. An important question remained unsolved however; namely: how to provide bed and bedding?

Upon making this proposition known to Zanthon, the boy suggested that Jemmy transfer his bed to the hayloft where the two could occupy it comfortably.

"It is well thought of my boy," said Jemmy; "but I do not like to abandon my house altogether."

"There is nothing in your house," said Zanthon; "besides you can return to it at any time, if necessary. You may live here and cook whatever you have in the kitchen."

"Ah! Zanty," the old man replied, "we can only burn fire in the kitchen for Ben Razzo's use; however, it is the best way to look at things now, so we will bring over the bed this evening, when it gets dark, so as not to be seen by the gossiping neighbors."

The next problem on the catalogue of Jemmy's mind demanding settlement appeared more difficult. It was first to engage and afterwards compensate according to ruling prices a laundress for Zanthon.

The elaborate outfit of Ben Razzo had been attended to for years by some of his well-to-do admirers, indeed it was difficult to select one family out of the large number who voluntarily offered their services, and esteemed it an honor to be permitted to execute such labor gratis, but Zanthon's one undergarment of gray calico could not be thought of. It might desecrate the halo surrounding those of his master. Therefore Jemmy very wisely concluded to make provision for the boy in the open market.

After spending a considerable time endeavoring to bring this business to a favorable issue, he was suddenly surprised to find that the boy had no second garment of the kind referred to; there was no money to buy one and how could it be procured?

Inspiration finally came to the aid of the old man. He could, he thought, obtain a fine substitute from the friendly grocer, before mentioned, in the shape of an empty flour sack, such as

would fit the boy's body, after cutting a hole in the bottom of the sack for his head and one on each side for the arms. The material was soft, and altogether it would be comfortable no doubt, when well washed.

There might be some objection raised to the name of the mills in which the flour was manufactured appearing on the back of it; but what difference did it make when concealed so as not to be visible to the naked eye, thought Jemmy.

When this important measure had been settled in a satisfactory manner, for the man had full confidence in the liberality of the grocer, he bethought him of a woman living at the lower end of the street, where he himself had resided, named Mrs. Fishpot, who would be likely to fill the requirements needed.

Mrs. Fishpot, to be sure, was easily found; but what ingenious mind was capable of finding means to pay her, considering all the circumstances of the case? From the fact of telling Zanthon that they would pay Mrs. Fishpot a visit for the purpose of arranging the terms which she would accept for her services as washerwoman, when they went to remove the bed in the evening, we infer that Jemmy had discovered the source from whence the remuneration was to come.

Mrs. Fishpot was a woman now over fifty years of age, whose husband had deserted her years ago; but who managed to subsist by working at odd jobs for those who employed her. When therefore the proposition of washing for Zanthon was laid before her that evening, in all its sympathetic details; and that Jemmy at the same time pointing to the boy said: — This is the boy who is going into the service of Ben Razzo, she replied: — "Tisn't the work that's great, nohow; but somethin', no matter how small, should come from it."

"You know," said Jemmy, in a plausible voice, "whatever is done on Ben Razzo's account, is for the good of the human race."

"He is rich enoo' to pay," answered the woman, without noticing the point in Jemmy's argument; and she continued: "I'd as soon work for the child's sake as for *him*."

Jemmy raised his hands and turned up his eyes to the roof of the house, as if appealing to the Supreme Power at this bold and seditious language.

"You mustn't forget, Mrs. Fishpot, that Ben Razzo is great," said he.

"I don't forget nothin'," retorted the woman, uncompromisingly.

"And," continued Jemmy, raising the forefinger of his right hand, for the purpose, no doubt of pointing at a significant announcement:

"He is powerful, Mrs. Fishpot!"

The woman so far from being intimidated by this assertion, adjusted one of her arms akimbo, saying with some force:

"Much about his power, indeed. What's the odds Jemmy? People cannot be worse than they are any way he takes it."

Seeing that this line of accomplishing his purpose would not succeed, Jemmy changed his tactics by the introduction of another theme.

"If we had no money to spare, how would you like to be paid in *tea*," he asked.

"When you say *tay*," answered the woman, "you *shoot* me exactly."

"Well, then," continued Jemmy, "we will save the tea leaves for you that comes out of the teapot of Ben Razzo; and its proud you ought to be to get them, on any account."

"How long does he keep them *in* the pot?"

"About three days."

"Three breakfasts and three suppers?"

"Yes."

"How much dry tay does he put in each time?"

"A teaspoonful."

On hearing this the woman groaned: but to reassure her Jemmy continued:—

"Why bless your heart! they're as good when he is throwing them out as when he puts them in, if you dry them."

Whether it was this suggestion that settled the bargain, or that Mrs. Fishpot concluded to work for Zanthon on his own merits, could not be ascertained; but Jemmy's proposition was agreed to; and shortly afterwards the man and the boy departed, carrying with them on their way to Seaview the old bed as formerly contemplated.

The course of instruction to which Zanthon was subjected from this time forward became critically exact under the management of Jemmy. In the morning of the next day at an early hour he gave his directions thus:

"With the hand nearest the wall remove the covering, and resting the other hand on the side of the bed jump into the middle of the floor."

The boy having performed this act several times in order to discover its advantages, dressed hastily so as to be ready to begin business at once.

The first work to be considered was the polishing of Ben Razzo's long riding boots, then the building of a fire, over which a kettle of water was placed to be ready for his tea, and a general cleaning of everything in sight including the steel attachments of the saddle and bridle.

After the work in the kitchen was completed they proceeded to the stable where the horse was kept. The animal was a steel gray gelding, about sixteen hands in height, long in the body and having also a small, well-shaped head. He was called "Crispus." Like a sergeant intent on drilling a squad of men, Jemmy instructed Zanthon in the several movements pursued in grooming a horse, from the brushing of his face to the hand rubbing of his fetlocks, as also the method of getting a stable in order.

"When you come to the hind leg," said Jemmy, "never stand directly behind the horse, but at his side, then place one hand above his knee or knee-joint, pressing it tightly while with the other you use your brush or wad to clean him."

As soon as the business pertaining to the stable appeared completed it was time to look for the appearance of Ben Razzo.

It was customary with that individual to partake of a breakfast of cold meat, bread, butter and tea. These ingredients were stored in a strong cupboard in his room always securely locked.

He superintended the cooking of his food; that is, he examined the meat carefully before placing on the fire and kept watch upon it until cooked, when he transferred it to the cupboard. Potatoes were always counted before going into the hands of those who worked for him, and the fire extinguished between meals. There was a mark on the inside of the teapot, a kind of gauge, above which he never permitted the hot water to proceed, as the amount below it was sufficient to supply his wants.

He usually rode out every day and dined with some of his friendly acquaintances; partaking of a light supper at his return.

After Ben Razzo had breakfasted on this particular occasion with the usual precaution bestowed on the teapot, he pulled on his riding boots and spurs, took a whip in his hand and strode to the door to await the coming of his steed, which Jemmy and Zanthon were furnishing in the stable with the necessary trappings. Jemmy lead the horse in front of the door with great ceremony and the use of certain well known admonitions to keep quiet. Then the master mounting, rode off, Zanthon in the mean time running before him to open the outer gate and to secure it after he left.

Left to themselves, the further business of the day was considered. The interior of the apartment occupied by their master was to be swept and dusted, the furniture arranged and good order restored. Jemmy then proceeded down town to the grocer's for Zanthon's allowance of meal, bespeaking the sour milk on his way at a place where such commodity was sold.

As a matter of curiosity, Jemmy had the grocer weigh a half pound of meal separately, which he carried home in paper, in order to test how how far it would be capable of feeding Zanthon for one day.

When it had been boiled and turned out on a plate it would give him more than sufficient for a meal but not enough for two, so that before the end of each day he must feel the pangs of hunger.

Zanthon insisted that Jemmy should share his food, not only at the present breakfast, but at all times thereafter, to which proposal the old man did not fully consent.

"I will be out occasionally," said Jemmy, "and whenever I come back with anything fit to eat ; turnips, potatoes, liver or tripe, we will have a feast together ; otherwise, my boy, I could not feel in my conscience, I was doing right, if I took the food intended for you ; and indeed, between you and me, there is not enough of it for you alone."

"I know a way, Jemmy, that this meal can be made plenty for us both," said the boy, "put lots of water in the pot and don't make the mush so thick."

"There wouldn't be substance in it anyhow," returned the man.

"There would be bulk," said Zanthon, "and what more can there be in any meal than that ?"

Jemmy laughed at the boy's idea, but assured him the plan would not succeed, however well conceived it may have been.

He reassured the boy the prospect which the future was liable to bring them, when by a combined assortment of ingredients they might be able to produce a savory and plentiful repast.

While on this subject Zanthon asked Jemmy what he liked best of all food.

"Ah, child," he answered, "the greatest and the grandest thing man or boy can get into his stomach is mutton broth. The smell of it is finer than the perfume from a garden of roses.

It would draw a hungry man from the top of a mountain to the end of the longest valley. It fills the whole of you with feelings akin to happiness; and makes you imagine you are in the neighborhood of heaven. It is ravishing. It devours you soul and body!"

In the evening Ben Razzo returned. The horse was conducted to the stable, groomed, bedded and provided with hay for the night. The master's supper also terminating and the business of the day over, Jemmy and Zanthon repaired to the hayloft to bed. There was no light, for the best of reasons, there was none allowed by the master of the house, although Jemmy made excuses for him on the grounds that there would be danger of setting the hay on fire, if they introduced a light in close proximity to it; and therefore it would be better to go without one altogether.

This matter settled, Jemmy turned attention to night prayers. Whatever faults he may have had, he was sincere in his piety. Besides he was anxious that Zanthon should be taught a perfect system of morals, whereby the poor acquires in another world the panacea denied to the rich. He was accustomed to perform long devotional exercises on an empty stomach. On the present occasion after the recital of the ordinary prayers he instituted another degree of devotion under the heading of prayers before going to sleep. Sitting together in bed the solemn voice of Jemmy could be heard through the darkness.

"Persecute us O Lord! to the utmost extent of thy wrath that we may hearken to thy voice and know thy ways. Visit us on account of our sins, delay not thy vengence, for in the mean time we may fall! Keep us from pride and the desires of the body, especially keep us from indulging in strong food. Do not let us be like those of old sighing for the fleshpots of Egypt.

Give us, O Lord, an understanding of thy law so that we may account ourselves rich when we are poor. Give us meek-

ness that we may properly respect our superiors in this world and bow down before thy favorites, so well represented by Ben Razzo.

Give us patience to wait for further disquietude.

Give us resignation to bear with the folly of others.

Give us —"

Jemmy was about to continue when he was interrupted by Zanthon touching him very perceptibly in the ribs with his elbow and saying impressively :

"Give us O Lord, give us mutton broth !"

This concluded the exercises on that night ; and if the whole truth be told the earnestness and simplicity of the boy made such an impression on the old man that the latter could barely escape bursting into laughter loud and long.

To prevent such an indiscretion effectually he stuffed a portion of the old counterpane into his mouth until the mirth was suppressed which he would have enjoyed at any other time.



CHAPTER XXV

JUSTICE REGULATES HER SCALES.

THE companionship of Jemmy was very pleasing to Zanthon, as well as beneficial, on account of the knowledge communicated to him, and the care the old man bestowed in his instructions regarding how to labor.

If the pair had had enough food, we would be enabled to say they were happy, but the short allowance of the boy and the precarious method of obtaining supplies for the man made their lives hard and unsatisfactory.

It was not more than two weeks after Zanthon's arrival at Seaview until he became acquainted with several good people who fed him occasionally, and at other times gave him food which be invariably carried home in order to share it with old Jemmy. Thus he became a mere beggar, like his friend, or a prowler after prog, because of the destitute state of his own kitchen. However when their course in life became well understood and the harsh treatment to which they had been subjected modified by time, they often passed very pleasant evenings together. On one of these occasions Zanthon had Jemmy write a letter for him to Nancy, depicting in graphic phrases his life and duties at Seaview which the old man sent by the common carrier who hauled goods from town to town and who undertook to deliver it at the other end of the line free of charge.

The felicity of this state of things was suddenly broken by the announcement made by Ben Razzo of sending Crispus, the horse, to grass, a practice he indulged each year.

"Now Zanty," said Jemmy one day, "this change of Crispus is not going to be all; mind I tell you others will follow."

"What other change do you fear Jemmy?" asked Zanthon.

"Mine, my son. I must take the road once more. My work was chiefly in the stable; yours in the house. You know now what work you have to perform. Mine is gone. Therefore I will leave until I be recalled to attend again to Crispus when he is brought home."

While preparing to evacuate the premises Jemmy gave Zanthon much sage advice. He would not remove the bed from the hayloft as he intended sleeping there at night, except when he traveled into a part of the country some distance from Lennabean. He promised to keep watch over the boy no matter how he fared himself.

Next morning at daybreak, Jemmy started out on one of his predatory tours through the suburbs of the town and Zanthon was left alone.

There was no affinity between Ben Razzo and the boy. While Zanthon performed his work, generally, in a manner to be commended, there were times when he omitted some parts of it, on account of the carelessness incident to persons of his age, and the bitter thoughts which would press forward in his mind regarding the irregularity of his living.

To relieve himself of pain, he often joined boys at their sports in the fields adjoining Seaview, and even accompanied them in boats on the bay where he spent hours at a time regardless of his master's anger or Jemmy's previous counsel. His visits to his friends in town also became more frequent and he began to imagine he was getting along pretty well in the world, when this state of things came to an abrupt termination by the intervention of his master.

Returning late in the afternoon of a fine day to Seaview, after having spent the greater portion of it with his companions, in the fields, Zanthon found Ben Razzo waiting for him at the door. He held a whip in his hand and was cutting the air

with it, as if in the act of whipping somebody. There was a scowl upon his features and he turned his head quickly from side to side, showing that passion was operating within him.

"I have a good mind to lay this whip on your shoulders, sir," he began. "You are a pretty fellow to spend your days away from this house when you should be doing your work. What have *you* to do with play?" Zanthon feeling he had transgressed the rules of the institution hung his head in silence. He felt great embarrassment and was angry with himself for his conduct, yet conscious that if Ben Razzo treated him kindly, and spoke less sharply, the train of his daily life would conform of itself to the necessary requirements of his service.

His master, however, was imperious. The exercise of kindness seemed foreign to his thoughts and, as we have seen, his arrogance obliterated all traces of the human heart.

Pride was his ruling passion, after coveteousness or rather stinginess.

Finding himself master of the dispute as well as of the situation in the present instance, he approached Zanthon and touching him lightly on the shoulder with the whip, continued:

"If ever you repeat this conduct in future, I'll whip you, my good fellow, within an inch of your life."

These words cut deeper into the boy's sensitiveness than the application of the whip would, if used in the manner suggested by Ben Razzo. It was now more than at any period of his past life the boy felt real adversity. In the days of the famine, with the little there was to eat, came words kindly spoken; and even when alone without protection the face of nature presented an expression mysteriously pleasing to the senses; but here where the fact of his being a member of the household, should entitle him to some degree of consideration, he met not only dire want but unkindness of the worst sort. He felt himself wounded to the depths of his heart, as effectually,

too, as a young fawn pierced by a bullet; and he burst into loud and passionate weeping.

This action of the boy increased the irritability of Ben Razzo. Relying on his knowledge of human nature, he believed that a little castigation in the present case would be beneficial, so without further consideration as to consequences he applied the whip to Zanthon's shoulders and legs until the boy shouted:

"Father! father! save me."

Then he retired into his private apartment while Zanthon continued to weep without restraint. If the phantasm of Marlband, as related in a previous chapter, possessed more than a superficial significance; if the death of Figbit was not merely accidental, but the result of the father's compact with the unknown, it was time the powers he invoked should act here in the defense of his son.

It is not for us to say how far the original agreement or supposed agreement was real or ideal. We propose only to be faithful to the incidents of the story by recording them as they actually occurred, leaving the reader to judge of their truth or falsity as inclination or opinion may dictate.

We would imagine, even if the profound principle of the universe responded to the wishes of the father's heart, yet in the present instance there appeared to be a difficulty not provided in the contract.

Ben Razzo was a benefactor, endowed evidently by the Supreme Power with the riches of this world for good purposes. He had been at all times faithful to his obligations. He prayed, too with great fervor; and as a matter of fact, the belief in its necessity, appeared to him as clearly as did the charm of its efficacy. How, therefore, could a violent death reach *him* from the Almighty?

Justice alone was qualified to determine; that invisible justice associated with circumstances which frequently eradicates whole tribes of men from the face of the earth.

The pomp surrounding the person of Ben Razzo would count for nothing, nor the influence of his rich associates.

The first cause of the difficulty lay with the master ; in fact *all* the causes. The rules of his establishment for the government of his dependents were founded on narrow-heartedness and illiberality. The impulse of the boy to find on the outside some means by which his life might be made endurable was undoubtedly a legal effort.

It will be recollected also, that Zanthon was little more than a child, not conversant with the responsibilities of servitude and therefore guiltless in the eye of the law. He imagined Mrs. Figbit's arrangement with Ben Razzo on his behalf included plenty of food at least ; and hence when this failed to come he was justified in seeking it elsewhere.

It fortunately transpired that this was one of the days old Jemmy returned to Seaview, being in its vicinity. He came in while Zanthon was weeping ; and the silence which ensued after the few whispered inquiries made to the boy were answered, was fearful. Jemmy felt as if he, himself, had been whipped and bent over the fireplace in deep meditation for a long time.

No doubt this was done, also, to allow Zanthon's grief to pass off in a natural way without rude interruption. When everything was quiet Zanthon seating himself beside his old friend said : —

"Jemmy, I must go away from this place."

"I have been just thinking that way myself," answered the old man, "but," he continued, "I could not make out where you would go to."

"I'll go to Nancy, of course."

"Nancy is nobody and has all she can do to get food for herself."

"I know very well Jemmy, what you say about her poverty is true ; but she will take care of me."

"Besides," said Jemmy, "if you go without the consent of

Ben Razzo he might send some one after you and bring you back."

"Could he do so, Jemmy ?"

"Ben Razzo can do anything."

"But if I sent for Nancy and told her to take me away what would *he* do ?"

"He would keep you and turn her out. If she had the strength of twenty-nine elephants, it would be of no use against Ben Razzo ; because *he* could move the officers of the law in his favor, who would throw her into prison. I will tell you what is best to be done ; hold out for a change. I always found it a first-rate plan. Not many people believe in it; I do. When a change comes, for come it will, one is as liable to gain by it as the other. You cannot be much worse off than you are now, therefore, Zanty, my boy, hold out for a change."

This seemed sage advice in view of the fact that the boy must make a virtue of necessity and remain in the service of Ben Razzo whether he liked it or not.

As the hour for the master's supper approached, the usual preparations were made in the kitchen. However, notwithstanding the length of time since his retirement into his chamber, Ben Razzo made no movement that could be heard outside of it by those awaiting his commands.

At length the supper hour *did* arrive ; and yet his door remained closed.

Jemmy threw up his head into the air with an expression of wonder, rarely, if ever before, seen on his features ; and his under jaw fell until the orifice of his mouth became like a gaping cavern in the side of a hill.

Whispering to Zanthon, he said :

"Ben Razzo is sorry for what was done and is repenting alone in his room."

The boy did not make any comment on this remark.

When at the end of half an hour nothing but silence still prevailed, Jemmy resumed :

"If this continues much longer, I will knock at his door and ask for instructions."

"About what?" asked the boy.

"About supper," answered the man; and he continued:

"Although the only good it will do me is to see somebody else eat while I go to bed fasting, yet there is more satisfaction in that than you would believe at the first mention of it; besides, maybe the man fell in a swoon, and we here not knowing the circumstance."

Before Jemmy arose, however, to carry out his laudable intention, the door opened suddenly and Ben Razzo made his appearance.

Without waiting to receive the customary obeisance, he hurriedly waved his hand, signifying that the old man was to follow him into his private apartment. Jemmy, taken aback by these unusually rapid movements, was no less surprised when on entering the chamber, he was instructed by his master to assist him to undress before going to bed. Now this implied that something was wrong, because there had been no supper. As the silence as well as the mystery involving this curious state of things became apparent to Jemmy's mind, he concluded it would be best to speak out boldly and fearlessly on the subject, instead of waiting to be apprised by his master. Convinced, therefore, of the utility of this course, he said in a tremulous voice:

"I hope, honored sir, you are not feeling unwell?"

After a short silence, Ben Razzo answered in a voice very much altered from that which used to greet Jemmy's ears on former occasions, and in which the old man thought he could discover a tinge of whining:

"I am a little cold. My walk to-day, I think, disagreed with me in some unaccountable way, or I was chilled while sitting near an open window."

"Ah! you have a fine constitution, honored sir," said Jemmy. "Nothing in the world can hurt *that*. Haven't I been looking

at you for years and years as hearty and as strong as man could be, and never a day sick ?"

"I would feel any sudden attack more acutely on that account."

"But, honored sir, you will *not* be attacked. You are in the prime of life. The situation here by the sea is invigorating, but above all the Almighty is protecting you in a special manner for the good of his poor people."

"Probably after sleeping to-night I will be quite recovered."

"No doubt of it, honored sir. Indeed, it would be a terrible blow to the country should any misfortune overtake you. It mustn't be thought of for an instant."

Ben Razzo felt, evidently, that Jemmy's language approached flattery, for he changed the subject without noticing the implication of the last sentence.

"Keep my room door open, Jemmy, and sit near it so you may hear me call."

"That I will, honored sir, if it required my presence for a year and a day ; but won't you have your usual good supper ?"

Ben Razzo looked toward the cupboard wherein his stores were kept, and answered :

"No, I am better without it."

Jemmy, too, cast a lingering glance in the same direction, expecting he might receive a commission to open the precious receptacle, and thereby be enabled to behold a sight he had long yearned after, but his master's reply settled the question.

Then Ben Razzo went to bed and Jemmy seated himself outside the open door. Making a silent motion to Zanthon to appoach, the old man whispered in a very low voice :

"We are a little sick to-night," pointing with his thumb over his shoulder to the place where Ben Razzo lay. "We will be well to-morrow after a night's sleep."

Zanthon went back to his seat, on the other side of the fireplace, without making any reply, believing the necessities of

the situation required absolute silence. A few minutes afterward Jemmy was called into the sick chamber.

"See who are talking outside my window Jemmy," said Ben Razzo, "I am disturbed by their conversation."

With considerable surprise Jemmy proceeded to the place indicated but found no one. Then searched around the house, the darkness having set in by this time, but with a similar result. Returning he said:—

"There is not a living soul there, honored sir; nor has there been to-night at any time. I would have heard the least noise."

"I thought I heard voices *under* the window;" said the sick man.

"Do you mean, honored sir, under the *house*?"

"No; under the front window, as if two persons were sitting there and trying to force the passage open."

"It was some other noise you heard, honored sir," resumed Jemmy. "Countrymen returning home on the road outside the lawn, perhaps."

Having given this assurance to Ben Razzo, principally for the purpose of quieting his fears, and not because it may have been true or false, Jemmy returned to his seat near the door pondering very much on these circumstances. Presently he was again summoned to the bedside of Ben Razzo, who said:—

"Jemmy, the air in the room is getting oppressive. It feels as if something had been introduced into it for the purpose of vitiating its purity. Besides there are disturbances in the corners of the room that inspire me with fear!"

"With fear! honored sir," reiterated Jemmy in amazement, "of what kind?"

"I don't know. The persons are shrouded in darkness and have a threatening attitude."

"Everything is just as it used to be, honored sir," said the old man, calmly, although he began to tremble with the exciting nature of the situation.

"You are getting feverish, maybe," he continued, placing

his hand on Ben Razzo's head and then on his breast. "I declare you are actually in a high fever, honored sir. May it not be well if I go and bring you a doctor ?"

"I thought we could get along without one," answered the patient.

"No doubt we will," resumed Jemmy ; "If he does no good he may do no harm. I might ask him to look in for a few minutes."

"Don't leave me for an instant. Do you not see the preparations that are being made. These men in the corners are going to take me. They are threatening to rush at me ; they want my soul !"

Jemmy raised his hands and eyes in the direction of heaven as if appealing to it to witness this sad condition of Ben Razzo. The old man pale as a ghost moved nervously before the bed unable to determine what to do, while large beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead or trickled down his cheeks. Finally he resolved to inform the people as well as call in the doctors ; and with these intentions in view rushed precipitately from the house calling on Zanthon to follow him, lest the delirious master might injure the boy.

"This is the strangest thing I ever did see," said Jemmy. "A man of his health to be taken down so sudden and unexpected."

"There is no other way that strong men are taken down, is there Jemmy ?" said Zanthon.

"Maybe not, the ways of the Lord are curious, howsomever, even with his elect," returned Jemmy.

Turning into every second or third house, on the route, the old man informed the occupants of the trouble at Seaview, until rich and poor, knew of the circumstance. The news had the effect of rousing the populace, as effectually as if an enemy lay without the suburbs of the town, and was preparing to pound it into dust with shot and shell.

A very short time elapsed after Jemmy and Zanthon left, until Ben Razzo's friends took charge of him and his house.

During the night, even, there was a continuous stream of people between the town and Seaview anxious to know the particulars of the case and the probability of the death or recovery of the sick man. Couriers were dispatched in haste to distant parts of the country, who dashed over the road at breakneck speed. Flambeaus were carried through the darkness, accompanied by crowds of excited people, talking shouting and praying; and during the first hour after the circulation of the news the streets of Lennabean were actually filled with people as if they had been impelled to turn out en masse through fear of a plague.

The principal cause of this commotion was not so much a love for Ben Razzo as the suddenness of the news of his indisposition and the eagerness with which persons living in remote districts are ever ready to discuss extraordinary events.

About noon, on the following day many carriages of the gentry might be seen on the lawn in front of the house with here and there a country wagon, kept in place, while the owners made inquiries at the door regarding the condition of the stricken man.

Within the house everything was changed.

The doors and windows stood open. Benches and chairs from neighboring houses were arranged along the walls, for the accommodation of visitors.

Bottles of medicine, fruit, wine, and other remedies or soothing appliances, occupied a table near the sick man's bed. The sacred cupboard, even, had been rudely handled, its fastenings burst asunder and its contents distributed among relatives who began to think they were already entitled to his property.

The doctors, three in number, held a hasty consultation for a few minutes in the exact place where Ben Razzo supposed he had heard the men endeavoring to gain access to the house.

While one remained to watch the case, the others putting on their gloves drove away.

Ben Razzo lay in bed extended at full length, his head thrown well back over a low pillow, his hands outside the covering.

The fever appeared unusually severe and rapid in its destructive action. During the night he became delirious, necessitating the employment of some strong men to prevent him getting out of bed; but now there was a state of collapse, probably due to the previous physical exertion.

He was unconscious.

An hour after noon those around the sick bed reported unfavorable changes taking place in the patient's countenance.

The doctor closely observing the man, said in effect that he, Ben Razzo, was liable to expire at any time; adding in explanation that he was now fast sinking; and as far as he could see, there did not appear to be further hopes of his recovery.

One of the relatives, a man of benevolent aspect and earnestly devoted to piety stepping forward said to the people:—

"Let us offer up petitions to God, in order that he may be moved to spare the life of this good man Ben Razzo. Who was like him? Was he not the soul of piety itself; the witness of truth, the right hand of justice? Who will arise hereafter for us and for our children equal to him?

His zeal in behalf of the poor was like a fountain of living water when it rushes through a gorge in the mountain and brings refreshment to the plain beneath. Let us ask that he will not die in the prime of his years and leave the world in anguish on account of his decease."

After this the multitude knelt in prayer, those on the outside as well as the persons within the house.

The day was calm, the sky clear, as if the inferior powers had been silenced to make place for some catastrophe dire or propitious. The birds were singing in the heavens above the verdant fields.

The view of the sea resembled the vision of eternity's brink, tinted in the colors of a paradise.

In the landscape could be discerned beautiful woods and hills resembling the domes of fabled temples in far-off islands of western seas.

The solemn appearance of the people kneeling in the open air, supplemented by the gorgeous display of nature made up a grand picture ;. fine enough, indeed, to witness the death of a king.

Ben Razzo, evidently was favored by these conditions.

Of those kneeling within the house, some more enthusiastic than others reached over to the head of the sick man and prayed aloud into his ears.

Nothing, however, transpired but the gradual lessening of his vital forces.

When the loud prayers had ceased and the succeeding silence became well marked, there could be heard coming from the sick chamber a peculiar noise, at first indistinctly ; but gradually acquiring increased tone and vigor until it could be recognized by every listener. It resembled the jolting together of hollow bones at intervals of a few seconds.

The people shuddered.

Persons who understood what the noise meant, said to those near them : —

"It is the death rattle ! Ben Razzo is dying."

On this occasion the silence became very profound and the frightful sounds went out uninterruptedly, mingling with the beauties of the scene like a deformed monster cast by the sea upon a lovely shore.

Jemmy had knelt near the foot of the bed with others and prayed earnestly in the goodness and simplicity of his heart.

It was remarked that he frequently turned his head to look into the open cupboard in the wall ; and those who made the observation were puzzled to understand the significance of such movement, seeing that the receptacle was empty.

They little knew, however, of the deep impression the interior of this cupboard had made on Jemmy's mind in times

gone by, when he would have bartered his hopes of heaven almost for the privilege of examining it and feasting his eyes on the wonderful collection of rich viands therein deposited.

Now that he saw it for the first time, filled only with emptiness; its glory fled, its riches ruthlessly confiscated, he wondered, even while he prayed, that so small a circumstance or subject should influence his life so long. The trifling desire had grown in his imagination to immense proportions only to desert him in the end and show how unprofitable it had been to engage in such pursuit like many other ideas that had come to as abrupt and woful a termination.

Zanthon stood at an open window, on the outside, looking in at the dying man. His head and feet were bare of covering as usual; for he had received no addition to his clothing since parting with Nancy, except the article procured from the grocer. He could see the ocean from the position he occupied and the glory of the prospect already referred to.

Within, it was so sad and around him so solemn, that the memory of his father came up with extraordinary force until tears ran down his cheeks.

It was singular how conspicuously the two most remarkable individuals of the time and place, the dying man and the boy, stood out in bold relief, contrasted with others present.

While every person in the assemblage was kneeling, Zanthon stood in a place where all could see him. It was as if the Infinite had said: —

"Look thou at this man in the agonies of death; and behold the boy, the innocent victim of his cruelty!"

The gorgeous attire of the master now thrown negligently into obscure places, or displayed for effect near his bed, and the poor covering of the servant, formed a remarkable contrast.

The flavor from the luxuries in the room and the emaciated appearance of the boy's face bore evidence of some great inequality or hidden wrong perpetrated on him; yet there was

a calm light in Zanthon's eyes grander, by far, than that which came from the gem on the finger of Ben Razzo.

Justice had come on the scene at last. The law, or the order of the unknown, was being executed.

The invisible court had sent its decision and was irrevocable.

No one dare dispute its inevitable operation.

The boy was free, while his master was throttled by a power not responsible to mankind for its acts.

When the death rattle ceased Ben Razzo was dead!

Eternal Justice stood exonerated.



CHAPTER XXVI.

ZANTHON HEARS A LECTURE ON MEN.

THE financial affairs of Ben Razzo gave rise to wide-spread difficulties among his friends, before a final settlement was reached. The courts were filled with law suits, originating on one pretense or another, with relative against relative until a large part of the property had been absorbed by litigation.

Nay more; a disturbance resembling a pitched battle occurred in the streets of Lennabean shortly after his death, caused by disputes over his personal effects at which ten persons lost their lives and as many more were carried home wounded.

None of the friends, however, attempted to provide for Zanthon. *His* future destination was arranged in this manner:

Three days after the funeral a public auction was held on the premises at Seaview for the purpose of disposing of the horse which had been brought in, and a few articles of household furniture. We may say this was a forced sale. Jemmy and Zanthon standing outside the house about eleven o'clock in the forenoon saw a woman alight from a country wagon at the gate. This was no unusual circumstance; yet something in her manner attracted their attention. She had a masculine air although a small person, walking at a quick pace directly towards the house. Upon a nearer approach it could be observed she carried a whip in her hand. Before the friends had time to exchange words on the woman's singular appear-

ance, Zanthon was surprised as well as overjoyed to behold Mrs. Figbit before them.

As the man and boy stood immovable, almost paralyzed with astonishment, the woman divining the cause, raised the whip and made a fierce cut at the air between them, which made Jemmy fall back with as much alacrity, as if he had been given a new lease of life.

She then embraced the boy, smoothed his head with her hand and taking from her pocket a sandwich of bread, butter, and meat, bade him refresh himself.

In the mean time she surprised him beyond measure with the news she brought.

Her business at Seaview was to take Zanthon away. She had come specially for him ; and he would return with her that very afternoon ! Nay, to-night Nancy would meet them as they entered the town where she worked.

Was'nt that glorious !

However, this was not all. She had a few days before concluded arrangements for a new place or situation where the boy's comfort would be attended to and his wants fuliy supplied. Still she went further.

At the sale she actually purchased Crispus, Ben Razzo's favorite horse, and Zanthon would ride him through the town of Lennabean triumphantly, she, Mrs. Figbit, sitting behind him to witness his delight. Happy boy ! was there ever any one so fortunate ? He leaped around the woman, laughed and cried alternately until a person would imagine he was a raving maniac.

His delight knew no bounds.

Jemmy, on the contrary, became exceedingly dejected on learning he was to part with his young friend. Tears stood in his eyes and his form seemed to bend more than previously. When the time for the boy's departure arrived, Jemmy followed him through Lennabean where a large crowd of people had congregated to bid him good-by.

"God be with you Zanty." "Good-by Zanty." "God bless you Zanty," were heard on all sides. Thus with the good wishes of the citizens to encourage him, the strong arm of Mrs. Figbit at his back, and the genial day to bear him sweet company, Zanthon proudly rode out of town.

"I have no patience with those men," said Mrs. Figbit alluding to the encounter with old Jemmy, after she and Zanthon had cleared Lennabean and were moving along the country road pleasantly.

"That man stood up there with his mouth open looking at me as if I was a shark just come in from the bay and was going to swallow him, when he should have known that I wanted to speak with you baby."

"I think, Mrs. Figbit, said Zanthon, "he was surprised to see you."

"Suppose that he was; why did'nt he get out of my way in time? A man of his age ought to have some solid understanding of things, and not allow himself to become like a petrified baboon."

"Jemmy is one of the best men in the world," returned Zanthon, "I have a great regard for him. He was very kind and good to me."

"If he had acted in any other way I would have horsewhipped him on sight," answered Mrs. Figbit forcibly, drawing the whip from under her arm, and cutting furiously at some imaginary figure in the air.

"It will take you a long time, baby," she continued, "to know who are the best men in the world. Old Jemmy is a poor shiftless simpleton, good enough if permitted to talk near a fire or roam about other people's homes in search of a bite to eat, but not able to gain a decent living for himself. If you admire men at all, and I would'nt if I was you, let it be on account of what they can do for the world after they have made themselves independent. Baby, my dear, be careful to

keep men at a distance until you are able to separate the good from the bad.

Most of them have kept the world back hundreds of years.

The mean, low wretches, drunkards, swindlers, idlers, thieves, murderers and others too numerous to mention."

"Are there many of such men?" asked the boy.

"The country is full of them. The towns are crowded with their kind my dear."

As Zanthon had studied men by taking his father as a model, and concluding, therefore, that they were all good, this announcement of Mrs. Figbit startled him, besides exciting his curiosity to know more of the subject.

"I never heard of that before, ma'am; I mean so bad."

"No, baby, people did not want to disturb your young heart by such accounts, but now that you are left to yourself, the sooner you get to know the whole truth, the better. They are a mean lot, those men; a dangerous crowd, baby; as tough as a wild beast show, my dear!"

"Where may I see them, Mrs. Figbit?"

"In jail!" promptly answered the woman, "in the street channels after dark, in bed when the sun is shining, shivering through want, but too lazy to work. In the grog-shops swilling drink, or sneaking in various shapes through the ranks of the people bent on doing mischief."

"Why do they not follow a better course?"

"Because they are low-bred, miserable creatures."

"Perhaps they would improve if told what to do."

"Why, baby, they have been told. We sent them teachers and preachers without number; books have been printed by the million for their use, but all to no purpose; they will not do good or think right."

"I suppose it is too difficult," said the boy; then he resumed: "How would you remedy the trouble?"

"If I had my way I'd drown them in the sea. They are not worth anything either to God or man."

When Mrs. Figbit had finished this speech, she gave a lurch in her seat that threatened to unhorse herself and Zanthon. The boy being silent, she continued :

"Some people blame me because I'm bold. I was forced into it, baby, I was driven to it. Seeing the stupid meanness of some men who could be bad and yet escape the law, I had to cry out and scold, or my feelings would burst me."

"Are there men like these in every country, Mrs. Figbit ?"

"Yes, baby, they are everywhere ; there could not be a place without them, because like dirty water they spread."

"The reason must be somewhere beyond our understanding," observed Zanthon, reflectively.

"It is not beyond mine, my boy," replied Mrs. Figbit. "If I could lay this whip on the shoulders of some of them, you would see what a revolution it would make in their conduct. It is the dogged animal nature in them that loves to resist order."

"Then you think it best that this state of things ought to be kept down by force."

"Indeed I do, baby, and lots of it at that. Give it to 'em heavy and sure."

"How can it be done ?"

"By means of the law, baby. Set the law on them, same as you would chase a robber by a bull-dog ; but if the law is not near you, do the best you can for yourself as I did at one time my husband and two of his friends returned to the house about the dinner hour. There was a drunken man with them who they could not get rid of. This man began to cut up in the house, and finally falling to the floor began to kick my furniture, especially the center table, on which was a dish of cabbage ready for dinner. Although there were three men present looking at him, my own husband one of the number, not one would make an effort to stop his mad work. They seemed as if their minds had escaped from their bodies, and left only enough life to keep them standing.

I would not have done anything myself, perhaps, if the fellow had only kicked the table ; but seeing him aiming maliciously with his heavy boot, at the cabbage, all the powers of my soul rushed to my assistance and impelled me to go to the rescue of my favorite vegetable. In an instant I seized him by the legs, dragged him to the door, then out into the street and wiped the gutter with him, while the witnesses lustily applauded when they were relieved of the trouble themselves which I was compelled to perform.

There is another thing baby," continued Mrs Figbit, "I want to tell you about: it is ingratitude. People will be ungrateful and you must expect it."

"Not every one," said Zanthon.

"A great number," resumed the woman. "A very great number indeed, baby. My own experience is enough to convince you of that. I traveled fifty miles at one time for the purpose of helping a sick woman ; but her husband gave out that I had selfish designs at the bottom of it all. I sent milk every morning free to a family for a whole year ; but one day it did not reach them in time and forgetful of the past favors bestowed on them, they called me bad names and said I was impertinent on account of disappointing their expectations. I bought clothes for the poor in winter ; the boys of these same people came and broke my windows. Everywhere I turned my hand I met a similar experience, even my own relatives were hard against me."

"I would not blame you," said Zanthon, with enthusiasm, "if you procured a whip and attempted to scourge mankind without any distinction of persons and without mercy."

"Thank you, baby. I did not get the whip until later on. There was, however, a great power given to my tongue which I used with considerable advantage and effect, until I met you and Figbit died."

"I will never forget your kindness to me," said the boy sympathetically.

"Never mind, baby. I found afterwards ingratitude was useful. We should not expect any return from doing a good act; excepting the satisfaction which it brought. A noble deed is injured by compensation; therefore, my dear, when you relieve others in distress be a stranger to them."

Zanthon pondered deeply on this advice; the woman continued: —

"When I found that the man I married was esteemed great by the common people; but in reality a mere fool and hypocrite, I raved like one possessed. I felt disgusted and disappointed. Why not?

A good man is a great man, baby. The women who are so fortunate as to marry this kind may well defy the world and it will be their own fault if they are not well off; but the others— well, the others — "

"What of them, Mrs. Figbit?"

"Oh, baby, it is too hard to tell. Some marry thieves, gamblers, men of beastly habits, criminals of various kinds, vain fools, fellows of no good principle, persons incapable of supporting themselves or anybody else and men who bring others to ruin in various ways. The women invariably come down to the level of their husbands. They never know what is peace. They would as soon curse a sunbeam as admire its beauty They are so much accustomed to behold wrong-doing that they will not look into the blue sky lest the celestial vision might strike them dead. They imagine there is nothing on earth but misery and fraud."

"How terrible that is," said the boy mournfully. He then asked:

"Are there many such women?"

"They may be reckoned by the thousand. Like wild game, the woods are full of 'em," answered the woman, reiterating what she had said regarding men, a short time before and satisfied by the tone of her voice that its truth was well established.

Zanthon began to muse rather than attempt to reach a solution of the subject involved in Mrs. Figbit's discourse, and the woman ceased speaking.

When she renewed the conversation she informed the boy how she had heard the news of Ben Razzo's death, her determination to proceed by means of a country wagon to Seaview, secure Zanthon and Crispus and return in triumph home.

"Not," said she, "that I want Crispus for myself but for a friend who deputized me to buy him."

Late in the afternoon of that day Mrs. Figbit and Zanthon arrived in town. They put up at a public caravansary reputed, by a sign on the outside, to be competent to furnish dry lodgings for man and beast.

Here the woman standing in a conspicuous place in the principal reception room, and holding the whip in her hand, gave the necessary directions regarding accommodations for herself and the boy as well as the disposition of Crispus.

Then she dispatched a messenger for Big Nancy, with instructions to inform that individual of baby's arrival in town and to come at once to see him.

After these preliminary arrangements had been made she and Zanthon retired to the apartments furnished for their use.

Nancy came like a whirlwind.

At the door she stood for an instant, as if petrified by the sight of Zanthon and Mrs. Figbit; her face distorted like the angry sky and her eyes rolling like balls of fire. Woman and boy rose courteously to greet her, on account of which she was overwhelmed with emotion and could only bellow and blubber as evidence that she intended to speak.

When the excitement caused by Nancy's entrance ceased, the three friends sat down together to further deliberate on Zanthon's future prospects.

Mrs. Figbit, far-seeing woman that she was, after pressing her lips and making other mysterious signs of disclosing an im-

portant secret, informed her friends that she had already secured a place for Zanthon.

"Before I tell you all about it," she said, "I must speak on a subject that has been on my mind a long time in regard to you baby, my dear. It is education. We must get you education."

Nancy bent an enquiring look on Mrs. Figbit to find if she could not discover what new fangled idea of the Figbit order was concealed under this word just spoken. The woman understood Nancy's stare as if its meaning were written in red characters on the wall.

"*You* don't know what *that* means Nancy," she continued:—

"All that's required in your case is to know how to work.

To sweat and drudge for other people is good enough for you; but baby must get education because it will make him a fine man.

Now I'll tell you what education is Nancy; it is the catechism and the rule of three; *that's* education.

I don't know them myself. I wish I did, it might keep me from scolding. I never could learn anything; but I heard a great deal about it. Figbit believed himself very knowledgeable. The gain that came to me on account of his knowing so much wasn't very great. I don't think it was the right kind he had any way. I'm told that those who know these branches can go through the world with flying colors and meet with no disappointments."

As Mrs. Figbit's listeners smiled approvingly, she continued:—

"I have not forgotten this while speaking in your favor, baby, to your future friends. I asked if they could teach you the catechism and the rule of three, to which the lady made answer that they could. Then I told her I would expect you to become acquainted with them as soon as possible; and she kindly said she would see that they were taught to you as stipulated. Because said I, furthermore he comes from a good

family as far as I can judge; and therefore he ought to know more than others."

Mrs. Figbit paused as if for a reply; but finding none forthcoming resumed: —

"The people you are going to serve in future baby, my dear are the Flippingtons, of Flippington Lodge.

No nicer family in the world I understand. Indeed they live in grand style and see a great deal of fashionable company. They have a beautiful villa or lodge near the sea on the opposite shore of the bay from Lennabean."

"Will they give me new clothes?" asked Zanthon.

"That they will," responded the woman, "Broadcloth clothes with gilt buttons in front, up to the shoulders; and a silk hat and gloves!"

Nancy clapped her hands in delight at the glowing account of Zanthon's future prosperity, while the boy laughed outright in harmony with her thoughts.

"You will have plenty of good food," resumed Mrs. Figbit, "and get some pay besides. We come to the conclusion that a dollar a quarter, or every three months, would do to begin with. Not that this will be the only thing. There will be *house* money besides."

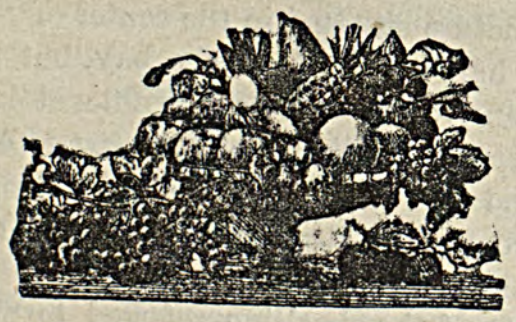
Here Nancy and Zanthon exchanged looks of surprise, intending to ascertain the character of Mrs. Figbit's meaning.

"I believe Mrs. Flippington said that the company resorting at the Lodge would give you money," returned Mrs. Figbit, "which we call house money."

Zanthon considered Mrs. Figbit's efforts in his behalf a great success.

His spirits rose to a vast height under the stimulating effects of her kind words; and for the first time since the happy days of his boyhood he felt that the future seemed clear and reassuring.

The change would evidently remove him from abject poverty, in which he had hitherto moved, to comfort and independence. At least it appeared to him an equivalent to admission into another sphere if no hidden monstrosity lay in wait to strike at his happiness.



CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SHADOW OF FLIPPINGTON LODGE.

ZANTHON was conveyed in a country wagon to his destination in accordance with the plans of Mrs. Figbit.

The day was as beautiful as a dream of paradise.

When the boy alighted from the conveyance and thanked the man for his kind action, he saw Flippington Lodge before him, a handsome structure situated in the center of rich grounds.

It was about half a mile from the bay, but the front commanded an extensive view over a magnificent landscape tending south and west, including a bluff, a strand or beach, a section of woodland and meadow, hills and rolling plains, and a bluish-tinted promontory stretching far into the sea in the direction of the north.

In the vicinity of the dwelling referred to was a village of white-washed houses famous as a summer-resort for health and pleasure seekers, who congregated here from other towns and districts to enjoy annually the animation attendant on open air exercises, and the inhalation of sea breezes.

Flippington Lodge exhibited a superior architectural design. The outline disclosed two stories elevation, two wings having decorated facades, one looking east as if forever waiting to greet the morning sun, while the other sought the restless but picturesque surface of the adjacent bay.

The large hall door of heavy carved wood, the spacious vestibule, the bay windows draped within with rare and expensive stuffs, the dormer and hooded windows above, the hip roof, the

chimney stacks, the polished stone steps, and the two semi-circular carriage drives beginning at the outer gate and terminating before the dwelling gave the approach to the entrance an imposing appearance. The lawn, about four hundred feet wide, was diversified by flower knots and groups of shrubbery, the design having been also applied to the land running along the sides and back to the rear of the Lodge, where it bounded a court-yard and stables, a kitchen garden, and a small grove of tall trees.

Zanthon was profoundly touched by what he saw.

An impression of peace came from the scene to his mind that seemed to sweeten all his senses and convert them into channels of exquisite delight.

The air above the place was odoriferous as if derived from the reputed breezes of Arabia. Tranquility dwelt there, evidently; and he came to the conclusion that here, surely, the troubles of the world would never come to him again.

Animated by this consoling reflection, he proceeded boldly through the grounds in the direction of the villa, and presently saw assembled at the front entrance a group of three persons; a gentleman and two ladies, who appeared to be watching his movements. When, glowing with the exercise of his walk, he stood before them, he observed that they were distinguished people by their manners and dress.

They remained a few minutes smiling at his appearance.

The gentleman was a dapper little fellow, about five feet four inches in height, active as a bird, and dressed with great taste. His language was a species of chattering, very merry, bright and rapid. Nature evidently did not intend that *he* should be sad. Sometimes his utterance made him stutter when it would appear as if he were endeavoring to bite the air. Patent leather shoes encased his feet. The garments he wore fitted his person admirably. No doubt he possessed a nervous temperament, for he was fond of moving from place to place, skipping occasionally like a girl, and otherwise conducting himself in a juvenile manner.

What surprised Zanthon most was that this little gentleman had white hair, making it difficult to determine his age. His face, too, was pale, more elongated than round, and fairly formed, the nose being long but not distinctly aquiline, the mouth small with thin lips, the eyes gray, the forehead narrow, the cheeks hollow, and the expression prevailing on it a mixture of comic humor and sadness. This person was Archibald Flippington, the last of his race, and the individual from whom Flippington Lodge had derived its name.

Mrs. Flippington, one of the ladies in the group, was also diminutive and juvenile. She possessed, however, more gravity of demeanor than her husband, a sweeter temper, and a greater amount of mental power, yet bearing a strong resemblance to him in his general characteristics.

Contrasted with Flippington as to daily life, she was more passive than active, disposed oftener to regard the interests of others with more attention than her own, and spent much time in laying plans for the benefit of the poor, or those in need of assistance, to overcome temporary difficulties.

The third person in view was Mrs. Flippington's aunt, a maiden lady of sixty summers, but apparently many years younger, supported, as this supposition might be, by the use of false hair, which came down in ringlets on both sides of her face, and above which she wore a neat head-dress peculiar to matronly ladies of the period. She was known by the name of Miss Cora Skittleton, but usually addressed "Miss Cora" and by the Flippingtons, "Cora." Miss Cora was housekeeper, manager, director, superintendent and governor of the whole establishment. Her executive ability being good, and the experience acquired by age, sufficient, her administration of the affairs of the household was characterized by wisdom and economy.

This gave the Flippingtons ample time to amuse themselves. Indeed, husband and wife were more like children than grown persons, playing around in odd corners of the house, romping

over the lawn, or clapping their hands and laughing at something thought to be funny by their simple minds. Although married ten or twelve years there were no children ; but this fact did not seem to disturb their pleasant relationship or burden them with unnecessary cares. They were about the same age, which at the time referred to might be forty.

The Flippingtons had access to the best society circles exclusive of the nobility who, as is well known, never associated with commoners except in matters of business or self-interest.

Besides the Lodge, the Flippingtons owned a small estate in a distant part of the country which was managed by an agent who turned in the money received at the end of each half year and had a settlement of his account. Thus Flippington was relieved of all trouble pertaining to it ; and could pursue his boyish proclivities to his heart's content.

After a short inspection of the boy, Flippington whirled out of his position into another near his wife, then around Miss Cora and finally stopping, remarked :

" I'll wager brass buttons this is the Figbit boy. He was to come to-day. The Figbit boy, a pretty boy, Helen ; a pretty boy, Cora. Isn't your name Baby Zanty ? " he asked as Zanthon looked up at him. Zanthon, now familiarized to both names, answering in the affirmative, Flippington continued while clapping his hands with delight : —

" I knew it was. I said so truly. *I* can tell when others can't. I'd sing a song about it now ; but I will wait till flowers grow and robins come. Baby Zanty my wife is Helen and my friend is Cora, here they are, my jolly boy ; but who I am you will not know, you cannot tell."

Flippington accompanied these words with a kind of incantation while wheeling and skipping from point to point.

Then the ladies taking hold of the boy conducted him into one of the front rooms to the right of the hall which was the parlor. The house was magnificently furnished.

Polished mahogany tables and chairs, sideboards and rich cases adorned the apartment. Paintings from old Roman artists in elaborate frames hung on the walls. Beautiful carpets ; exquisite paper and other valuable articles of a miscellaneous character added luster to the place. Through open doors one could see other rooms similarly furnished, so that Zanthon was bewildered by the gorgeous display before him.

The Flippingtons seemed in ecstasies about the boy, he appeared so interesting ; different from other boys of his age ; almost helpless and poorly clothed.

Mrs. Figbit had posted the lady as to what she would require done for him regarding education ; the course having been originally sketched as will be remembered, in presence of Nancy and consisting of a knowledge of the catechism and the " rule of three."

Mrs. Flippington on introducing this weighty matter on the present occasion, said, as she looked towards her aunt :

" Cora, dear, it will not be difficult for you to teach him the catechism."

She spoke in this manner lest her aunt should be embarrassed if mention was made of the mathematical part.

As it was, Flippington looked over at Miss Cora with such a comical smile on his countenance as indicated that he knew the reason why the reservation had been made which brought on what the speaker had endeavored to avoid. Miss Cora spoke up exclaiming : —

" Certainly, Helen dear, I will be delighted. We ought perhaps practice a little on the principle of division of labor and get Arch to instruct him in the rule of three."

Flippington instead of assenting to this proposition began to waltz around the room, humming as he went : —

" Tum, the rum, the rum ; it cannot well be done. It cannot well be done, oh tum, the rum, the rum." Seeing which his good wife said : —

" *I* will teach Zanthon the rule of three."

This matter being settled the next movement in order was to provide the boy with decent clothing.

The wardrobe in Flippington Lodge was of itself, an institution where suits of various patterns and sizes were kept for contingent demands, such as the ladies found frequently among the neighboring poor. From this collection Zanthon was provided with an outfit, designed however to be temporary, as it was contemplated to procure others better adapted to his condition, at the tailor's.

The change in Zanthon's appearance on account of his new dress, after emerging from the small room in which the transfer was made, excited the wonder as well as the merriment of those present. Flippington skipped through the halls and rooms like a schoolgirl, and Mrs. Flippington and Miss Cora were evidently well pleased, judging from their smiles.

After much of this amusement had been enjoyed, the boy being more surprised than entertained, Flippington came back suddenly to the group wearing a serious countenance. He held up his hand as if to command silence and said almost in a whisper : —

" The shadow ! how shall we manage the shadow ? "

Mrs. Flippington looked distressed as she turned to Miss Cora ; and the features even of this lady became overcast with seriousness.

Zanthon did not understand all this or any of it.

As they descended the stairs to regain the parlor Flippington ran off on tiptoe towards the kitchen, peered through the doors and ran back as if afraid of something terrible.

Zanthon's astonished and inquiring gaze confronting him Flippington said : —

" We have a shadow in this house, master Zanthon."

" Do you mean a skeleton ? " asked the boy, remembering he had heard it asserted that such an instrument of terror was in every house.

Flippington laughed very much at this. He clapped his hands with excessive delight while he addressed his wife : —

" Did you ever hear the equal of that idea, Helen !

Skeleton eh ! The boy calls the shadow a skeleton. Is there much of a skeleton about it, Helen ? Is there Cora ? A huge skeleton it would make indeed. A terrible skeleton. No, Master Zanthon this thing moves like a whale or an elephant."

After this mysterious speech Flippington began to waltz in one of the corners of the room, whistling a suitable accompaniment.

At this juncture Miss Cora took hold of Zanthon by the hand, looked over her shoulder as if to notify the Flippingtons to follow and marched into the hall turning towards the kitchen. Arm in arm the husband and the wife came, intent on a pleasant episode. They spoke to each other in a low voice, the good sense and amiability of Mrs. Flippington appearing in happy contrast with the light gaiety of the man.

This movement of the party looked like a procession with less solemnity than a funeral ; yet not enough merriment to make it appear a May-day festival.

Arrived at the kitchen door Flippington became apparently very nervous. He said : —

" Now, Master Zanthon, look out for the shadow ; and keep well on your feet lest it should run over you. Cora open the door with great caution. Helen stand near your natural protector."

While Miss Cora smilingly placed her hand on the door to open it, Zanthon felt this to be the greatest mystery he ever encountered. Had he been at liberty he would have run off and never returned to inquire if a solution of it could be obtained.

When the door was pushed back he saw a square apartment of moderate dimensions furnished with all the conveniences necessary for the prosecution of the culinary art.

Standing near the fire, holding a flesh fork in her hand, was a woman of commanding appearance. She was nearly six feet

in height, squarely built, her limbs proportioned to her size and the entire form somewhat corpulent. Her face was broad; the individual features of it being more or less repulsive looking, especially the nose which bore a slight resemblance to that of a hog. Her eyes, too, were swinish, small and keen. These characters were quite perceptible under heavy brows and a low forehead.

Flippington from behind bent down and said to Zanthon in a whisper.

"Do you see the shadow? *She's* the shadow and no skeleton you'll admit."

Miss Cora entering the kitchen said, addressing the woman: —

"Mony, this is Master Zanthon, or Baby Zanty, the new boy: Zanthon, Miss Mony Grimson, the person who has charge of this part of the house."

Miss Cora used a conciliatory form of words instead of telling Zanthon that the woman Mony, was the cook, in order to make the latter feel how much importance was attached to the administration of her office.

Mony turned on Zanthon a fierce look which made him tremble; but at the same time having put the flesh fork under her arm, she stroked his head with her large hand in token of friendship.

Mrs. Flippington moving up quietly to the woman's side said in those gentle tones peculiar to her: —

"Mony be kind to the boy for my sake," to which the woman replied: —

"That I will, ma'am. That I will."

The relation of Mony to the Flippingtons was singular. She had been in their service many years and exercised extraordinary influence over them; like the power of a fabled genius above the destinies of an enchanted castle. It was the strong will of the worker gradually encroaching beyond the limits originally designed for it, trespassing on the domain of the rich owner. The simplicity of the Flippingtons favored this

dictatorship. Mony performed her work satisfactorily and thoroughly. Indeed the amount of work done was enormous; as much perhaps as two ordinary persons might be expected to perform. Besides she afforded them protection as a giant would a family of Lilliputians committed to his care. Under these circumstances she asserted her independence at an early date, that is she would not permit anyone of the household to interfere with her in working according to her own methods.

For Archibald Flippington this woman possessed a supreme contempt, probably because of his being unable to uphold the strong positiveness of a man. His light manner disgusted her. She would have openly upbraided him with want of dignity if she dared; but she knew that any attempt to infringe on the privileges or the freedom or the peace of the master of the establishment would be met with instant dismissal, no matter how inconvenient it might prove to be.

On the other hand Flippington provoked great mirth for himself at the expense of Mony. Her scowls made him laugh; because he imagined her displeasure was a concession to his capacity for wit and this gave him satisfaction. Whenever her anger rose to a high pitch he used to run off skipping and jumping, laughing in the mean time until his body shook with suppressed delight. In the sitting-room he talked to his wife and Miss Cora about the shadow, as he called the servant, for hours at a time, dilating on her exhibitions of temper with as much minuteness as if they were state affairs.

To Mrs. Flippington Mony was all gentleness and respect.

Looking down at the little lady she used to listen to her words, with the greatest show of deference it was possible to assume, standing motionless as if spell-bound. Indeed she often carried Mrs. Flippington over the lawn in her arms, during inclement weather addressing her meanwhile, as if she were a child. With Miss Cora, too, Mony was on the best of terms, as her duties brought her frequently in presence of that lady; and also the wisdom displayed by the housekeeper in

the management of household affairs had a soothing effect on the mind of the servant charged as it had been with a fair portion of ignorance.

Heretofore, as hinted at above, Mony executed all the work required within doors in Flippington Lodge; but as the Flippingtons had recently overcome some financial embarrassments arising out of the transmission of the estate from the old folks to them, they proposed to employ a page to wait at table, and otherwise assist in the performance of the ordinary duties pertaining to their establishment.

There were other reasons also for this step. A well-dressed boy would attract notice.

In the public streets of the town of Kindleton where the aristocracy sometimes congregated in carriages, persons would be heard to say: —

"This handsome youth in gaudy livery belongs to the Flippingtons of Flippington Lodge."

If society were tempted in this manner the Flippingtons would now be ready to entertain its favored members to their hearts' content.

While Flippington moved through the kitchen examining the objects therein displayed but in reality to listen to the conversation of the others and keep well out of the range of the shadow, the ladies spoke to Mony concerning Zanthon's duties in the future.

"He has not had much experience Mony, in anything," said Mrs. Flippington, "and we will get him to learn all that may be required."

"Leave the learning of him to me, ma'am," answered the shadow, rather sternly, at which Flippington looked at Zanthon and unobserved by the others, poked his forefinger at his ribs, as if to insinuate that the boy was in for it.

"Of course," said Miss Cora, "I will help you as far as I can with him, until he knows enough to need no more assistance from us."

"I'll regulate him myself," continued Mony : —

"It isn't fit for you to meddle with small people," and she drew the flesh fork from under her arm, as if it were a sword, and placing the prongs against the table leant upon it with her outstretched hand, thus presenting a very formidable appearance.

Flippington standing behind Miss Cora managed to communicate with Zanthon on this announcement of the shadow's. He elevated his eyebrows, looked fiercely and pursed his lips to indicate what terrible things were in store for him. These exhibitions of his master modified, to a great extent, the terrors of the situation, which otherwise would have possessed the boy's mind from his own observations of the woman's conduct, seeing how fully she controlled the family.

"We will make it as pleasant for him, as possible," said Mrs. Flippington : —

"The poor boy has lost his friends and should be well treated."

"Too much petting isn't no good," retorted the shadow. "He must work out his salvation with his hands as we have to do. He isn't no baby sure."

"Ha ! ha ! Zanty," said Flippington who had shifted his position and now stood near the boy : —

"You are not Baby Zanty after all. You are a big strong thing. A mountain, boy. A whale."

Mony believing this to be a sarcasm manufactured at her expense, looked round fiercely at Flippington, but he turned away suddenly, knowing her intention and she thus suffered a defeat.

"To be sure, Mony," returned Mrs. Flippington, "he will work ; but what I meant to say was this, if you treat him kindly I will take it as a personal favor done to myself and give you my fullest gratitude."

This language of the good-hearted lady was too well pointed to admit of further misunderstanding.

Every face became grave in admiration of her magnanimity, and Flippington set aside his levity for an instant to gaze at her as if struck by the grandeur of her words.

Mony courtesied and replied:

"Yes ma'am. I will indeed."

Then the party withdrew from the kitchen and Zanthon was left alone with the shadow.

"You mustn't sit down during the day," said Mony, beginning her instructions.

"Why?" the boy asked.

"Because you came here to work. When you are eating and sleeping you may rest, but not otherwise. It is a golden rule for servants."

"If I finish within before night?"

"You may easily find something to do on the outside; cleaning the courtyard, trimming the grass in the garden and things of that kind."

"Then I must be always engaged?"

"If not within, then without."

"Hard luck," murmured the boy, laconically.

The woman continued:

"Do you see the pot over the fire?"

"I do."

"When I tell you lift that pot off, come up boldly to the fireplace, take hold of the hooks, raise them and carry the vessel into the middle of the floor."

Zanthon observed the blazing fire in the grate, the large pot bubbling over with boiling liquid, the iron hooks by which it was suspended, and concluded there was great danger in any attempt at removal.

"It would scald me to death," said he.

"Well, suppose it does?" returned the woman. "What of it? They would give you a decent burial, no doubt, a thing that everybody doesn't get."

"I wouldn't like it a bit," said Zanthon.

"We do not always get what we like best," remarked Mony. "If you do it quick enough and careful, nothing will happen."

This subject having been settled, the woman continued:

"Never let the kettle run dry, and keep it always boiling."

"What would happen if it *did* run dry?" asked the boy, innocently.

"What would happen?" retorted Mony, with a grunt. "Why, as like as not the poker would be drawn over your head in a way that would make you think the world was coming to an end."

The boy felt this argument to be very conclusive and admitting of no reply, so he remained silent, while the instructions continued:

"Twice a week you will go to town for meat and groceries."

"Will I have to walk all the way?"

"Indeed you will, unless a conntryman should take you upon his wagon and carry you along. You must trust to luck."

This was not a very cheering prospect, the town being about seven miles distant. The journey on foot in the morning and the return during the afternoon would be a remarkably fair achievement for a boy of Zanthon's age; but when to this would be added the burden of a heavy weight, it seemed too hard.

"How much will I have to carry?" he asked.

"Sometimes one thing and sometimes another. The first order for you will be: a leg of mutton, sixteen pounds, a pound of tea, five pounds of sugar, half pound of caraway seed and a paper of needles, besides messages, and what they think of before you start."

"Why all that weight will break my bones," said Zanthon in wonder.

"You'll get used to it. The basket can be fitted nicely to your back, and when you get tired, rest on the roadside."

"Many messages to go?"

"One with another from ten to twenty-five. Now when you have done all your messages, be careful to remember one thing more than another. On your life don't forget it."

"What *is* that thing?"

"Bring the news of the town home with you."

Zanthon letting his under jaw fall so that his mouth was half open, gazed in mute amazement into the woman's face.

"What news?" he said.

"All kinds, deaths, marriages, births, scandals, accidents, gossip, and lies if nothing else."

The boy trembled; he said loud enough to be heard:

"I will never be able to get at this disagreeable nonsense."

"Hunt them up in all places," pursued the woman, "pull men by the coat-tails, stop women in the street, question children, ask in the shops and where you go for your goods; if you see a gathering of people run into it; if it moves do not stay behind, but find out what brought it there and where it is going. If a boat is upset in the river, get the names of the drowned, in short, have all there is to know."

"Who would be the best people to ask?"

"Generally half blind women and lame men, although they are only the best for *gossip*. They love to talk about their neighbor's faults more than anything else. Indeed they seem to live on it."

"Why is it so, ma'am?"

"Who cares to know? I suppose they are badly raised. They are shallow-minded, evil-minded creatures. Oh, we who like news are very different from *them* kind."

This multiplication of deeds such as would test the mental and physical capacity of the strongest men began to trouble Zanthon exceedingly. If he must live up to all the requirements here enumerated, his distresses at Seaview and elsewhere were mere trifles compared with his troubles in Flippington Lodge. However, he had not yet heard the last of them. Mony resumed:

"You must not sleep much."

Zanthon being now prepared for any disclosure, no matter how extravagant, merely answered :

"I am fond of sleep."

"You'll be the last to go to bed and the first to get up."

"Very well."

"When there is company they may remain until two o'clock in the morning ; when there isn't it will be twelve. After everybody else has gone to bed, you must go round and round the house, looking well to the windows and doors, and be sure the front gate is closed. Then you may turn in."

"I will be like a night-watchman."

"That's what you're intended for."

"Why do you want this done every night ? "

"Because we must lie quiet on our beds. The family is not strong-minded, and the least noise disturbs them."

"I might get a dog to assist me."

"Nonsense. A dog would bark and do more harm than good."

"If a robber comes what will I do ? "

"Beat him off."

"I ? "

"Yes, you."

"How could I hope to do that, knowing I am but a weak boy, and he may be a strong man, perhaps."

"Find out the way. Use stratagem. Employ implements. Have a horn to blow at him. Get a long pole with a sharp point of steel to run through him. Carry a dipper of dirty water to throw over him, and fine sea-sand in your pocket to blind him if he attempts to come near you. Set a couple of rope traps that will catch him, and if all fails, fall back into the yard and give a general alarm."

Zanthon brightened up at the thought of becoming a hero strong enough to encounter a robber, when accoutered in those instruments of warfare enumerated by Mony. It reconciled

him to the difficulties of the undertaking and infused a spirit of enthusiasm into his mind, tending to dissipate the effects of the cruelty with which he was made so long familiar the past year.

After enumerating several other duties which would engage the attention of the boy, the woman continued : —

"It is not alone from robbers at night, but you must protect the family from the whole country ! "

Zanthon moved backward from the position heretofore occupied by him, until he rested his back against the kitchen table. He was getting weak in the knees. However extraordinary and insurmountable the previous propositions made by Mony appeared, this last one almost took away his breath. It seemed to destroy all hope of prosperity within him.

" Protect the Flippingtons from the whole country ! " What was implied in this terrible announcement ?

His looks betrayed the intense feelings of which he was possessed and called forth an explanation from the woman : —

" Many people try to impose on them in business ; you must prevent it by watching the market prices of things."

"I will be a kind of private detective."

"That's what you'll be, always do the best you can."

To mitigate the severity of her instructions the woman set some choice food before Zanthon and desired him to eat. She assured him also he would always be provided with plenty of good clothes and the best there was at the family table as well as that he would get enough house money to buy books. This prospect appeared so wonderful that he looked up to Mony as a being of extraordinary endowments, the harshness of whose voice was as soft music to his ear. All the rough lines of her face became smooth, and he felt he would as lief encounter a robber in the night as not ; or travel to town with a light step and a cheerful mind.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A VOICE FROM THE NIGHT

ZANTHON'S trial trip to town as indicated by Mony in the last chapter was performed in good time and excellent spirits.

He felt the effects of kind treatment already, and the prospect as sketched by the woman was not at all discouraging when he reflected that he would do all in his power to please them as he grew stronger. When, however, he began the homeward journey laden with the heavy basket of provisions, his mind underwent a great change. While traveling the first mile his physical powers seemed exercised to their full capacity he began to fear he would not be capable of proceeding much further, like soldiers on their first day's march after a long rest in camp. Yet remembering the remedy for fatigue he laid his burden by the wayside resting a little, then proceeding slowly along the highway. It was a terrible task to get home that day; and finally when late in the afternoon he entered the house followed by Flippington, who had been waiting his re-appearance, he felt so thoroughly exhausted with fatigue as to be almost unable to stand upright.

Refreshed with a good supper, however, he soon regained full animation. Then he rendered an account of the day's performance and its accuracy was acknowledged to be both satisfactory and pleasing. The only thing complained of related to the news. He said when he inquired of some men about items of general or local interest they stared at him in wonder and smiled, but said nothing; excepting one man from the

country who told him he had lost a pig about two months previously, if that would be of any interest to his people.

Mony's face darkened while the Flippingtons laughed at this recital.

"But," continued Zanthon, "the finest object I saw was the picture of a man in the clouds. He had white hair and was pointing with his finger towards the sea."

Flippington began to laugh and skip about.

"That's me," said he.

"There was something dark in the direction in which he was pointing," said the boy.

"Just so," returned Flippington lightly. "It was a shadow of course. Ha! ha! he! he!"

Zanthon looked at Mony and ceased speaking; but the rest of the company were evidently very much amused. He had been inadvertently drawn into the narration of the incident by the encouragement given him by Flippington; but was wise enough to stop before giving offense to his rough companion of the kitchen.

"That news is not worth anything," said Mony.

To relieve the boy's embarrassment Mrs. Flippington, always considerate, asked: —

"What else did you see?"

"I saw crowds of people in the streets of the town; the two bridges and the river; the long road bounded by stone walls; the meadows and the trees; the hills and valleys in the distance and the sea!"

Mony laughed hoarsely.

"Everybody sees them," she said.

The Flippingtons were silent. Something beautiful in the boy's speech mingled with his innocence neutralized their mirth

When Zanthon looked up to ascertain the cause of the silence they were moving noiselessly out of the apartment, as if conscious of having committed a guilty act and had been detected.

The life of Zanthon at Flippington Lodge was one of great activity. While pleasing to him in general, his visits to town were attended with too much labor for one so young.

Mony endeavored to palliate her rough usage of the boy by giving him good food; but there were times when he felt keenly how deplorable it is to be dependent on the will of others.

As a result of fear and over-exertion Zanthon became a somnambulist. This peculiar phenomenon troubled the Flippingtons very much, although anyone acquainted with the facts might have easily determined the cause; but the individuals referred to were so strongly attached to the routine of life established in their household, that they did not understand either the origin of the boy's disease or its management.

What aggravated the case and made it felt more than at another time was Mony's accuracy began to undergo modification.

Simultaneously with the appearance of somnambulism in the boy, a loss of power or nervousness of some kind afflicted the woman. She accidently broke a pair of valuable vases, overturned a bottle of ink on the ottoman in the drawing-room and knocked the head off a statue of Flippington's father which had stood on the parlor mantel-piece for half a century!

The family appeared terror-stricken under these and other disasters of a similar kind, fearing lest this change in the conduct or manner of their faithful and previously reliable servant indicated the beginning of some dire calamity to themselves.

This was not all.

A piece of mortar fell down the kitchen chimney into the fire, scattering the live coals about, some of which ignited Mony's clothing.

While attempting to suppress the flames, which she finally succeeded in doing, her right hand was badly burned. The accident caused her great suffering, and the parts injured did not heal for a considerable time.

The efficacy of soda was then unknown, but Mrs. Flippington and Miss Cora applied several domestic remedies and extended a large amount of sympathy to alleviate the distress of the patient.

One evening after a weary walk from town, Zanthon dropped into a chair by the kitchen fire, and soon fell into a deep sleep. Mony, who could not tolerate rest during the working hours of the day, called sharply to him to get up and walk about. The boy obeyed mechanically and moved or rather moped through the kitchen without any definite purpose in view, for indeed he was still asleep.

Seeing this, the woman began to scold him; and following towards the hallway where he had just then directed his steps, was in the act of stretching forth her hand in order probably to prevent his further movement, when she received a blow on the back of the head that nearly laid her prostrate.

She was terrified as well as shocked.

There were no living persons present but the boy in front of her in a helpless condition, the family being out walking.

Terror is very effectual in taming a savage or cruel nature; and in the present case the woman trembled with fear like one in the presence of an awful death.

She sat down stupefied so as to collect her scattered reason, and Zanthon soon returned to his chair.

Superstition came to Mony's aid in her endeavor to solve the mystery of this new accident. She began to suspect that her treatment of Zanthon brought her the misfortunes which recently disturbed her life at Flippington Lodge.

The more she reflected on this theme, the more she became convinced of its truth. She did not understand why such marvelous interference should be exercised on behalf of the boy; she only knew by experience, punishment to him meant calamity to her.

She was not slow, therefore, in changing her manner to suit the power which favored him, and when she spoke it was in

the gentlest words imaginable, inviting his opinions also on the subject about which she was then concerned.

The generous boy, conciliated by the deportment of the woman, arose and examined the house thoroughly, but found no one.

He saw in the circumstance, however, a prospect of better times with Mony, and hence, when he returned to make report, he magnified the mystery of it as much as possible, and thus inadvertently increased her fears.

On his own account he did not connect the fact with superhuman agency, but strongly suspected Flippington of committing the deed. His master might have detached himself from his party, come noiselessly through a door and delivered the blow to the woman as an admonition to desist in future from troubling him in the manner already described.

When the family returned and the facts of the case became known, there was great consternation among them ; although several opinions were offered by individuals, no doubt, to allay any great fear that might arise if all believed in the superstitious side of the question or imagined that robbers were concerned in the outrage.

Miss Cora, who knew a good deal about headaches, smelling bottles and the like, believed it to be a sudden pain that started up in Mony's head, which she concluded was a blow. Such sensations often happen, and the similarity existing between them and real blows has been well established.

In the absence of any other, Mrs. Flippington was very much in favor of this view, seeing, upon examination, there was no contused part on the head where the blow was said to have been received. Flippington laughed and skipped about, although he appeared serious at times.

Zanthon kept a sharp look on his face, but was unable to draw any conclusion from its appearance, so indefinite did it remain under scrutiny.

In a whisper Flippington said to the boy :

"It may be another shadow."

After a great amount of comment the subject quietly subsided, and the business of the establishment resumed its usual phases.

Nobody cared to refer to the incident again.

The tendency to somnambulism in Zanthon, notwithstanding, increased, for although Mony's inconsiderate harshness became less after the occurrence above related, still a sufficient amount of it remained to produce the derangement spoken of.

Very frequently Zanthon would arise from his seat where he had fallen asleep and walk about the kitchen or into the yard in a thoroughly unconscious state, and this, too, without any word from Mony. Mrs. Flippington became sorely disturbed by this unfortunate condition of her favorite, not knowing how to apply a remedy, and believing with the others that it proceeded from causes beyond their control.

On another occasion, the family being out visiting friends in the neighborhood, Zanthon sat by the kitchen fire asleep. It was night, and as usual he was distressed on account of journeying from the town under a heavy burden.

The moon had come out from a shroud of clouds, and filled the earth with her mellow light. There was a remarkable calmness in the atmosphere, as if mysterious powers were concerting plans for some wonderful performance requiring profound silence. The tints of the sky scattered through the west by the sun, where he had gone to rest, mingled with the moonlight and produced a richness and softness of shade fascinating to the mind of the observer, as if the sheen surrounding angels had been sent to adorn the canopy above the habitation of mankind.

The woman from some cause, exhibited an irritability not common with her of late; and, after rousing the boy, began to scold him. The back door stood open and some moonlight streamed into the hall. Suddenly a voice was heard coming from the outside stillness.

It repeated one word two or three times: —

"Mony! Mony! Mony!"

It was a solemn voice; and judged from its tone, evidently masculine.

Zanthon heard it with peculiar distinctness; and for the first time was astonished; because he could not account for it.

It was not Flippington's voice, or any other with which he was acquainted.

Mony trembled violently, so clearly did the sounds come to her and so emphatically was her name articulated. She ceased speaking for some minutes, during which she and her companion reflected on the strangeness of the case; Zanthon being pleased inwardly, knowing his tormentor would relax her stern conduct towards him as she did after having been struck in the head.

In as quiet a voice as she could assume Mony asked: —

"What was that? I think some one spoke. Did you hear it?"

"I did," said Zanthon, "and very plainly too."

"What do you think it said?"

"Mony, without doubt," returned the boy.

"Yes, that is what it did say; but why should it call *me*?"

"I do not know," replied Zanthon, shrugging his shoulders.

"Was it like any person you ever heard speaking before; any of your friends. I mean those dead as well as living?"

Zanthon reflected a little to determine if it resembled the voice of some one of his dead relatives: —

"No, it was not like them," he answered.

This assertion seemed to relieve the woman's mind somewhat.

In the mean time the boy arose and walked into the yard, thence to the garden and adjoining grounds, but made no discovery that could solve the mystery of the unknown voice.

"I am almost sure the noise was caused by the swinging of the stable-door on its hinges," he said when he had come back.

"There is no wind to make it swing," returned the woman promptly.

"It might be a strange dog that came prowling into the yard and began to cough."

"Dogs don't cough that way."

"A toad might have made the sound."

"Nonsense. Toads cannot speak."

When the Flippingtons returned they became alarmed at the strangeness of the incident. Flippington appeared overcome by a degree of gravity never before shown by him. No doubt it was caused principally by the concern which he entertained for his wife.

In the sitting-room where the three discussed the subject before going to bed, he remarked: —

"The idea, my dear Helen, of the superhuman intervention is long since exploded. Don't you think so, Cora?"

"How are we to account for it?

What can we do when such things as these transpire?" returned the lady.

"I do not believe the whole of the story," said Flippington. "There was doubtless some noise resembling the word which the servants imagined they heard spoken; but this could have proceeded from several sources; a calf, a sheep, a hog or the wind!"

"What troubles me most," said Mrs. Flippington, "is the difficulty of determining the origin of the sound. While it may be conceded that there are no spirits at work on the case, we must conclude there are grounds for uneasiness, if we suppose living persons to have given birth to it. This view is the more probable when taken in connection with the blow recently received by Mony. If any person or persons in the village are secretly engaged in doing these things there would be more reason for apprehension than if they were actually the results of supernatural agency; because their vengeance would be positive."

This was sensible language from Mrs. Flippington, showing how she entertained a practical view of the case; and one that

now seemed the most reliable of all others. Flippington by his silence coincided with his wife; Miss Cora questioned still further: —

"What object could any person have in coming around the house and committing such outrages?" she said.

"That we cannot tell," answered Mrs. Flippington. "We might conjecture however that it was some one having ill-feeling against Mony, perhaps on account of her treatment of the orphan boy Zanthon; although we are not aware that she has been cruel to him. It would be hard to guess the truth and we must wait until the cause or causes become clearer than at present."

"It appears to be quite certain," said Miss Cora, "we are not the object of the visitation, individually, or collectively; for the occurrences have taken place during our absence."

"They are after the shadow," said Flippington. "Helen's suggestion about the boy's friends is good and very likely to be the whole truth."

"He has no friends here," said Miss Cora.

"He may have dozens of them for all we know," remarked Mrs. Flippington in support of her husband's opinion, and she continued:

"The boy is closely observed by every one who sees him, and many persons would do him a kindly act on the strength of his personal appearance, if they knew he required one. No doubt Mony is the objective point."

"By the way," resumed Miss Cora, "I must begin to teach him the catechism as originally agreed upon."

"And I," said Mrs. Flippington, "will see to it that he learns the rule of three. When our duties are performed, we may rest without fear."

The subject being thus disposed of, Flippington resumed his wonted merriment by waltzing around the room and humming one of his favorite airs.

For several weeks afterward, Zanthon was flattered by the most assiduous attention from everyone in Flippington Lodge. He grew happy, a dangerous condition unless supported by wisdom and knowledge, because it is liable, like all things, to change. Activity in the business pertaining to his employers induced health as well as pleasure, and he became fully satisfied to live with the Flippingtons all his life, the more so as Mony ceased to trouble him, and somnambulism afflicted him no longer.

During this period he performed many useful and wonderful deeds in behalf of the family, made several important purchases for them, collected some outstanding accounts supposed to be lost, and otherwise displayed a lively interest in all matters pertaining to their welfare.

In the midst of the tranquility caused by this success, he became aware of the fact that certain efforts were about to be made to change the current of his life and alter the plans regarding him which had been so carefully made by Mrs. Figbit.

This information caused him immense trouble.

It came about in this way. During his visits to town, he invariably saw and conversed with his old friend, Big Nancy. Learning the days of the week on which he was expected to arrive, she usually left a message for him at the hostlery where the meeting with Mrs. Figbit had formerly taken place, giving him to understand where she might be found.

At one of these visits the boy told her of his troubles, exploits and hopes for the future. He was surprised in a few weeks afterwards to find that she had repeated to one of her employers all he had said about himself, and that this man had taken a very lively interest in the recital. Nancy's story was more or less incoherent, but he gathered from the entire statement sufficient to conclude that a gentleman wanted to speak with him on important business relating to his future career.

As Zanthon was at a loss to unfold the prospect of the future, he was not disposed to favor a change from his present position.

Mrs. Figbit's plan had operated very well. He had now everything that a boy of his age required. Nay, more, he had money to spare, and a large number of story books with which to amuse himself.

Looking through the past, back to the time of his father's death, nothing appeared but abject misery. He could never agree to return to such condition in future, while persons like the Flippingtons were more than glad to take care of him, and reward his services besides.

After long debating with himself, however, taking care that nothing would yet be told about the subject to anyone, he consented to hear the gentleman speak the next time he came to town. He would meet Nancy as before at the gentleman's house where she was employed temporarily. The gentleman was a merchant of considerable wealth, and one most likely to be a good judge of what would be suitable for a boy like Zanthon. His name was Gangpond.

When Zanthon presented himself the day and hour appointed with Big Nancy at his side, the contrast was almost appalling.

Mr. Gangpond, a large man with steel gray hair and a benevolent countenance, extended his hand to the boy saying :

"I need not be told that no family relationship exists between you and our friend, Nancy."

"Thank you," answered Zanthon, promptly, "she has been a good friend to me for all that."

The gentleman continued :

"I have been speaking to her about a change in your condition ; did she explain what I meant ?"

"I did not understand what the change was for. I am now as happy as I could be, perhaps, under any circumstance."

"It is because you know no other form of happiness. When you advance in years the bliss you now feel may no longer exist ; for the reason that it may be due as much to your youth as it is to your situation. What I proposed to Nancy was that I would aid your friends in having you sent to school."

"I thought," replied the boy, "I needed no further learning, having been taught the catechism by Miss Cora and the rule of three by Mrs. Flippington."

The gentleman smiled and Nancy laughed outright.

"These are not even the preliminaries of learning," he replied. "I understand your father was a scholar of some note."

"So far as I can judge, he knew almost everything," said Zanthon.

"Surely if he lived, the plan or course I submitted to your friends would be the one he would recommend you to pursue. When you acquire knowledge through intercourse with books, the world will entertain you in a different way from what you must expect at its hands while you remain a mere menial. The height to which you could aspire and probably attain may not now be determined accurately; but while it would be great, generally speaking your present status will be about the same at all times."

"Could I ever get so far as to have a house of my own?" asked the boy.

"Yes, and many other things too numerous to mention."

"Carriages and horses and dogs," suggested Zanthon.

"Whatever you see others possess," replied the gentleman, "would be yours if you employed the same means as they did to acquire them. The members of your generation will fill our places when we are dead. There is room being made for such every day. If you make the necessary efforts beforehand, you may have your choice of the positions vacated, and finally occupying the one most desirable to you, leave it in turn to some one else."

"It will feel very hard to me if I attempt to leave the Flippingtons," said Zanthon.

"The work before you is much more distressing, or at least more laborious," replied Mr. Gangpond.

"Of what does it consist?"

"Studying the several branches of the sciences that constitute a sound English education ; standing up courageously against the difficulties with which the life of every man is beset in his struggle for support."

"Would it not be better to remain where I am, and in this way avoid the distress ?" said Zanthon, fully alive to the memory of his former sufferings.

"No," answered the gentleman, "it is your duty to follow a progressive course no matter what the inconvenience entailed by it may be ; because it has been fully established by experience that this always results in most benefit to the actor besides being in harmony with universal law."

"Why should I have any regard for duty ?" asked the boy.

"Because if you neglect it you lose your place in society as well as in the domain of nature. Duty is what we *should* perform even at the risk of our lives ; for the eternal powers require it in return for the conditions with which they surround us."

"Then you think it is my duty to accept your kind offer ?"

"Without doubt it is."

Zanthon hung down his head in a meditative mood, unable to give a direct reply. Presently he resumed : —

"I know it would please my father and I will therefore consent."

"Do not be afraid," returned Mr. Gangpond, "I will make a man of you."

The interview then terminated. Zanthon after thanking the gentleman and bidding Nancy farewell pursued his journey to Flippington Lodge.

On this occasion the weight of his burden did not seem very troublesome. He thought long and deeply.

It must be admitted there was a large amount of sadness mixed up with his consideration of the contemplated change. The Flippingtons were always friendly to him and in their house his wants had been fully supplied. Would he not be

ungrateful to them, he thought, if he concealed the knowledge of his clandestine meeting with Nancy and Mr. Gangpond. On the other hand, movements of this nature demanded a certain amount of secrecy essential to their successful operation. He must follow the way indicated by the gentleman, the patron of Nancy ; because he believed it best. The greater of two goods or the lesser of two evils should be selected when a choice becomes necessary. The change to him would be greater good than gratitude to the Flippingtons. It was grievous to think so ; but there was no help for it.

Thus he reasoned with himself.

At his return he had not been more than five minutes in the house when Mrs. Flippington noticed the mental depression under which he labored. To relieve him of this distress the lady approached the table where he sat at supper and attended to his wants with her own hands.

This action so far from having the desired effect increased his sorrow. After a few efforts to overcome it he arose from the table and burst into tears !

If a thunderbolt had exploded in the center of the room it would not have produced more astonishment than Zanthon's exhibition of grief.

Mrs. Flippington approached Mony on tiptoe and gave her an inquiring look ; but the shadow was staring at the floor in silence and made no response. Then the lady went into the drawing-room where Miss Cora and Flippington were playing a game of cards and related what she had seen and heard. Nobody could understand the case ; because nothing presented itself indicating trouble for the boy.

When questioned presently on the subject, his answers did not elucidate the mystery. Miss Cora asked : —

"Are you ill, Zanthon ? "

"I am well, Miss."

"Did any person offend or hurt you ? "

"Everyone is kind to me."

"Have you lost what you desired most to keep?"

"I have won all that is necessary."

"Are you dissatisfied with your present position?"

"I do not wish for any other."

"Will you not tell us the cause of your grief?"

The boy hesitated as if deliberating whether or not he would reveal the truth in regard to the origin of his sorrow; he then said: —

"Something has come into my memory which makes me grieve. A thought of past times, it will be gone presently."

From this expression it was understood that a recollection of one or more of his dead relatives caused the temporary trouble.



CHAPTER XXIX.

THE MOVEMENT ON FLIPPINGTON LODGE

WHILE the incidents recorded in the last chapter transpired at Flippington Lodge, Zanthon's friends in the town of Kindleton were busy in his interests. It was strange that Big Nancy again became instrumental in shaping his destinies; not on account of intelligent exertion on her part, or even by the most remote reflection exercised toward that end; but the accidental position which she occupied seemed to have been selected by the powers through which to bring forth the boy's preservation; like a sunken rock that alters the channel of a river on account of some ulterior design of nature, perhaps, to beautify itself.

Thus the most insignificant person known to the community became an instrument of good.

Mr. Gangpond took pains to ascertain the history of Zanthon so far as known. He encountered much difficulty in this undertaking, as Nancy betrayed such ignorance of everything outside scrubbing and scouring; but by patient perseverance he finally reached all the details of the case.

Believing it was due to Mrs. Figbit he directed that a message be sent her, so as to have her meet him at the hostlery where she had been accustomed to call; in order that Zanthon's future position be discussed and her consent, to the contemplated change, obtained. It was also decided to summon old Jemmy.

Mr. Gangpond's status in the proceedings was assumed through conscientious motives. He had no selfish ends to sub-

serve. His action was wholly for the advancement of benevolence. He was one of those men who sometimes stop in the market-place or on the highroad, pick up an unfortunate wayfarer and assist him to pursue life's journey successfully. None but Mr. Gangpond and men of his class ever know of the sweet pleasure derived from such deeds.

Mrs. Figbit came on time. Heretofore the most active of all Zanthon's acquaintances she showed by her prompt attendance on the present occasion no disposition to vacate that enviable position so long and faithfully held by her. The persons who recognized her on entering the town noticed a troubled look upon her features and an unusual quickness in her movements as if desirous of reaching her destination without delay.

Old Jemmy came later. He wore a clean shirt collar, rather high in its makeup and a cotton handkerchief tied under his chin, the knot being elaborate and flashy in appearance. The rest of his garments were the same which he wore while the companion of Zanthon at the residence of Ben Razzo. Perhaps the bend in his person was a shade greater and the look in his eye less bright than formerly ; but he exhibited fine health for one of his age.

His meeting with Mrs. Figbit and Nancy was cordial.

Whatever unpleasantness existed on account of the scene at Seaview on the occasion of her visit was now set aside, and the gravity of a serious undertaking assumed instead for Zanthon's sake.

Thus children have been the cause of many a reconciliation with those who otherwise would have remained forever apart.

This was the first time the old man became acquainted with Big Nancy.

From what could be gathered in Nancy's language, when requested by Mrs. Figbit to give her views on the subject at issue, she thought the change contemplated involved only the going to school. If Mrs. Figbit's plan had already secured the boy's education through the Flippingtons, she did not understand

how much more there was in it. What could possibly lie beyond the catechism and the rule of three? Under these circumstances Zanthon's transfer did not present so favorable an aspect as represented by Mr. Gangpond. Besides she believed Mrs. Figbit knew more than anybody else; and she was willing to abide by her decision.

Jemmy, on the contrary, who had read somewhat more extensively, considered it advisable to assist Mr. Gangpond's idea by all means. In furtherance of his opinions he said: —

"Zanty should study anyhow as far as the square root."

"Well, and what did *you* ever gain by — by the square or by the root," retorted Mrs. Figbit, with animation: "or by going so far; tell me that?"

"To tell you the truth, ma'am," answered Jemmy, "I gained but very little." The woman resumed: —

"Baby is better off now than *you* ever was. If by sending him to school he comes to nothing more than *you* did, how can you have the heart to ask him, or encourage him, to leave his place? I'm surprised at you, man!"

Jemmy seemed staggered by this language, uttered in the forcible manner for which the lady was remarkable. To conciliate her he said: —

"No doubt you are correct in this as in all other things. You are the cleverest woman, not that I say it Mrs. Figbit, I ever spoke to. However, Mr. Gangpond, when he comes, will tell us more than I can explain."

Having gained this point she changed the subject.

"How have you fared since Baby left your company?"

"Very well, I thank you, ma'am. I am quite comfortable with the new man; that is he who took up Ben Razzo's business, I get something to eat."

"What did you do when you got nothing?"

"I did without it the best way I could."

"It was less troublesome," remarked Mrs. Figbit sarcastically.

"Pretty much that way, ma'am; and very inconvenient at times."

"Do you wander around now as much as formerly?"

"Not by any means. I spend most of the time at Seaview, doing odd jobs for the master."

"How much are you allowed for your work?"

"Nothing but all I eat; and that is considerable, seeing how long I fasted on little or nothing. He gives me presents sometimes."

"Good ones?"

"Well, this collar, if you excuse me for mentioning it; and the handkerchief. I thought I'd put them on, so that Zanty might see how well I have done since he left us."

Mrs. Figbit smiled, exchanging glances with Nancy who was carefully observing all that passed, though strictly silent.

"If I'm not too bold in asking," said Jemmy, "in what way has the world treated you, Mrs. Figbit, since we last met?"

"You are quite excusable, Jemmy. I have not much regard for the treatment of the world. I treat myself moderately and am content. I live with my sister on a farm. My means are well invested, that is, safely.

I have not much trouble; because I do not take a great deal like others. I pay my way; I have no debts. I live within my means and for amusement. I sometimes invade the province of men and hunt or fish as I desire."

"Don't tell me. You do not fowl, ma'am?"

"Why yes. I can shoot a snipe on the wing readily."

"I'm astonished to hear you. You're wonderful. I wish ——"

"Do not," said Mrs. Figbit sharply, before the old man could finish his sentence: "wishes come to nothing."

"Ah! you are again right," said Jemmy with a sigh. "I was only trying to express how glad I would be if I could act the man as well as you act the woman."

"Thank you. Perhaps you could if you tried hard enough."

" No, ma'am, I have not the brain for it."

"Nonsense, use your arms. If you cannot design on your own account, follow the instructions of some one else ; or be like an inferior animal, learn to work patiently."

Before Jemmy could make reply Mr. Gangpond entered the apartment. As the time and place had been arranged previously his presence did not excite surprise.

After greeting the individuals of the party he proceeded in a business-like way to provide refreshments for them.

Mrs. Figbit would take a glass of wine as a compliment to the occasion, while Jemmy and Nancy were accommodated with hot water and whisky made palatable by the addition of sugar ; besides there were sandwiches of cold beef, bread, butter and other articles of food.

When a portion of these comforts had been partaken a better feeling prevailed. Mrs. Figbit seemed disposed to resign the whole case into the hands of Mr. Gangpond without further controversy.

"You know best what should be done," she said.

"My experience in the world has enabled me to discover many things outside the reach of others, not similarly placed," replied the gentleman, "Zanthon belongs evidently to a fine stock of people. His mental powers must be large, and consequently he may attain a high station in life if proficient in learning."

"Will learning do all that for him ?" asked Mrs. Figbit.

"Yes, and will bring him a great deal more ; independence, wealth, honor and happiness."

"Happiness had better be left out Mr. Gangpond."

"As you will. I spoke because a form of it is possible of attainment, under certain conditions, such as peace, contentment, comfort, joy, hope and others.

"Have you any particular plans regarding Zanthon's future ?"

"Not many; for the reason that it is better to wait and see what may be required as we proceed. The boy, on coming here will be accommodated with the necessaries of life at the house of respectable people living near one of the suburbs of the town. I will pay what little may be charged for his support. He will also attend the principal school here at my expense. Upon his own conduct there, will depend his future success. He will have no further struggle for food; but his search after knowledge must be continuous and energetic. He will begin a new life."

"There may be trouble in getting him away from the Flippingtons. It will be hard for me to sanction his removal, seeing that I was the person who asked the place for him," said Mrs. Figbit. She continued: —

"I am in doubt whether it is best for me to go down to the Lodge or stay away and send the others."

"If you be Zanthon's real friend you should confer personally with his present employers," said Mr. Gangpond. "You have the best right to speak."

"Yes," returned the woman, "it must be as you say. Every consideration should be set aside in favor of the boy's release. I will be his friend as long as I have life."

"I think, too, it might be as well for Jemmy and Nancy to accompany you," resumed the gentleman. "In this way it will be seen how many are interested in the boy, and will doubtless give a more favorable impression of the proceedings than if only one appeared in the case."

"I am ready to risk my life for him," said Jemmy, with enthusiasm, "and I am sure Nancy would also."

Hearing her name mentioned, Nancy looked around at the persons in the apartment as if to assure them of her willingness to do her share for the boy, while she touched her eyes with the corner of her apron, where tears had been accumulating.

Mrs. Figbit recognizing the greatness of Mr. Gangpond's bounty, determined to give as much assistance towards the enterprise as she could. Hence, the difficulty of transportation to Flippington Lodge and return presenting itself she said

"I will procure the means of conveying all three of us, and have room for Baby besides."

"No one could do it better than you," said Jemmy.

Mrs. Figbit continued:

"I will borrow Crispus for the occasion. Baby will like to see him."

"It will be a pleasure even to me," said the old man, "to see the horse Zanty and I loved so well."

"I propose also to get a family chaise and yoke him to it," continued the woman, "the vehicle is in the yard of this house. We will have *you* drive, Jemmy, and I warn you to do it well."

"You may be sure I will do so while you are behind me," answered Jemmy.

Mrs. Figbit turned to Mr. Gangpond.

"It is understood your name will not be mentioned in connection with this affair."

"You are quite correct. It is best not to do so, unless an extremity might arise, in which case, of course, I would take the matter into my own hands and insist on its accomplishment; but my personal interference will probably not be required."

"Then the responsibility rests on my shoulders, or so much of it as requires the removal of the boy," continued Mrs. Figbit. "I am proud to undertake it, but I have neither a paper nor permit of any kind to show the people that have him."

"Nor a *latitat* nor a *habeas corpus*," said Jemmy.

"I won't flinch on that account," returned the woman, "while I have a tongue in my head."

"When do you propose to make the journey?" inquired Mr. Gangpond, rising to take leave, as the business in hand had been settled.

"To-morrow morning at five o'clock," answered Mrs. Figbit.

"We are all early risers and understand the benefits of morning air."

"I will meet you at your return," said Mr. Gangpond, as he opened the door and passed out, leaving Zanthon's friends together.

Then Mrs. Figbit settling herself in her seat, became the great spirit of the occasion.

Jemmy and Nancy were awed into silence lest the sound of their voices might dispel the glamour which encircled the personality of this wonderful woman.

The time available to make ready being limited, it was necessary that the labor of preparation should be divided among them.

To this end Mrs. Figbit directed Jemmy to apply for Crispus, and on no account to accept a refusal.

"If he does not want to lend the horse," said Jemmy, "what can I do?"

"Don't come back to me without him," replied the austere lady, feeling hurt at Jemmy's question, for she felt satisfied the horse would be lent her. "You'll find the harness and the chaise here, and have them all ready to start at the time appointed." Then she turned to Nancy.

The instructions given to her had reference principally to provisions for the trip. Nancy must borrow a basket somewhere, no ordinary lunch-basket, but one of huge proportions, for Mrs. Figbit did not forget she had to deal with persons who never wanted a good appetite. Moreover, the sea air would have a fearful effect on such constitutions as those possessed by Jemmy and Nancy, making it necessary to provide extra quantities of food for this particular occasion. Mrs. Figbit entered into the most minute details so as to leave nothing undone in making the *commissariat* worthy of such an expedition as the one now being organized.

The expenses incurred here as well as those attending the wants of old Jemmy would be borne by Mrs. Figbit in the interests of Zanthon, and as tending to show that his friends on *her* side were not wholly destitute.

It is questionable if Jemmy slept at all during that night. After getting Crispus into the stable and examining the paraphernalia pertaining to a family chaise in motion, enlivening his movements by singing verses of old songs, he sat beside the kitchen-fire until bedtime, then stretched himself on a bench in the corner, intimating to the host of the hostlery that as he needed to be astir early he would not employ a room. It was evident he had a wholesome fear of Mrs. Figbit's criticism, or else it was desirable he should stand well in her estimation.

How long he remained on the bench could not be determined, for those who first entered the place next morning found him absent in the stable busily engaged at work.

When Zanthon's three friends met at the breakfast table in the back parlor, everything was ready.

The meal finished, Jemmy with a great show of circumstance, hitched Crispus to the old chaise, and led him out to the front door.

The horse was in splendid condition. From habit the man had been grooming him for a couple of hours, the result being a shining coat, a glossy mane and tail.

When Mrs. Figbit, with some slight paleness in her face, appeared, followed closely by Nancy, he said in the pride of his heart:

"Look at his hind-quarters, ma'am."

"He's a handsome beast," returned Mrs. Figbit.

"He has an eye in him," continued Jemmy, "as bright as well water, and the spring under his fetlock is of the right kind. Step right in, Mrs. Figbit," he said, holding the door of the chaise open.

Nancy followed. Finally taking the reins, Jemmy mounted the box-seat, and touching Crispus lightly on the flank with

the whip which was a part of the furniture of the outfit moved off.

"Keep him in an easy trot, man," said Mrs. Figbit. "I want him fresh for the return journey with Baby."

"If it wasn't yourself that said it," returned the old man, "I know how to manage Crispus the best of any man on the road, Zanty can tell you that."

To which the lady replied:

"It is my business to manage both you and Crispus on this occasion and it will be done without fear or favor."

Jemmy felt the time had come to suspend further conversation, so bending resolutely to the work on hand, the chaise continued the forward motion bearing its passengers in silence.

The morning sun was high in the heavens and shining pleasantly over Flippington Lodge, as if specially designed to contribute light and warmth to it, when a dark looking vehicle, drawn by a steel gray horse was seen approaching the gate. There was a jingle accompanying its motion which might be heard some distance, caused probably by a piece of chain hanging to the axle and the loose washers under the linch pins. At intervals the top, or covering, would lurch from side to side as if about to fall off; and the body itself on these occasions oscillated perceptibly until one would suppose it must soon go to pieces.

Zanthon observed these peculiarities of the drag, as he stood before the front entrance on the occasion referred to. The appearance was so quaint that he kept his eyes on it until it stopped and the driver had dismounted to aid the others in getting out.

The boy expected the conveyance to pass the gate like many more, as the road lead down to the beach and thence northward to a well-peopled district. The reverie into which he had been thrown was now quickly dispelled giving place to astonishment on perceiving that the party so far from proceeding over the

route anticipated seemed actually preparing to move on the Lodge itself.

What could such a coach as this, or the homely people it contained, want with the Flippingtons? he thought. They were not relatives surely; and it was preposterous to assume they might be guests.

Who were they?

The answer came immediately, and brought fear with it as well as surprise. The three persons advancing in Indian file along the gravel walk between the gate and the house could not be mistaken. Mrs. Figbit, with a whip under her arm, leading; Big Nancy with the handkerchief around her head, and old Jemmy dressed in his large coat and high hat, bent from the effects of years and accumulated cares.

Although Zanthon had given his consent to leave Flippington Lodge he did not expect this sudden visit, made evidently, for the purpose of carrying him off; and he now regretted having favored the idea. He possessed great regard for his old friends, loved to remember them; but good food and kind words went far to influence his actions when taken in connection with any serious change in his mode of life. Hence he instinctively dreaded the uncertainty of the immediate future.

Before he could control the first impulse with which he was actuated, he ran off in great excitement, and meeting Flippington in the garden informed him of what he feared was going to transpire. It was with the greatest difficulty he did this, however, for the trouble at his heart took away almost all power of speech.

When Flippington gathered from his disjointed words some understanding of what the boy meant, his gaiety disappeared in an instant; and he looked up at the sky as if expecting to behold some unusual commotion there on account of the perpetration of such an outrage as the taking away of Zanthon implied.

Hastily advancing into the house he summoned each member of the family by name, supplemented by loud shouting,

the like of which had never before been heard coming from him. If Mony had not made her appearance in good time, showing her great strength to advantage, and holding in her hand an immense club, the ladies would undoubtedly have been frightened into hysterics. Flippington continued to run around the apartments screaming and laughing, throwing up his hands above his head and stamping on the floor like a jig dancer.

The cause of the commotion was explained by Zanthon in a few seconds, so that by the time his friends appeared at the door, their business was known to the inmates of the Lodge.

It is safe to say that the plague within the walls of Flippington Lodge would not have created more consternation than did this threatened departure of Zanthon.

The suddenness of the movement almost paralyzed the power of the Flippingtons. Mony, however, was equal to the occasion. Standing in the doorway, like a tower, she brought the end of her club down against the floor with such force that the foremost of the Figbit party trembled. She did this of her own accord, for the purpose of stopping any further advance of the enemy, so called, in order to allow the people within ample time to recover their equanimity and determine on the best method of procedure.

Mrs. Flippington recognizing Mrs. Figbit saluted her kindly and invited her whole party into the drawing-room, where after a little while the entire household assembled and became known to each other. Zanthon cordially shook hands with his old friends and stood in the midst of them conversing with each one in turn.

Miss Cora believing that on her rested the responsibility of debating such important questions as might be presented on the present occasion, assumed a grave aspect and prepared to speak; Flippington in the mean time rubbing his hands with delight in anticipation of the method by which she would dispose of the arguments of the new comers. Miss Cora addressed

Mrs. Figbit with the understanding that she was the chief personage on the opposite side. She said : —

"We have been led to believe your party has come here to disturb our relations with Zanthon."

"Wherever you got the information," replied Mrs. Figbit boldly, "it is not strictly correct. We have no intention of making any disturbance."

"But your intention is to take the boy away."

"You are right, Miss Cora, it is my intention."

"If you are permitted to do so, we will consider it a very serious disturbance indeed ; and an unwarrantable interference, on your part, with the affairs of our house."

Mrs. Figbit winced under this severe language. Every eye was turned on her inquisitively. She had answered the first question in a masterly manner ; how would she meet this one so well pointed by a lady who possessed learning, wisdom and the experience of old age to sustain her ? It might be seen, however, that some of the old fire which used to animate her in former days came to her aid, for she raised her face with such an expression of defiance that Miss Cora gathered the folds of her dress nearer to her as if she needed protection.

"The fact of your considering it a disturbance," said Mrs. Figbit, "does not make it so ; or granting on the other hand that your opinion is true it may not amount to much. I mean it may be insignificant compared with the purpose we desire to accomplish. It was my power, poor as you think it to be, that gave him to you in the first place, a power, let me tell you, still capable of taking him back."

"Excuse me," rejoined Miss Cora quickly, "your power in regard to him ceased when he came to us. He no longer belongs to any of his former acquaintances. *We* own him now."

Flippington laughed gleefully at Miss Cora's language, repeating the last sentence, and nodding his head at Zanthon to inform him that the matter was settled in that way. Mrs. Flippington, too, seemed highly pleased on account of her aunt

expressing so well what she herself would be most likely to say. Mrs. Figbit resumed : —

"I hope it will not be necessary for me to prove that the boy is no slave. There was no bond. Bad as the country is it does not tolerate slavery. You should tell ignorant people that you own him. *I* can afford to laugh at that. You cannot own him if you recognize the law. I have the first claim to be his guardian ; because I was first in affording him shelter when he was in need. I permitted his service with you for his benefit ; and now believing another change to be still more beneficial I consider it my duty to have the transfer made. You know, or at least Mrs. Flippington knows my intentions were always good and my designs such as could be examined by anyone without bringing discredit on me."

Jemmy coughed behind his hand, as Mrs. Figbit finished, and scrutinized the faces of those in front of him with keen interest. He felt this was the best argument yet put forward, and he actually straightened himself in his seat, with a show of pride, so much did his enthusiastic admiration of her influence his mind and body.

Miss Cora did not reply immediately. A slight paleness appeared above and around her lips. It was evident she was seeking how to effect an honorable retreat from the position assumed by her on the subject under discussion.

Flippington and his wife were gravely silent. They had heard a reference made to the law which set them thinking. It made them serious.

Miss Cora continued: —

"What place could you offer him where his wants might be better supplied than here ?"

"I have considered the subject very well before making the application," replied Mrs. Figbit evasively.

"The fact that we, too, are concerned in the same subject ought to entitle us to an answer," resumed Miss Cora. "Mr. and Mrs. Flippington are persons of quality and responsible for

what they do. There should be some respect paid to their rights and privileges."

Flippington here interposed hastily.

"I will take care that they shall be respected, Cora. The boy cannot leave. He must not leave. If he is forced away I will send officers after him, and have the others arrested or imprisoned.

Mrs. Figbit looked askance at Flippington but did not speak lest she might say too much.

Mrs. Flippington in the mild manner peculiar to her asked : —

"May we not hear, Mrs. Figbit, what your designs are respecting Zanthon's future ?"

"Most assuredly lady. It is intended to send him to school. I believed, formerly, that learning consisted of only two branches ; but on reflection I find I was mistaken. I know it must be the greatest benefit to him in the end to learn all he can at school. He is a bright boy and a good boy."

"Will his other wants be also attended to Mrs. Figbit?"

"We are prepared to do so to the best of our ability," answered that lady ; and she continued : —

"We are poor people ; but his wants will not be many, nor the demands on our means very great."

There was silence in the apartment.

It appeared the discussion had reached another turning point.

No person desired to comment on the proposition respecting the boy's schooling. It was too important to be trifled with. After a while Mrs. Flippington turning to Zanthon with a sad countenance, asked —

"Zanthon, what do *you* say to these questions : will you remain with us ; or will you depart with the persons here assembled who have come to claim you ?"

The boy stood up exhibiting signs of great trouble. It seemed as if he had grown older in a few moments than time would make him in years. He answered : —

"Mrs. Flippington, I do not know how to answer you. The kindness you have shown me makes my heart sad when I think it possible to go elsewhere. I have been as happy here, as I ever was in my own home. What I received in your house was better than anything I ever had before. I came to think contentment would be my portion forever. But lady, these old friends remind me of the time when I was destitute. They bring back to my recollection the memory of my own people, especially my father. I cannot forget him. He loved me better than he loved himself. I am sure what Mrs. Figbit says about school would please him."

The boy's emotion choked his further utterance. He sat down covering his face with his hands to conceal his tears, while every one present became visibly affected by his sorrow.

Then Mrs. Flippington looking from one to another of the persons in the apartment beckoned Zanthon to come near her. Placing her hand on his head in token of kindliness as if to soothe his grief, she said :—

"You shall go with your friends, Zanthon. There must not be any obstruction placed between you and the course which your good father evidently would have marked out for your pursuit. Mr. Flippington and Miss Cora will abide by my decision.

Let justice prevail.

Whatever inconvenience may be felt by us on account of your departure, it will be cheerfully borne, when we reflect that we have endeavored to do right in this as in other things to the extent of our knowledge."

Mrs. Flippington arose from her seat with the air of one satisfied that the judgment rendered by her was imperatively binding on all the parties concerned and must be respected.

In conversation with Miss Cora it was arranged that Mrs. Figbit and her companions be entertained in a suitable manner; and to this end refreshments would be served to them in the parlor, notwithstanding the fact becoming known that they were already provided with provisions.

"My dear," said Mrs. Figbit privately to Mrs. Flippington, "we have a boiled ham and a couple of roast chickens in the basket, besides five or six cuts off a round of beef in sandwiches; a fat goose to be eaten with mustard; a breast of lamb and buttered bread enough for all our reasonable wants not to speak of a dozen of ale to wash down the victuals."

Jemmy was directed to escort Crispus to the stable where he could be fed, while Nancy would accompany Zanthon and collect what belonged to him in the house. Then they sat down to a great luncheon, where cold roasts and boiled dishes were liberally flanked by bottles of porter, preserves and pudding; and this good cheer finally had the effect of dissipating all ill-feeling which existed between the parties at the first meeting.

The Flippingtons, Miss Cora and Mony presented Zanthon with mementoes of their esteem, requesting at the same time to be remembered by him in his new world. On his part, he did not fail to return thanks as kindly as his generous nature permitted, and promised never to forget them.

When the moment for his departure at length arrived he was unable to speak. He could only extend his hand silently to each individual. Indeed everybody there seemed similarly affected, for the Flippingtons, after he had turned away, retreated precipitately to separate apartments as if desirous of hiding their grief from each other.

The emotion of Mrs. Figbit's party resulted from joy.

We may say Mrs. Figbit never felt a happier time than this, as taking Zanthon's hand she walked with him slowly down the lawn to the gate where the conveyance awaited them.

There were no words spoken because it was thought proper to allow the boy's grief its full measure of indulgence without interruption.

In the chaise Zanthon was placed in the center between Mrs. Figbit and Nancy, the seat being large enough for their accommodation. Then Jemmy looking in to ascertain if all his passengers were comfortable, mounted the box, glanced furtively

at Flippington Lodge as if it threatened to surprise his retreat, applied the whip to Crispus and drove off at a brisk pace.

It is strange how soon grief begins to grow less through the instrumentality of change of scene, or the acquaintance of new associates.

Flippington Lodge being out of view, Zanthon raised his head to look at the beauty of the sunlight which pervaded the afternoon. Then he rested his eyes on each of his friends, saw Crispus gaily trotting before him, the landscape along which they were moving, and finally turning to Mrs. Figbit said :

"I do not know why you have all been so good to me ; I feel very happy as well as sorrowful."

"You will be more cheerful in a little while," said Mrs. Figbit, kindly. "We were waiting until you began to speak of your own accord."

"You will have the finest time, Zanty, my boy, that ever was," said Jemmy.

"I am beginning to feel I will," answered Zanthon, as he brightened up and entered fully into the general conversation which ensued.

The shackles of his servitude were broken and he felt free.

It was a happy time for these simple people, carrying as in a triumph, the poor orphan boy from obscurity and dependence into the light of knowledge and the advantages accompanying its possession. No wonder their hearts were glad. No wonder they laughed hysterically until tears dimmed their eyes, and that the scenery surrounding them, as they sped along, was magnified to resemble a sight of Paradise.

What were the political intrigues of the world to innocent hearts like these? Where could their happiness be found? Surely not amid the pomp and glitter of wealth, or the fulsome shows invented for the entertainment of the ignorant.

They were not influential in a worldly sense, but they had power such as is employed by Nature in her mysterious designs, the power of doing good.

In their souls there was a sweetness which the combined attractions of the earth or the ingenuity of mankind could not bestow, because it emanated from the Infinite as the reward offered to those who perform generous actions on behalf of their fellow creatures without compensation!

Ascending the eminence from which an extended view of the coast-line, as well as the village just quitted, could be obtained, Jemmy pulled up Crispus to afford Zanthon an opportunity of taking a last look at his late residence. The scene was beautiful and the boy gazed on it with delight.

"For my part," said Jemmy, "it is not likely I will come this way again. It cannot be long, now, until I enter on the road from which there is no turning."

"We had enough sadness for one day, old man," said Mrs. Figbit. "Keep your tongue quiet on that subject. We old heads must not allow sorrow to get the best of us in the presence of blooming youth. It will be time enough to cry about *you* when we come to attend your funeral."

"You are right, ma'am," returned Jemmy, although he felt how terribly severe her words were, "you have more good sense than a score like me. The way you managed this day's business was worthy the character of a statesman. I was proud of you."

"I am well repaid for it by the pleasure I feel," answered the woman. "I will never forget this happy day."

Zanthon sat in an ecstasy of delight, meditating on the varied beauties of the scene. There was a crimson glow on his cheeks and a brilliant lustre in his eyes more illustrious, perhaps, than even the sunlight which surrounded him. Health, beauty and peace were his in abundance, and the rectitude of a noble mind could be discerned in his countenance.

From extreme sorrow, cruelty and insignificance he was coming into the possession of friendship, freedom and prosperity.

Out of darkness he was emerging into light.

Why should he not exult?

His spirit was like that of the universe, conscious of its own grandeur.

No monarch ever sat on his throne with a statelier air than he, surrounded by his friends and the charms of nature.

Through the azure of the heavens he saw the magnificence of the Incomprehensible.

The purity of God became visible to the keen perception of his soul.

He drank of the sweetness of the beatitude of Omnipotence until he became intoxicated almost beyond endurance.

He laughed like one crazed from joy. It was his day!

He stood on the highest pinnacle of virtue, on the awful line which separates innocence from worldly debasement; the beginning of the pleasant prospect leading through life to honor, intelligent exertion after legitimate acquisitions, and the pursuit of knowledge; or the cross-road into by-ways and devious paths where whirlwinds prevail, purposeless aims, and the bitterness acquired by vicious practice.

Oh, boy! shall we call to thy presence, from the highways of a bustling world, the hearts riven by misery and care, so that the genial conditions which surround thee, and the happiness of thy lot, may gain them one moment of pleasure?

Shall we importune the wanderer whose footsteps were thoughtlessly directed from home in the days of his youth, that he may pour his regrets and his sorrows into thine ear; and will the lost child of many a bright home turn to behold thy face so as to remember a happier period that shall come no more?

Fully satisfied with what he saw, Zanthon, rising from his seat, laid his hand on Jemmy's shoulders and said:

"Let us go forward."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE APPROACH OF THE WHIRLWIND

WHILE Zanthon was pursuing his studies under the patronage of Mr. Gangpond, and learning by experience all the pleasures and troubles peculiar to schoolboys and students, vague rumors began to circulate of some impending danger, calculated to disturb the nation's peace.

Incoherent mutterings, significant innuendos, mysterious whisperings and threats were heard occasionally in the public places, all tending toward the one object — preparation for war.

Severity of the laws instituted by the rulers and mismanagement of the internal affairs of the country were the remote causes of the popular discontent, while the recent famine and its terrible consequences aggravated this feeling into desperation.

It was the approach of the whirlwind!

Where oppression forged her thunderbolts, there must be sparks of fire.

After the night of woe, a dawn was coming whose ordinary character indeed might be changed by the dreadful lightning flash; but it could be relied upon to involve both friend and foe disastrously in the wings of the storm!

The natives had been suspended in the jaws of death; but while numbers fell victims to the dread destroyer, the majority escaped.

A few years brought them, again, prosperity, such as it had been, in the past, and with it a determination to evolve the

freedom essential to a better system of social life in the future or perish in the attempt.

Death by the sword, with the spirit of a patriot, would be preferable to the slow process of decease by starvation.

It was true, that time and circumstances had destroyed the pristine glory of the old nationality, had paralyzed political independence and commercial enterprise ; but like an oak whose strength survives more than a hundred years after its fall, the heart was yet sound !

Patriotism lived !

The herculean task of revolution presenting itself at this time for consideration, was accepted, generally, by all classes of the enslaved people ; not necessarily because there were great hopes of its success ; but for the reasons that the problems inducing it would be forced before the attention of the civilized nations of the world ; and the dominant aliens, compelled through fear, to concede more advantageous laws to the survivors than those by which they had been heretofore governed.

Men of the character of Ribbonson, whom the reader will remember having met journeying with Antony Firfag on his way to Mrs. Timbertoe's, appeared simultaneously in all parts of the country. Strong of limb, fearless in danger ; imbued with the patience of stoics to witness without exhibitions of passion, the insults and injustice of the oppressors ; and perseverance in the eternal search for freedom by every means within their reach.

They were the van-guard of progressive action whose example would influence the destinies of mankind, politically and socially, in many an ill-governed nation, hundreds of years in the future ; the incubators and disseminators of the idea of war as a remedy for wrongs, that, otherwise would not be righted ; the trumpeters on the hill-tops calling men to arms for justice and humanity's sake ! The advocates of republicanism as a substitute for monarchy.

In the mean time Zanthon's life was the most peaceful imaginable. The family where he resided consisted of a man and woman, husband and wife, each of them being well advanced in years. They belonged to the poor thrifty class; and in selecting them Mr. Gangpond had in view the good example their lives would make for the boy.

The man's name was Mehall or Mehill; but people, invariably, called the woman by her Christian name, Earing.

Mehill followed the occupation of a laborer; working in the fields for a landowner, who finding him steady and attentive to his business, gave him a fair compensation and continuous employment.

Earing, on her part, sought to assist her husband, or rather, perhaps, to increase the household finances, through jobbing on a limited scale. She purchased eggs from poor country folks, in small quantities, and sold them at a profit to merchants of the town. Hard-fisted, rough-mannered, penurious through necessity; these two persons toiled for a competence; and competence they acquired: health, contentment and a free conscience being added gratis.

Their wants were few.

They knew no literature or science, but the art of toiling.

In a country where politics, at times, assumed fearful phases, they were ignorant of its significance.

They were good without being religious; wise without logic and happy without riches.

The vanity of competition with their neighbors as to who should be reckoned the greatest in the community, never entered their minds. They knew their station and kept their places, like inferior animals in a comfortable burrow.

Mehill was subject to Earing, to an extent not often witnessed among married people. There was economy in this; because it saved him from trouble; such as an ignorant man who is self-willed is sure to experience.

If he had an opinion at all, it was this : that his wife Earing was the custodian of thought, prudence, economy and every principle pertaining either to business or morals, essential to life. Therefore he became an attentive listener to her but spoke few words. He dare not smoke or drink or swear or tell lies ; but he found to his astonishment that the absence of such luxuries soon made him content without them.

This successful termination of his self-denial he ascribed to the generalship of his wife.

The food provided for him was good ; the clothing comfortable ; the house clean. It is true the domicile was not large,for it contained only three apartments, but it possessed all the qualities of comfort observed in more pretentious establishments ; air space, dryness, ventilation and warmth.

Mehill did not wait for the millennium of the dreamer that would never come ; he created one for himself and, figuratively, swam in it to his heart's content. The conditions necessary to produce this state of bliss were few and apparently, easily accomplished : work and silence.

It was here Zanthon learned how much contentment may be gained by persons in the humblest walks of life, if guided by common sense.

One of the apartments had been given up for his special use ; one reserved as the bed chamber of Mehill and Earing, while the remaining room constituted kitchen, sitting and dining room combined.

To Mehill and Earing, Zanthon soon became like the sunshine, an additional source of pleasure. He often turned from his books, when the fire in the evening was brightest on the hearth ; and explained some difficult problem to the awe-stricken minds of this good couple. However time flew with its accustomed rapidity. In the peaceful retreat assigned to him, the periodic visits of his old friends were the only incidents in his life, outside the routine of school business. Indeed

the boy was merging into manhood before he seriously felt the obligation he was under to Mr. Gangpond.

It was during this period he visited May's grave in the old house and the fort near it; but found to his surprise that the bodies of both had been removed.

Zanthon had resided about four years with the Mehills and was preparing to accept a position in a warehouse from his patron, when something occurred that changed the entire direction of his career. He was then about eighteen years of age.

One evening after Earing's return from the business part of the town and Mehill from work, Zanthon heard the following dialogue pass between them.

"There's a crowd at the corner to-night, me man."

"A crowd at the corner, Earing?"

"There is *that*, Mehill."

"There is."

"I would n't be near 'em on any account. There's black strangers among 'em."

"Ah! ha! Earing."

"Dark lookin' min, Mehill."

"They are."

"In the face I mean: angry; ready to give a blow."

"Yes!"

"They were looking at something on the wall."

"The wall, Earing?"

"A paper on the wall. What they seen made 'em come closer together."

"It did!"

"Pushed 'em among each other."

"Oo! Oo! Earing."

"The paper wants 'em to find the grandson of Merraloon."

"Merraloon!"

"Merraloon! Mehill. Merraloon, the chief, who was killed in the rebellion."

"The Lord bless us!" said the man, in surprise.

"Amen," answered Earing. The woman continued: —

"They'll give money for him. A power of money."

"They will."

"The full of a bag of gold, they say," Mehill groaned and smacked his lips in token of ecstasy at the idea.

"They don't know where he is," resumed Earing.

"They don't."

"Some say this; and some say that; and some think he never lived at all."

"They do."

"No one ever seen him; but he'll rise out of the ground when he comes."

"He will."

Earing lowered her voice and stood closer to Mehill as she continued: —

"There will be slates on the houses, roads through the swamps and long black coats on the clergy under him."

Mehill opened his mouth in wonder at such a glorious prospect; but was unable to utter a word on account of the temporary paralyzation of his organs of speech, seeing which the woman continued: —

"He'll bury his feet in the sand, so the enemy cannot follow him. He'll banish the fogs, the hunger and the cold; and stop the wild geese from going to distant parts. He'll bring the rebellion again to the doors of the gentry!"

Mehill's mute look of amazement became fixed, as if he had been set up in marble. Whether he furtively entertained opinions pro or con, in reference to the subject spoken of by Earing; or committed himself to the act of dreaming of a time in the future when his own millennium would admit of freedom of speech, could not be divined, as there was no physical sign visible from which an idea might be deduced. His oracle had spoken and therefore the necessity for comment on his part was prevented.

Before the conversation was resumed Zanthon coming out of his room passed quickly into the street.

In the depths of obscurity there appeared an oracle for him also. His spirit awoke at the mystic sound, as if he had been sleeping and was roused by the discharge of cannon at his door.

Timidity, doubt, mystification, fled from him.

Like the sun over the mountain he came forth in the pride of strength and glory of power.

He realized the truth of the political situation with the keen perception of one accustomed to reason on facts instead of opinions.

Heretofore he had been content to read of and investigate the issues of the past: quarrels, invasions, battles, conquests and all the train of evils resulting from man's ambition, arrogance or desire to dominate over the destinies of his fellow-man; as also the questions pertaining to his own country and people without imagining for an instant a possibility of war, on account of the want of material to prosecute it.

Hence when the call for his appearance came he was astounded but ready.

His cogitations now must end in activity and the strife of war. It would be idle on his part, he thought, to oppose the resolution of the patriots on the issue of revolution, merely because his reason induced him to believe they could not be successful without an organized army and a base of supplies. Such opposition would only entail dishonor on the fame left by his ancestors, at a time when the niceties of his action might be construed to indicate cowardice.

He was the grandson of Merraloon, and, therefore, must be unyielding to any circumstance favorable to peace with the enemy of his country.

Up to this period he had guarded with scrupulous care the secret of his identity as imposed on him by his father.

No human being knew his true character.

Would he disregard the admonition of his parent, the last wish of a dying man, and reveal it now?

The pride of youth, the fearlessness of honor, the ambition of individuality made him answer his own question in the affirmative.

"Yes."

That answer neutralized years of Marlband's researches in quest of means and ways to secure the safety of his son against the consequences of political intrigue.

With a light step Zanthon proceeded to the principal business street of the town where the corner referred to by Earing was situated.

To a stranger there was nothing worthy of notice in the appearance of the place; for the large crowd had disappeared; but he perceived that in the space between the sidewalk and the center of the street a number of men were standing in small knots, evidently discussing some question of importance. These knots extended a considerable distance like a picket-line; but their motionless attitude seemed to disclaim any relationship with war.

He turned to a placard on the wall whose outline and contents could be yet discerned in the twilight. The language of this placard was disguised, in order, no doubt, to evade the vigilance of the police and save it from being torn down; for the agents of the party in power were alive to the necessity of continued watchfulness and allowed no opportunity to pass of proving how assiduously they intended meeting every indication of revolt.

Zanthon gleaned a few salient points from what he read. A reward was offered for any information of the discovery of the heir of Merraloon, whose presence was desired in order to settle some dispute respecting the title to a piece of land formerly occupied by his father. From careful study of all the circumstances connected with the family of Merraloon it had been ascertained that there were strong reasons to believe a grand-

son of the celebrated chieftain was living in the country, but under an assumed name. If this youth should present himself to the proper persons he would hear something to his advantage.

"The proper persons," said Zanthon, reflectively, "are the leaders of the coming revolution. No doubt I can consult their representatives here."

It was wonderful how sharp appeared the turning from the studious habits of his youth to the exciting circumstances connected with the life of a soldier.

It was not difficult to find a person who would be competent to furnish him with additional information on the subject of his thoughts. His residence in the town enabled him to become acquainted with all classes of its inhabitants, either personally or by report; the patriotic as well as those willing to uphold the cause of the conquerors.

After a little reflection he directed his steps toward one of the groups of men on the street above mentioned, and coming near to it beckoned with his hand to some person of his acquaintance there.

The man detached himself at once from his companions and joined Zanthon.

He was above the medium height, straight and comely in form, his dark complexion being intensified in shade by thick black hair. The cheeks were lean. The lips thin and colorless, the nose sharp and pointed, the chin square, the orifice of the mouth fairly horizontal showing teeth white and regular.

Strongly built in proportion to his size; quick in his movements, always on the alert to detect intrusion, offensive or aggressive, it was evident there was great capacity in him for the performance of daring deeds when called into action.

"Tanders," said Zanthon, addressing him familiarly, "you can tell me all I desire to know."

"What are your wishes, my dear boy?" returned the man in a pleasant manner.

"Are the rumors of war well founded?"

"It is a dangerous subject to trifle with."

"I am quite serious, Tanders."

"No one can doubt any longer that we may expect the most alarming troubles."

"You think it time for every man to choose his side?"

"Pardon me, Zanthon. I did not say so."

"Come, Tanders, let us understand each other. You know me, my circumstances and my sentiments. I love my country; I am willing to fight for its independence. I want to join the patriots!"

Tanders extended his hand and grasped that of Zanthon, saying curtly: —

"It is better to be a volunteer than a conscript."

"Or a mercenary," rejoined the young man.

"Or a coward," continued Tanders.

"But," said he, "you must first be inspected."

"And then?"

"And then examined."

"What next?"

"Enrolled."

"And afterwards?"

"Assigned."

"Enough."

"Come. We pass along that line of men on the street. They will *inspect* you."

"What! the civilians in groups?"

"The same."

"Explain?"

"They are soldiers; republicans, patriots. Being with me they will understand you seek admission to their ranks."

"All eyes, no doubt, will be turned upon me."

"Nothing will be left undone to make the scrutiny of your person complete. It is but just, as a rule, seeing how necessary it is to observe the greatest caution in order to prevent the

agents of the enemy from getting a knowledge of our plans and movements."

Having made a circuit of the line by marching along it on one side of the street and countermarching on the other, Tanders accompanied by Zanthon entered a door leading from the sidewalk into a small office, such as justices of the peace occupy while holding court in petty precincts of cities.

"Your inspection is over and we will now await the report," said Tanders as he lighted a lamp and motioned Zanthon to a seat near him.

Presently two men entered the apartment.

One of these men had a commanding appearance with long features and full beard. His manner was grave and methodical. The look of his eye was not prepossessing nor the pallor overspreading his countenance. If rightly interpreted they indicated severity in his character, or rigid adhesion to set purposes. If he had nursed a lofty air he would be imperious; but he had only sufficient resolution to evoke the cruelty inherent in human nature and practice it sometimes without regret. His age must have been, then, about forty-five years.

Anyone acquainted with military men would conclude he was a good disciplinarian.

Tanders greeted him by name:

"Hordance," and he was not unknown to Zanthon.

The individual accompanying him could not boast much of either stature or corpulency. A small man with a clerical air; due probably to a long black coat, which he wore buttoned up in front, as well as on account of his gait and method of speaking. He seemed gifted with a fine flow of speech, a mild temper and a quick perception.

He had a dark complexion, black hair, thin colorless face, long nose, his lips and chin being covered with a moustache and full beard. No doubt he was forty years of age.

"How is it, Taffles?" inquired Tanders addressing him.

"Satisfactory," answered the new comer.

Tanders turning to Hordance, said :—

"Proceed."

Thus reminded Hordance drew from his breast pocket a paper from which he read the following queries to Zanthon, recording the answer in each case as he received it:

"For what purpose have you come here ?"

"I desire to join the ranks of my patriotic countrymen."

"Do you know what these patriots seek ?"

"The independence of their country."

"Give your views on the nature of independence ?"

"A government of the people by the people which guarantees equal rights to all citizens within its jurisdiction, protects them from violence and intrigue, and fosters industry for their benefit."

"What is this form of government called ?"

"Republican."

"To what extent will you endeavor to supersede the monarchy by the republic ?"

"With all my powers."

"What punishment should be meted out to him who having engaged to act with his comrades for the emancipation of his country betrays them to the enemy ?"

"Death !"

There was a pause.

"Enroll him," resumed Tanders to Taffles.

"What is the full name ?" inquired the latter.

"Zanthon," replied the youth.

The men looked puzzled. Taffles, however, recorded the name in a small book which he carried with him saying as he did so :—

"Variety is one of the greatest laws in nature ; your parents must have been people of knowledge to have observed it in this manner."

Zanthon made no reply and Tanders continuing said :—

"We are now engaged in filling a regiment of which your humble servant, Jack Tanders, is Colonel. This grave gentleman, Bruce Hordance, is Lieutenant-Colonel and Luke Taffles, Adjutant. I think my good Zanthon, we will make you, Major."

"A very suitable young man for the place," said Hordance.

"I commend your taste, Colonel," said Taffles, "our field and staff will make a fair showing, whatever may be said of the rank and file."

Tanders smiled, but made no comment on this remark.

"We may as well lead you into the knowledge of a few secrets regarding the regiment at once," resumed Taffles, glancing at the others, "so as to prevent you asking unnecessary questions when you come to meet it on parade. It is designed to distinguish itself during the approaching campaign."

"That fact is self-evident," returned Zanthon pleasantly.

"It will be known as the Crowfoot Regiment."

"A grave name indeed; but euphonious."

"Excepting officers of the field and staff every mother's son in it, or who may hereafter gain admittance to its ranks, must wear the mark of a crow's foot, in a conspicuous place on his person."

"That is a singular arrangement."

"It is a war sign, figuratively speaking; a sign of age. Veterans all of some kind; desperate tramps, hoary-headed tinkers who have kept public gatherings in fear during a score of years, reformed thugs, backsliders evading the vigilance of the law, men who escaped the gallows by a hair's breadth. Pugilists, circus-clowns, spendthrifts without money, the black sheep of families in the district and prodigal sons from all quarters. Men of large stature and long necks. The high cheek-boned and those with contorted features. The squint-eyed, the bow-legged and many others that must be seen to be appreciated."

"The enumeration of itself is sufficient to inspire terror."

"We hope so. The idea of classifying men in this way is not without merit. In cases of great emergency a commanding general could easily carry or defend a particular point, if fully conversant with the character of his men."

"You are determined, I presume to permit the Crowfoot Regiment to engage in some hard fighting?"

"Assuredly. Wherever the smoke of battle is thickest there it may be found.

If there be a breach to enter or a retreat to cover the men of the Crowfoot Regiment will be expected to perform that duty.

It is on the lists to deploy in skirmish line before the main body of the Brigade of which it is a part, in the first encounter with the enemy.

If found necessary it will lead the forlorn hope, the storming party, the night attack and the flank movement in great engagements."

"What will be its strength, in active service?"

"About twelve hundred all told."

"How many may be expected to survive the first year of the war?"

Taffles did not answer, but his look of grim inquiry at Tanders and Hordance assured Zanthon that the survivors could be easily counted.

As other duties with the regiment demanded the attention of the Lieutenant-Colonel and the Adjutant before bedtime, these officers arose to depart, but each in turn grasped the hand of the young Major and congratulated him on his appointment.

After they had left Zanthon said to Tanders: —

"What is the real significance of the placard respecting the heir of Merraloon?"

"If such a person exists it is calculated that his presence will strengthen our cause considerably."

"Then it is for war purposes only that he is sought?"

"For the most part. Every item in our favor is so much gained. At least he would count one. If not fitted for the field he might be utilized in the council. The memory of his grandfather's deeds will, doubless, exercise a salutary influence on many of our people, and induce others to assist our efforts towards political freedom."

"Certain facts have come to my knowledge in regard to the subject which I would like to disclose to the persons interested."

"We are all concerned about it, of course; but the Executive Council is the party for which the information is desired. As your appointment in the regiment must be confirmed by the general commanding in the province and your commission issued by the Council, I will give you an introductory letter to that body at once so as to enable you to make the statement we speak of before it."

"Thanks, but tell me further where is the Executive Council located?"

Tanders bent over and whispered something in Zanthon's ear to which the latter responded: —

"Well! well! that is a surprise. Now continue your information. What is the rank of the provincial general?"

"He is a Major-General."

"How many brigades will the province muster?"

"Eight to begin with, calculating six regiments to a brigade."

"Other provinces, no doubt, are similarly organized?"

"I believe so."

"I presume you are acquainted with the number of provinces in the entire country?"

"Why yes. Everybody knows that."

"The strength of our army can be, therefore, easily estimated."

"There is no lack of men, but war material is scarce. The expenses of an army are enormous."

"How shall we meet them?"

"The best way we can. Necessity will make us perform, perhaps, many things which otherwise would never be thought of. The product of the country must be retained and pressed into service."

"You will pay for it, of course?"

"Yes. Our idea, in this connection is to institute and carry on a legitimate warfare."

"Where will the money be procured?"

"Where all governments find it in contributions, taxes, bonds, and scrip.

We must first establish a credit by means of success, and that is what we will now attempt to do."

"Have you made any arrangement about clothing?"

"To be sure. Every man in the regiment has provided for himself a uniform pants and the tunics are making, so that in a short time we can turn out at a moment's notice. We encountered some trouble in the selection of a uniform hat, as we could not procure the shako; but finally it was determined to adopt the soft felt or campaign hat, until a better pattern can be found."

"What is the color of the uniform tunic?"

"Bottle green with red facing for artillery, gold or bronze for cavalry and blue for infantry. Ours of course will be blue."

"Excellent. Now tell me where are the arms stored?"

Tanders looked up quickly for an instant while saying: —

"If we had arms and storage sufficient for our requirements the enemy could not hold this country twenty-four hours. Their rules make it criminal to carry or possess arms on any pretense whatsoever. Our friends and agents are now engaged in making the necessary provision; but with what success I am unable to say. There is one thing certain, however, the Crowfoot Regiment will be fully equipped the hour the drums beat the long roll to prepare it for action."

Zanthon vacated his seat at this juncture in order to go home.

"Give me the letter. I leave town to-morrow afternoon," he said. "In the morning I will meet my patron, Mr. Gangpond, and inform him of my departure. You shall hear from me."

Tanders wrote a few lines on a slip of paper, folded it and gave it to Zanthon. Then the newly made friends shook hands and parted.



CHAPTER XXXI.

OPPOSING FORCES.

THE twilight had disappeared when Zanthon emerged into the street after his interview with Colonel Tanders.

It was springtime.

The air was no longer keen or blustering, but mild and sweet, as if it belonged to the Orient and had wandered imperceptibly to this distant land, where the perfume of early flowers gave it a welcome in harmony with its beauty.

Many a time in the past had Zanthon sauntered here, at this hour, through crowds of citizens conversing pleasantly with each other ; but now the thoroughfare was deserted. Intuitively he divined the cause.

The men planning warfare, the women either assisting them, or terrorized ; the agents of the enemy inside of barred doors, the wind only remained in the street. It came as if laden with grief, not vigorously, but with little sound, like mysterious whispers trying to tell the young man how sad was the condition of his country, and warning him of the advent of future danger. There was a charm in this dreadful substitution of *spirit* for human life ; a fascination filling the soul of the observer with awe, as if he had been dragged to the brink of earth's domain to look into the immense chasm of eternity !

Under this spell he sought repose in the domicile which heretofore had been his humble home, and dreamed of cavalry charges, forced marches and the bursting of shells among the enemy's lines.

He was astir early the next day. Mehill went to labor in the fields as usual, and Earing to ply her traffic on the road unconscious of any change in the times or fear of disturbance, thus leaving him alone at the breakfast table.

He had arranged with himself to leave the place without informing anyone of his exact destination excepting Tanders, after weighing everything seriously that related to the subject.

His accounts were clear; that is to say, there were no debts to liquidate. During the past two years he had earned some money by keeping books for a merchant three evenings in the week and writing for Mr. Gangpond every Saturday afternoon.

By this means his patron was relieved of any expenses on his account. Besides Zanthon's accuracy as well as honesty were repaying Mr. Gangpond for all he had advanced him in the first instance.

Nor were other persons, well known to the reader, forgotten.

Big Nancy was frequently made happy by donations of money from Zanthon's purse. For old Jemmy he purchased a new overcoat, and Mrs. Figbit was obliged to accept presents from him once a year during the Christmas holidays.

In his room there were but few personal effects, and even these did not possess but little value. A square box about as large as a Saratoga trunk contained all, with the exception of his books which appeared on two shelves near the window.

The new silk hat which he had purchased recently he took from a compartment of the box, placed it on the table, and under the band of it inserted a slip of paper with these words, "For Mehill." Leaving the key in the box and everything undisturbed as on all other occasions, he stepped lightly through the house and into the street, securing the door behind him as was customary with the inmates.

Then he proceeded to interview Mr. Gangpond.

He found that gentleman in his house in a suite of rooms fronting the east where the morning sun was liberally distrib-

uted among easy chairs, ornamental tables, books, pictures and other evidences of comfort.

Mr. Gangpond, whom we have not yet fully described, was one of that class of men who live long because they live well.

At peace with the world he acquired peace for himself almost without an effort.

He did not love seclusion or the meandering through country lanes in search of a poet's genius, but to meet his old friends in the largest crowd available and talk lustily with them on the nonsense of the times, as well as business.

New principles were abhorrent to him. The knowledge of his day, whatever it might be, was the eternal order of things, he thought.

While yet quite young he married, assisted to raise six children, and saw them severally united in wedlock, comfortably housed and provided with all the requirements of life. Now he was alone, attended only by servants, his wife having died, but hale and hearty like a mammoth tree that survives the wreck of its fellows of the forest, and upon whose branches can still be detected the evidence of pristine verdure. The steel gray hair was becoming white; but the features were yet full, the forehead smooth, the eyes bright and the frame erect.

On the occasion of Zanthon's entrance, Mr. Gangpond noticed instantly a change in the young man's manner indicative of trouble.

"Has the revolution started?" he said looking up.

"I am not aware of it, but believe the time for its appearance to be near at hand."

"My dear boy, don't give way to sensational rumors. There is nothing in them. I recollect very well how I used to be excited over similar reports when I was a young man. Imagination carries people a long distance."

"Then you think there will be no disturbances?"

"There may be, but they will prove unfortunate for the people."

"Have you no regard for men's rights?"

"More than many professional politicians."

"The efforts of revolutionary parties elsewhere in the past have not been always unsuccessful."

"True; because the conditions were different. The people here have not enough strength to support their efforts. See what the government can achieve. Its regular troops in this country number, at least, seventy-five thousand men stationed at the best strategic points the place can afford. It has a special garrison of twenty-five thousand men equipped as rifles distributed in small squads through the length and breadth of the land. These squads have each a barrack built of stone and mortar sufficient to stand a siege for weeks at a time, unless assaulted by heavy guns. It could double the numbers above mentioned in forty-eight hours from outside garrisons. The militia forces under it are enormous. It has a fleet of war-ships at the south and another at the north guarding the coast line. It holds the capital and every place of importance that could be named. There is money at its command, provisions for the soldiers and war material almost without limit. What chances could a revolutionary party have against such odds?"

"They have a good cause to inspire them with energy. The justice-loving people of the world will commend their endeavors. Genius shall invoke aid and procure it, where otherwise it would be inaccessible. Unity of purpose persisted in, will gain more favorable results than great numbers of soldiers whom time must soon destroy or circumstances scatter."

"You are clever Zanthon. I delight to hear you speak; and so well, too."

"The patriots may be overpowered but their action will advance their country's interests towards good, a century beyond where they found them."

"I like that. I believe you boy; but you see how many poor men must suffer before they can accomplish so much."

"Every generation cannot be a conqueror. It is enough if

each perform a part until all be completed which was desirable; and as for suffering it is inevitable in such cases.

"We must part, Mr. Gangpond."

"What is that?"

"I am going to another part of the country."

"Nonsense, Zanthon; nonsense!"

"It is true."

"And you so young, so tender, so considerate for others; to expose yourself to the rough usage of strangers and ruin your future prospects; Oh no! Your enthusiasm, I believe, carries you recklessly into the revolution. It is not suitable dear boy. Let rude men fight if we must have battles. Besides you are under age."

"Good-bye."

"Don't go my boy. Stay with me altogether. You are like a second son in my affections. Part of my fortune will revert to you when I am dead. Without your presence I will be desolate!"

Before the words of the paragraph terminated Zanthon was gone.

His footsteps were heard for an instant outside the door; then the sounds died away; for the silence folded them up in its embrace. The world's reality, in all its stern phases, was before him. Peace, contentment, fortune and friendship were abandoned; not without pangs of regret; but because the greater principle, patriotism, demanded his services.

It was in the season of youth, when love of country is held sacred and pure before being degraded by mercenary motives; or, lessened in value on account of the acquisition of the knowledge of mankind seen through the smallness of its designs, like crystal water issuing from its cavernous bed in the mountain, before it is sullied by the soil of the plain; like the foliage of the trees, in spring, before it has been seared by exposure to summer suns; like the snowflake in mid-air, before suffering contact with the dull dark earth; like the sentimental dream

of a maiden before her confidence in her lover is rudely broken by acquaintance with his worthlessness.

The fire of this patriotism filled his soul.

No sacrifice was considered too great to be offered at its shrine.

The land on whose bosom he had first seen the sunshine ; whose smiles had filled his youthful years with delight, notwithstanding the cruelty perpetrated against him by human beings ; where genial atmosphere supplied a place of luxuries ; this home among the billows of western seas, was desecrated by the presence and unjust rule of others.

He could hear its complaint in the low murmuring of the streams; and the long deep moaning of the wind through the woods.

To his vision the hills wore a meek aspect and the valleys seemed intent on concealing their beauty from the strangers, as if acting in harmony with the spirit of the natives.

As instructed by Tanders, Zanthon directed his steps to the place where the Executive Council of the revolutionary party held its session.

What time the journey occupied, none knew. It is probable he made no mental record of it himself, so busy were his thoughts with the anticipated struggle.

To inconveniences he paid no attention.

His weariness afoot was sometimes relieved by a ride in a country wagon, or behind a peasant on horseback.

When he ate it was hastily ; and for drink he imbibed nothing but water.

Arriving at his destination he found himself in a city of considerable magnitude.

After the preliminary circumlocution attending his first appearance among Tander's political co-mates had been exhausted, he was conducted through devious passages ; up winding stairways and across open rooms of a large building devoted to business purposes ; and finally into a rectangular

apartment resembling a public hall. This was the secret chamber where the Executive Council met.

There was a table of heavy dark oak in the center; and a number of chairs with high backs carved fantastically, arranged for the accommodation of members of the Council both at the board and along the walls of the chamber.

The six chairs involving the space around the head of the table had been upholstered in different colors.

For the President of the Council, purple.

For him who held the portfolio of state, blue; of war, red; the navy, green; finance, yellow and foreign relations, white.

The Council had absolute jurisdiction in all things pertaining to the country until a representative body could be elected, after the defeat of the enemy. Its means of operations were so multifarious that it would be foreign to a work of this class to make any attempt at even a general outline of them.

The Council was in session when Zanthon made his appearance. Besides the six members already mentioned there were four representatives of large bodies of the race in other countries who had promised substantial aid during the war and claimed joint control with the home delegation.

Zanthon's guide advancing, said to the President: —

"This is the person accredited by Colonel Tanders."

The man in the purple chair raised his head slightly and motioned Zanthon to come forward.

"What business have you with the Council?" he said in a mild voice.

"I come in response to a call for the production of the grandson of Merraloon; the deceased chief of revolutionary fame."

"Well?"

"I am he."

"You?"

"Yes."

"Can you adduce proof?"

"My father, the son of Merraloon, instructed me in the family history. He was forced to conceal himself in a poor country district under the name of Marlband."

"Is there nothing but your own words to substantiate this? Are there no other persons to testify in the case?"

"No."

"Explain."

"We suffered in the famine. It was night when alone with him I entered a cave, where he died and from which I escaped. No one saw the entrance or the exit. He surrounded me with such restrictions as made it impossible for me to be recognized. I adopted the name of Zanthon at his suggestion the better to carry out his wishes."

"What object had he in view in changing your name?"

"So far as I can judge it was in order that I might pursue civil avocations and avoid military service; as well as to remove the political disability which my relationship with Merraloon would entail."

"It is strange that he would do this, and he the son of a chief."

"He was devoted to the study of abstruse science, regarding it as being greater than the profession of arms."

The members of the Council looked up suddenly at each other, as if about to speak, but relapsed into a grave mood as before.

The President continued:

"Do you desire to express your own individual preferences?"

"I wish to offer my services to the Republic in the hour of need."

A murmur of applause was heard in the apartment.

"Besides in deference to the memory of my father I will retain the name of Zanthon; but it may be stated by proclamation or otherwise that the grandson of Merraloon will take the field. In furtherance of this idea I am disposed to serve with

Colonel Tander's regiment as Major, to which rank he has been kind enough to promote me, subject to the approval of your Council."

The President seemed pleased with this statement. He motioned Zanthon to a seat near the sidewall and taking up the end of a tube which hung at the head of the table sent a signal through it. In response to this summons a man stood an instant in the doorway before entering.

A certain gracefulness of motion made him remarkable. A small stature, square shoulders and strongly built frame, indicated capacity for physical exertion. The gray eyes sparkling with intelligence completed a picture with which the reader must be acquainted. Yes, this man, once seen, would be easily recognized: it was Ribbonson, now active in revolutionary work.

"I believe it was you that collected the data concerning Merraloon," said the President, after Ribbonson presented himself.

"Yes, Mr. President."

"State briefly the principal items of information which you were enabled to gather on the occasion?"

"I found that the man called Marlband, living near the village of Footford, in the province of Liebadthore, was the son of Merraloon. The means by which I discovered this were accidental but conclusive. The information was confided to me by a dying man who was satisfied of my integrity. He said Marlband was known to him both before and after his first appearance at Footford, as son of the chief and as a peasant. Every account following this one tallied with it."

In reply to further questions Ribbonson continued: —

"I first heard a description of Marlband from a lackey named Antony Firfag. So remarkable did it appear to me, that I was induced to investigate further and was rewarded by success at last.

From other persons who had resided at Footford I learned that Marlband raised two sons, one of whom died during the famine; but of the other there was no trace. I searched every place in the vicinity of the village; examined a number of persons who formerly saw the boy but all to no purpose. Therefore I concluded that the other son also was dead."

"He is here," said the President, pointing to Zanthon.

Ribbonson opened his mouth in wonder and stood staring at the young man as if petrified.

"There is some doubt as to his identity," continued the President in a low tone of voice.

"We can easily relieve all doubts on that score," said Ribbonson.

Then advancing to the table he drew from a large drawer in it, a picture of Merraloon and carrying this to the place where Zanthon sat held it against the wall, so that the two were side by side.

"See for yourselves!" he said.

An exclamation of surprise burst from the members of the Council.

"The resemblance is most remarkable," said the President.

Then instructed by Ribbonson, he directed Zanthon to come forward:

"What name were you known by, before you were called Zanthon?" he said.

"Clare."

"And your sisters?"

"Amby, May and Valine."

"It is sufficient. I congratulate you on your patriotism and assure you we shall approve your claim to the name and position occupied by Merraloon if ever you desire to make one."

Zanthon thanked the Council in appropriate terms.

"In addition to the rank of Major in Colonel Tander's regiment which you desire to hold, we will confer on you the governorship of the province of Liebadthore where we expect the

enemy to make his first stand. In other words, we will begin the war there!

It will be your duty to assist the forces in the field by all means available such as providing them with provisions, clothing, horses, men and other material as may be deemed necessary. You will be responsible to no one but this Council for your official acts, until the people choose representatives for their future government; and we will rely on your honor, honesty and good disposition to conduct the affairs of the infant Republic in a just and statesmanlike manner."

Other instructions being in order for the new Governor before his departure, Zanthon was accommodated with a seat near the President's chair and Ribbonson withdrew.

"We will instruct the leaders in the province in regard to your appointment;" resumed the President, "so that you will encounter no difficulty with them on your arrival."

"Can you give me any idea about resources?"

"Yes; issue a proclamation to the effect that all persons within the province found aiding, sympathizing, or protecting the enemy, or declaring in favor of his future rule shall forfeit their right to their real and personal property and the same may be seized for the benefit of the Republic.

This will give you a large supply of stock, money, provisions and land, when the war is in progress, for there are many alien property-owners in Liebadthore who are staunch adherents to the monarchical cause.

In the next place, employ forces of men to carry out your instructions. Establish recruiting and supply depots. Organize wagon trains. Send parties out to collect horses for the army; and if possible start a gun factory,"

Zanthon could not avoid seeing the similarity between these details and the instructions given by Mony for the protection of the Flippingtons, and wondered why, in all stages of life, so much is expected from one individual.

The President continued:—

"We will place at your disposal a number of the bonds of the Republic with which you can pay for material taken from our friends. You perceive how essential it is to control the services of men in whom we can place implicit confidence."

"Are they not all reliable?"

"I doubt if it were ever intended they should be. At any rate we find unreliable parties in every country; probably on account of their early training being neglected; or adhesion to vitiated opinions; or again as the result of greed for wealth.

We have a small party with us who wish to become notorious in the pursuit of violence. Of course in the field this would be legal, to the extent recognized by the usages of war; but otherwise it would be injurious to our interests. Therefore, Governor, appoint judges of the law in your province and such other officers as may be sufficient to maintain it, in accordance with their decisions."

"We have yet no code of law."

"Law is eternal and universal; rule in equity."

"What species of violence do you fear?"

"It may be called insurrection out of season. Making any attack on the enemy before we are ready to follow it up; and in this way exposing our men to certain defeat or death. The perpetration of murder, incendiarism or other acts, which besides being positively criminal in peace or war, expose us to the criticism of civilized nations very much to the detriment of our administration; for it is usually concluded in such cases that we instigate every act done in our name. The time and place to burn powder and exhibit exertion in slaying obnoxious individuals is on the field of battle in face of the enemy."

"I shall remember your instructions, Mr. President."

"And bear in mind, also, Governor, there are large numbers of people who desire to become famous through criminal processes, especially when excited by war; hence be upright in duty and cautious with all who surround you."

"When may we expect the commencement of hostilities?"

"Immediately. Some of our men are coming from the enemy's country in large numbers. There are ten thousand of this class already in the city. The government of the enemy is making no arrests. There are not jails available to hold even a moiety of the suspects in sight; besides movement from point to point is not deemed criminal.

Auxiliaries will also arrive from other places. It is singular we should depend on foreign aid, when if fully organized our own power would be strong enough to expel the aliens and maintain independence."

"From what country are the auxiliaries coming?"

"I may say with truth from all quarters. Soldiers of fortune for the most part. The governments of course do not show their hands in the case.

Gold from Australia. Arms and men from America. Officers from Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain, and Russia; but," said the President, bending over towards Zanthon and speaking with unusual energy: "France sends an entire contingent of regular troops fully equipped, and a general-in-chief to take command here."

"How should we interpret this action of France, in our regard?"

"In the sense that justice requires, as the magnanimity of a great nation desirous of assisting our people out of the thraldom of destitution with which misgovernment has encumbered them during centuries of the past. Like a generous friend who grieves for your distress and exults over your emancipation from it as if the transposition were his own.

Dignified by noble deeds, proud of a greatness acquired through exertion and genius, its liberality is not only incomparable; but large enough to make the nations of the entire earth conspicuous if distributed among them.

Upright and hospitable at home, it viewed the cruelty per-

petrated on our country by its conquerors, with the most uncompromising dissatisfaction.

Its acute sense of justice made it the patron of equity; its high discerning powers, the friend of art; its broad intelligence, the custodian of science; its love of rectitude, the teacher of the world!

While contemporaneous political powers carried conquest to defenceless peoples and despoiled them of their liberties and territory, France sought but to perpetuate the principles of knowledge essential to the maintenance of good government and happy homes for her citizens.

To enslaved races of mankind it has been, what the morning star is to watchers in the night; an individual glory heralding the coming of day, where the light of scientific truth stimulates the citizen to labor; and freedom crowns his efforts with competence.

Patient with its children, through the adversities of the past, either while followers of voluptuous courts or the crafty designs of an autocrat; yet even at the height of their folly or selfish ambition it taught the nobleness of honor, the refinement of taste, the delicacy of politeness, the value of honesty, the god-like attribute of friendship!

France! The elite of civilization, leader of etiquette, distributor of fashion, school of design; a righteous sword, an aurora, a sunburst, a planet endowed with eternal light, a diadem above the nations!

Rising through the lurid ages of kingly rule to be interpreter and protector of the people's rights, its varied powers combine all the greatness of Sparta, all the learning of Athens, all the courage of Carthage, all the genius of Rome!

Great in peace. Great in war. In the unity of its citizens great. Great in sympathy. Great in benevolence. Great in truth! Like a meteor penetrating illimitable space bound for some mysterious goal of rest, as yet unknown to human intelligence, its progress is onward!"

Zanthon expressed great pleasure at the President's eulogy of France, saying moreover, "it was well deserved."

Then he withdrew to send a message to Tanders and prepare for his own reappearance in Liebadthore.

While thus engaged we will turn to Mehill and Earing, and view for an instant their sorrow on account of Zanthon's absence from home, not knowing what had become of him.

At supper, the first evening of his disappearance, the couple sat in blank amazement unable to form any opinion of the strangeness of the phenomenon. They had just finished an examination of his room and every corner in the house with the hope of finding him; Mehill in his forgetfulness even going so far as to raise the lid off an iron pot on the supposition that he might be hiding in it, regardless of its size. They listened when a footstep was heard on the outside; and one or the other arose to see if Zanthon was at the door or coming.

When the night fell and the hour to retire to rest had passed, they sought the customary repose, but Mehill did not sleep. He heard, however, nothing but the sounds peculiar to the night; the rumble of scavenger wagons, the barking of dogs, a solitary pedestrian, half intoxicated, hurrying out of town towards home, the creaking of old doors and swinging signs on their rusty hinges, and the distant uproar of the river at the falls.

In the morning Mehill and Earing turned out to prosecute their customary labor, but at the midday meal the woman made report of her inquiries and observations regarding the missing young man.

"There's neither tales nor tidings of him," she said.

To which Mehill responded:

"There isn't."

"Not a dividu'l word nor an iday where he will be found."

"No."

"I have my doubts, howsomever. The min at the corner ook him maybe. They're bad times for that work."

"They are."

"They'd want him to jine 'em."

"To jine 'em?"

"To be sure. They'll rise another rebellion among 'em and he'll be killed in it."

"He will."

"But I'll go to Mr. Gangpond to-night. That's what I'll do."

"Yis."

After her interview with Mr. Gangpond that evening, Earing returned home contented. The gentleman told her Zanthon was out of town on some business, that in due time he would come back, and cautioned her about making any display of feeling on his account as it would be unnecessary.

This was said by the old gentleman so as to shield Zanthon from the suspicion of having joined the patriots.

Up to this time as no attention had been paid to the new hat left by Zanthon on the table of his room, Mehill and Earing now began to speculate as to the purpose of its presence there. Perceiving the note, the woman withdrew it from the band, and carrying it to a person living near who was accustomed to read her letters, for she could not read herself, asked to be informed of the nature of its contents.

Then she came home jubilant with the news, "the hat was for Mehill."

When the full significance of the announcement became known to the man's mind, he trembled as if the reading of his death warrant was in progress.

He, Mehill, accustomed all his life to the coarsest and cheapest kind of head-gear, to don a hat like this in the full light of day and before all the people, to be laughed at, jeered and stared out of countenance?

Preposterous! The weight of such refinement and criticism would absolutely crush him to the earth! or shame drive him to desperation.

Oh ! no. If Earing wanted him to wear this hat, the greatest surprise of his married life would transpire there and then; he would refuse point blank.

In other affairs she might carry home rule to any extent she pleased, but when it came to "hat," he would demur. His mind was made up on the question.

That's where he would plant his foot, figuratively speaking, and begin the era of opposition whatever the result.

Mark, however the strength of human vanity.

The next morning when satisfied Earing had left the house Mehill returned to it, locked the door to prevent interruption and prepared to gloat over the acquisition of his new hat, alone.

As preliminary actions he rubbed the tips of his fingers on the sides of his pantaloons, in order probably to make his grasp thoroughly secure ; coughed, groaned with excessive delight, then seized the hat daintily in his hands.

After examining its beauty with the keenest relish imaginable, he raised it above him an instant, like one about to crown himself, then permitted its soft lining to encompass his head.

The hat was on !

There was a looking-glass on the wall near him, up to which he glided and the sight that met his eyes there, roused every latent power of his body and mind into ecstasy.

He laughed, giggled, screamed, bowed to himself, threw his feet up alternately in the air as if executing a highland fling and performed many other wonderful movements, until compelled to stop for want of breath.

He never imagined the world capable of affording him such pleasure.

It would make him a new man with patience to bear twenty years more of life, and gild the passage of all that time with golden memories.

Having delivered this decision to himself in his own way, he hastily replaced the hat in its receptacle and returned to his work in the fields.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE BATTLE OF THE BOUNDARY

THE inhabitants of Kindleton were aroused from slumber one night by the reports of firearms in the streets, shortly after the departure of Zanthon from that historic town, as previously related.

It was that peculiar hour, specially favored by Morpheus, when those who had rested uneasily on their couches, on account of suffering or wakefulness, finally sank into sweet repose ; the time when the silence becomes profound, as if by design, in recognition of the greatness of the power which moulds the destinies of the darkness.

Tne firing occurred at intervals, a few rifles or muskets only being concerned in it ; but the effect on the listener's minds was terrible. They could hear also the measured tread of men arranged in military column and the orders of the persons in charge of them, directing their movements.

The revolution had begun !

It was Colonel Tanders' method of opening it ; for the harsh commotion in the quiet night came from the vanguard of the Crowfoot regiment, as it pushed forward on the line of march.

Before the noise subsided the deep regular footfall peculiar to the marching of large numbers of men was heard, as the main body of the troops approached. It was headed by a solitary bugler, who sounded the call to arms.

The men remained silent, as if conscious of the fearful nature of their undertaking ; but a crowd of persons on the

sidewalks accompanying them kept up a continuous clatter of voices laudatory of the revolution. After them came the dull rolling of the wagon train; and finally the rear guard, designed to prevent men of the command from straggling too far behind; or to render them aid in case of accident or sickness.

Tanders had received orders to move in the direction of Fawndell, the capital city of Liebadthore, distant about three days' march from Kindleton.

The enemy held the place with a force of ten thousand men which when augmented by the scattered squads in the province to the number of twelve or fifteen thousand more, the united command, would, it was calculated, resist any and all efforts of the patriots to dislodge it; and save the rest of the country from the horrors of war. In furtherance of this idea the small detachments of government troops stationed in and around Kindleton had been withdrawn several days before, which enabled the opposing party to organize without molestation.

The route taken by the Crowfoot regiment was southeast, over an old road fairly passable. The order to march included the time and direction so as to permit large or small parties joining it on the way. Ten miles out it was met by other regiments as yet mere skeletons, the entire brigade mustering not more than three thousand men. This was due to many causes which may be readily understood by those acquainted with organization in general, namely: lack of patriotism on the part of some, sickness, accident, insufficiency of firearms, and family cares with others. However small bodies of men were coming up from all points along the route and farmers in many instances voluntarily gave up all they possessed in provisions and horses to assist the soldiers under arms.

On this account a regiment of cavalry was organized during the progress of the march which went far to assist in sustaining the hopeful spirits of the patriots.

Besides the regular troops, there were many irregular bodies of enthusiastic citizens armed with the old flint-lock musket, the blunderbuss, as well as a variety of swords, scythes, pitch-forks, pistols and pikes.

Late in the evening of the second day after leaving Kindleton, Tanders' regiment bivouaced on the ground where all the forces available in the province were about to concentrate.

The general commanding, whose name was Hefton, had never been a soldier, but was eminently qualified, notwithstanding, to conduct the issues of a great battle. The same genius which made him remarkable in building bridges, constructing canals, and attending to all the details of large works of this kind, was now turned to efficient account for his country's good. Nor did he rely wholly on his own knowledge while in charge of the military movements then in progress. During the following day, after the arrival of all the troops, he held a council of war at which he heard the principal officers of the army express their views on the best methods of attack or defense in the coming engagement, and the plan of battle by which they would be guided.

Zanthon and Tanders were both present at this council. The meeting of the two friends was exceedingly cordial.

The young governor with a large escort had carried dispatches from the Executive Council to General Hefton, among which he was informed of Zanthon's appointment, and what might be expected of him in collecting war material when the first battle of the war decided whether he could exercise power independently of the enemy or remain in the field.

Reconnoitering parties coming from the direction of Fawndell reported that the enemy was taking up a position about two miles outside the city in anticipation of attack.

Hefton's command, therefore, must be the assaulting party. The force at his command was not as great as anticipated.

There were twelve thousand infantry, three thousand mounted men carrying arms of various descriptions, but principally mus-

kets; three thousand pike men, and a battery of three guns, besides a thousand irregulars, teamsters, cooks and camp followers.

The commanding general, and indeed several officers and men of every brigade under his orders, were thoroughly posted in regard to the character of the ground in the vicinity of the city where, as just announced, the government troops proposed to fight. This was considered favorable for the patriots.

In conversation with Tanders and Zanthon, General Hefton said he did not fear defeat in this engagement.

"The government troops are like our own, strangers to war. There is not a veteran soldier among them."

"Why have they left the city?" inquired Tanders.

"To save their aristocratic friends the distress of witnessing a battle in the streets."

"You propose then to enter the city?"

"We will be there to-morrow night."

"Have you determined on the method of utilizing the pike men?"

"I'll annihilate the enemy's cavalry with them."

"If chance permits you?"

"It already offers me victory. I cannot help taking advantage of the enemy's plans. Their sappers have cleared the plain over which the country road runs to the city on the east side. This indicates conclusively they intend charging us with their cavalry at that point, and it is there my pike men will meet them."

"It is well conceived, General. There is one piece of information omitted heretofore, which I desire to communicate. The men of my regiment are armed with a rifle superior to any in the country. They will kill fully a quarter of a mile beyond the range of the enemy's muskets."

General Hefton on hearing Tanders make this announcement bent his head an instant in thought and replied curtly:

"That is important."

Tanders continued :

"Besides, General, every man carries a pistol in his belt which has a revolving cylinder at the breech, capable of holding eight prepared cartridges, and these may be discharged alternately in less than a minute of time."

"Why, Tanders, you will be irresistible. Have you tested the weapons fully ?"

"Yes, General ; moreover every bullet from the pistol will reach as far as a musket ball ; therefore, my regiment can be made as effective as an entire brigade."

"This is wonderful news. How did you get possession of them ?"

"They were manufactured by experts employed by me secretly. The design of the pistol also was furnished by one of our men returned from abroad. I have been concerned with them off and on more than five years in anticipation of war. The men engaged in the work were thoroughly reliable, so that we completed it without interruption."

"If we succeed in establishing independence, I will see to it that you be suitably rewarded with those who have assisted in the manufacture of the arms as reported."

"Thank you, General."

"Now, is there any particular service you wish to render during the coming battle ; in other words, how may we place your regiment so as to enable it to act to the best advantage ?"

"I desire to be permitted to turn the left flank of the enemy which your map of his position shows will be the northern extremity of the lines."

"The idea is good. I tell you what we will do. I will order two regiments to support yours in that undertaking. This arrangement will afford me the opportunity of promoting you to the rank of Brigadier-General, which you well deserve. Carry the earthworks on the left flank and throw the enemy on to his center, where I will look after him. We will give Hordance the Colonelcy of the regiment, and our young friend, Governor

Zanthon, can fill his place with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Now to your posts, gentlemen. We move immediately."

As soon as the order of march was communicated to the several commanders by the usual method, namely, mounted orderlies, the troops began to move forward; Tander's brigade of three regiments in advance. After these went the main body of the infantry, followed by the pike men, the cavalry, the irregulars, the cannon, the wagon train, and the rear guard.

The troops appeared in excellent spirits.

As no provision had been made to provide the regiments with bands, individual musicians were encouraged to carry their musical instruments with them and play whenever it was deemed advantageous and pleasurable.

Hence, on the present occasion, there arose such a collection of harmonious sounds, on the morning air, as had never before been heard by any person in the command. Under these inspiring strains, men unable to control their feelings of delight burst into cheers or laughter, as if they were children bound for a day's pleasure in the woods. The paraphernalia of war, however, so thrilling to youthful minds was not alone the chief source of inspiration.

The face of Nature was full of beauty.

The poor man's cultivated field and the rich man's pasture, lay on each side of the route, equally endowed with the glorious sunshine of spring. Wild flowers supplied perfume, wayside brooks, pure water and the general landscape, a view such as the proudest Emperor of the East might envy.

General Hefton set great value on the information derived from his scouts and reconnoitering parties. Those who had been detailed to keep him posted in regard to the nature of the ground in front of the enemy reported in the afternoon when the command was about five miles from it. On this account he was enabled to complete his plan of battle and communicate the same to the various commanders under him before going

into camp for the night. At daybreak next morning the fight would begin.

Fawndell, the capital city of the province of Liebadthore, had a population of twenty-five thousand inhabitants. It was an inland city depending on agricultural products and manufacture for its trade and wealth. Its western suburbs lay on the line dividing Liebadthore from another province. This line was popularly known as "The Boundary," and as the upland on which it extended was occupied by some handsome villas of the aristocracy, to the exclusion of everyone else, the owners were termed, "The Gentry of the Boundary."

The importance of Fawndell as a business center and pleasant place of residence for foreigners made it incumbent on the government to concentrate a number of forces there for its defense in preference to other towns with less claims for protection.

There had been no attempt made to fortify it; the barracks for the government troops was a stone building six stories high intended merely as a dwelling-place for them in times of peace; but wholly unsuitable in war being little better than a trap Hence their general, Mills, pushed his troops two miles east of the city and threw up a series of earthworks to protect them in action, feeling confident he could hold the ground in opposition to any force brought against him by the Republicans with the weapons then in use.

The arrangement of his forces in line of battle was well conceived. His center rested behind the edge of a plain, as before stated, and was composed of a battery of six guns, one thousand cavalry, and nine thousand infantry; three thousand being in reserve. His left extending northward consisted of six thousand infantry militia, while the right wing running south, and bounded or terminating near a large lake was made up of four thousand infantry, also militia.

His purpose was to hold the center; force his enemy from that point and support his wings with men from the reserves if necessary.

When the Republican troops got into place it was found their distribution was according to the following order.

The center rested on the other side of the plain opposite the center of the government troops. In it were three guns having only about fifteen round shot for ammunition; two thousand infantry; three thousand pike men; with all the cavalry about three thousand in number held in reserve. Tander's brigade on the extreme right, supported by a brigade of infantry five thousand strong; while the left stretching to the lake was occupied by one thousand irregulars and two regiments of infantry.

The distance between the lines measured about three-quarters of a mile. The character of the ground to the right and left of the center was irregular, being divided into sections by stone walls four or five feet high and ditches of earth, both favorable to infantry.

The silence which pervaded the armies during the night remained unbroken when the first appearance of dawn indicated the approach of a new day. All preparations for battle had been completed long before this time; and the troops rested on their arms or slept with the implements of war in their hands, beside their watchful comrades.

The air was clear and invigorating, the stars had twinkled mysteriously whether for good or evil, no one knew; but their disappearance gradually below the western horizon appeared to many like the desertion of friends.

Presently a red light flashed up in the neighborhood of General Hefton's center followed by a long dull sound. It was a cannon discharged at the government earthworks over the plain. After describing a semi-circle in the air the ball fell short of the breastwork ten or twelve paces.

Some of General Mills' officers who witnessed the incident laughed; and the troops in the vicinity gave vent to ironical cheers and derisive applause!

When the amusement created by this ineffectual method of clearing a breach on the part of the Republicans subsided,

Hefton's miniature battery discharged another round shot with no better result than the first one.

At this second exhibition the merriment was renewed with an uproar. The soldiers in several places mounted the ditch and called to General Hefton not to disturb them at that early hour but to "call again and leave them a lock of his hair."

The commanding general hearing of the character of the assault recommended the officers around him to go to breakfast saying good humoredly: —

"I myself will indulge in hot rolls this morning."

Then he sent dispatches by courier to the city in the same vein, informing his friends they might rest easily as it was likely he would rout the enemy in a couple of hours and carry the rebel commanders home in the evening.

Daylight had spread itself through the opposing camps.

In his tent some distance behind the lines sat General Mills, the Commander of the Government forces, in happy mood owing to the abortive attempt at assault made by the patriots on his center.

Breakfast was served to him by two or three soldiers acting as waiters. The hot rolls were there, fish, eggs, meat, potatoes, and other desirable articles of food. He had touched the handle of his coffee cup for the purpose of carrying it to his mouth when the sharp rattle of musketry brought him to his feet in an instant, so terribly real was it in the silence of the morning.

As he left his tent to ascertain the cause, he was joined by his adjutant-general whom he questioned : —

"What is that, sir ?" he said.

The orderly will be here immediately, general, with the news," replied the subordinate, who had sent a courier to the nearest field officer on duty for report. The report soon came.

"An attack is being made on the left wing of the command. The attacking party is infantry ; but they are numerous and active."

General Mills walked to an elevation in the vicinity of his tent and examined through a field-glass the situation of his forces on the extreme left. His gaze was long and earnest.

Notwithstanding a cloud of smoke which arose slowly from the place under observation, he could see the nature of the action and the soldier-like bearing of the men engaged in the attack. When he lowered the glass he said: —

"We will get something to do at that point, sir."

Then he returned to breakfast.

Well might he marvel on the character of the commotion just inaugurated. Vengeance was in the wind! Retribution appeared ready to strike for justice's sake. Tanders and Hordance were there, not as idle spectators assuredly; but avengers fully determined on pushing their men through the enemy's lines, to victory or death.

General Hefton's first shot was the signal to prepare for action as prearranged with Tanders; the second to take the field.

Five companies of the Crowfoot regiment were detailed for the advance, Colonel Hordance commanding; while Zanthon as Lieutenant Colonel took charge of the remaining companies attached to the brigade. The day was then bright. Lightly the men stepped as Hordance accompanied by two orderlies and a bugler gave the command: —

"Deploy as skirmishers! Double quick! March!"

Then when the line was completed he cried: —

"Halt! Front! Forward! March! Fire!"

Hordance appeared terrible.

Mounted on a black charger, his hat drawn closely over his brow; the uniform coat buttoned in front to the neck, a strong leather belt around his waist, a naked sword in his hand; with the wind blowing his whiskers backward over his shoulder; his eyes red from excitement; his words of command reiterated by the bugler, were like sharp thunder claps at intervals in a storm.

Inspired by his appearance the men bent to their work vigorously. They knew the superiority of their rifles compared with the muskets of the enemy and with the memory of having been systematically wronged by force and fraud, felt they had been appointed the instruments of justice to drive the usurpers from the land.

The first volley from their guns penetrated the picket line of the government troops with deadly effect. The soldiers retreated precipitately without waiting to return the fire leaving three-fourths of their number dead on the field.

The loud reports from the new arms, the humming sound of the bullets through the air and the fearful results witnessed after each discharge, brought universal consternation to the enemy's camp. The branches of trees fell off as if cut by the keen edge of a knife; wooden posts flew into splinters, the stones were pulverized under the leaden hail and the earth itself torn into deep, unsightly ruts.

The men behind the earthworks opened fire with their muskets as a retaliatory movement; but the range was too long to be effective, so that Hordance's command stood quite secure, especially as they took cover behind a wall after they had driven the pickets in on the main body.

With the view of dislodging his opponents and capturing the extreme end of their lines before cannon could be brought to their assistance, Tanders ordered that a steady fire be kept up at that point by the entire regiment, when the companies under Zanthon joined their comrades, in one continuous line of battle. The remaining two regiments of his brigade would form a storming party when the enemy became thoroughly disorganized. Nor had he long to wait for the realization of this successful movement.

The bullets from the Crowfoot not only reached the enemy's works but perforated the top of them, fell with deadly purpose on the other side of the ditch; killed men some distance

beyond it, tore their canvas to tatters and routed three regiments instantaneously.

In fact the flank was evacuated !

Seeing this happy termination of their first efforts, Tander's entire brigade as well as the brigade of five thousand men which supported him moved rapidly forward, and in a short time were abreast of the works recently occupied by the enemy. Before reaching it however, the fire from their opponents on the left of their position caught them and many men fell including fifty of the Crowfoot regiment.

The occupation of the flank by the Republican troops opened up a great advantage to them. The whole line of the enemy's left became exposed to their fire and his soldiers were obliged to retreat beyond a rising ground some distance in direction of the center, in order to save themselves from utter destruction.

Tanders sent a courier to General Hefton with the following dispatch : —

"I have turned the enemy's flank."

While these important movements were taking place, General Mills' tent, on the Government side, was the scene of lively discussions.

With his adjutant-general, staff officers and aides-de-camp he received dispatches from the disturbed point every half hour.

When it was reported that at least three thousand of his men had fallen back before the fire from the rebel guns, he grew white with rage.

"Ridiculous, sir !" he said, "if six thousand men cannot hold their position behind earthworks with only a lot of ragmuffins in front of them, what is the service coming to ? There was neither shot, shell, canister nor grape to touch 'em. A file of schoolboys with pop-guns would do better than that."

"General Moulin who commands the militia there, states these same ragmuffins are in possession of a superior musket," replied the adjutant-general.

"Ridiculous, sir! stuff and nonsense!" retorted the commander. "No infantry weapon can dislodge troops under cover of a ditch. I placed six thousand men on the left in order to feel secure before charging on the center. A bull-frog croaking on the top of a pole would do more service than these cowardly militia."

The next dispatch requested reinforcement without delay, as the security of the entire left was threatened by a most galling fire.

"Take my reserves, sir; strip me! cripple me! My left in retreat, my reserves gone, what hope can I have of victory with such troops?"

"You may have to change your front, General," suggested the subordinate.

"Change my front, sir! Ridiculous sir! We must fight on the present lines or court defeat. There is no time for movements except those designed for immediate action."

When the final news reached him that the position held by his troops on the left had been taken by the enemy and some of his men were actually retreating from the field, he mounted his horse and with his staff rode to the center of his lines.

Nothing was perceptible at General Hefton's center but the discharge of a round shot at long intervals. This had been performed, as was now evident to all, to divert the enemy's attention from the point where the most important movement of the battle took place. The decoy enraged General Mills as well as those who were disposed to laugh at their foes in the early morning.

"They shall have fighting all along the line," he said. "Let that battery open fire, sir; and when those toy guns of the rebels are silenced, let the cavalry charge and capture their position. We'll swing after 'em. Keep the right steady until our center is assured of success."

Then there was added to the rattle of musketry, the deep

booming of cannon, which the hills re-echoed in many a peaceful valley and on many a meadowy plain.

Above the sky was clear and full of azure like some far-distant paradise visible in dreams; but volumes of dark blue smoke rolled over the land at the scene of strife, as if an immense crater had been suddenly opened for the purpose of discharging its contents on the innocent earth, the better to purify itself.

The wind carried the smoke with difficulty, so full was it of impurities, dragging it across green fields and hedges covered with blossoms to the margin of the lake where the crystal water met the quiet shore enveloping both in a canopy of darkness, as if some fiend from the bottomless pit had escaped designedly in order to efface the beauty of the golden morning!

The Republican forces at the center had been waiting assault General Hefton, their commander, knew his foes must act in that way, because his movement on their flank would admit of no other practical course, except retreat towards the city and the taking up of a new position which he would endeavor to prevent.

When the enemy's battery opened fire, the pike men and their support of infantry lay close behind double ditches or stone walls. The effect of the fire was trifling. Some of the balls whizzed far over the lines, others were buried in the ditch, while a few made breaches on the tops of the walls without causing much damage.

Besides the Crowfoot regiment, which gave such evidence of its superiority, great confidence had been placed in the ability of the pike men to resist cavalry.

The pike itself was a terrible weapon. It consisted of a steel head, lance shaped, a foot long, secured to a shaft of oak or ash wood, fifteen feet in length. The men who carried these formidable implements of warfare were country peasants, strong and active, as well as being fully alive to the necessity of proving themselves victorious on the present occasion.

Like leviathans in the recesses of the deep gloating over the appearance of a school of fish soon to become their prey, those hardy wielders of the pike kept watch for the propitious time that would bring them face to face with their foes. Hence, when the bugles of the enemy sounded the charge, they sprang to their feet and prepared for action.

Then the long lines of heavy cavalry were seen bounding forward from their position. They emerged through two openings at the right and left of the center, wheeled into line on the sloping ground and moved rapidly over the level plain.

They formed an imposing spectacle, these gallant horsemen of a misused and tyrannical power. The red-tinted tunics which they wore appeared in striking contrast with the green sward, and made them look like a party of huntsmen seeking the pleasures of the chase.

The brass helmits glittered in the sunshine in front of the wild looking plumes which the wind lifted and tossed into wierd shapes. From the swords and steel sheaths came flashes of light, keen and swift, as if lightning had been cast from the heavens into the face of day for some extraordinary purpose.

The columns were remarkably straight, the horses evidently having been well trained to act in harmony with their rider's requirements.

When nearing the Republican center, at a distance from it of about two hundred yards, the leaders flourishing their sabers above their heads, began to cheer in order to encour age the men to perform deeds of valor in the approaching conflict.

Suddenly the bugles of General Hefton's command at this point were heard. The pike men had formed and were beginning to move on the right of their line. It was intended they should advance to meet the enemy in the shape of a crescent, so as to encompass them, and subject their regularity to attack from several points at once.

The last commands came pleasantly to their ears :

"Left front into line. March! Charge! Forward; double quick. March."

That column of pike men, three thousand strong, went forth like a hurricane when it is furious! Over the ditch it rolled like a great wave of the sea impelled by a storm. Whatever stood in opposition to it went down to the dust like grass in the scythe of a mower. Those who witnessed the closing together of the two armies and the crash of the first encounter, will never forget the scene if they lived a thousand years.

It would be grand if it were not shocking.

It was frightful!

Then were heard above the words of command, the loud shouting of men engaged in the death struggle, varied in tone and intensity by the particular situation of the combatants.

Curses mingled with huzzas; cries of despair with shouts of defiance. Groans, gasps and wild shrieks of young men dying and the howling, whining or other guttural sounds peculiar to the wounded.

The earth shook beneath the tread of horses as they reared on their hind quarters or fell from the deadly lunge of the pike which the riders were unable to parry.

The cavalry sabers were no match for the weapons of their foes. The men could not even draw their pistols, so swift and destructive was the onslaught of the pike men. The rear lines of the cavalry wheeled into open order to give the riders in front a chance to save themselves; but before they could execute the movement a second time, they found *themselves* in the clutches of the enemy. After one of the most stubborn encounters ever witnessed on a field of battle, the cavalry finally retreated, or so many of them as constituted only a small remnant of their original number.

Wild with their success the pike men pressed forward in pursuit, supported by the balance of the command held in reserve; for General Hefton left nothing undone that would tend to ensure him complete victory. Their passage over the

plain to the enemy's position resembled a storm at sea where spray rises mountains high above the waves as a consequence of the lashing of the waters by the wind.

As they crossed the earthworks they could see Tander's brigade of infantry driving the enemy from the field to the right. Indeed General Mills' army was in full retreat.

Zanthon conducted himself bravely in the fight. He commanded the second battalion of the Crowfoot Regiment and repelled the reinforcements sent to aid the militia in the early part of the day. These reinforcements came forward over the ridge behind which the extreme left had retreated; and it was these forces that Zanthon's infantry forced back. The regiment then advanced to the ridge itself; and by the time the cavalry was seen retreating, the enemy was completely routed at all points, the right also having joined the general stampede.

General Mills like all efficient officers, attempted to cover his retreat by a brigade of infantry. The steadiness of the fire from this force kept the pike men in check; but Tanders seeing it, sent the Crowfoot Regiment with the long range rifles in pursuit, which broke up their lines and made them run with all the speed in their power.

Long before the final issue was reached, couriers carried the news to the city that the patriots were successful, which caused many of the gentry of the boundary to desert their homes through fear and take the road in the direction which General Mills' army would most likely pursue in the progress of its retreat.

The officers of the government troops made no attempt to rally them when they reached the city. The principal incidents of the day proved to their minds, conclusively, that they were unequally matched and would be annihilated if forced to renew the fight. Therefore their flight to the interior province was precipitate and uninterrupted.

That night the Republican army occupied the city of Fawndell.

A great feast was spread for the men on benches in the streets by the inhabitants favorable to their cause ; and indeed these were largely in the majority.

General Hefton and a number of his officers were entertained at the house of a rich man, Tanders, Hordance, Zanthon and Taffles being among them. It was a great occasion and well did all enjoy it. After mutual congratulation had been exchanged and full justice done to the good things provided for them, General Hefton said to Tanders : —

" We move forward to-morrow in pursuit of the enemy leaving Governor Zanthon to superintend the collection of supplies and carry out the instructions of the Executive Council. Had I a few more regiments like yours we might calculate on easy victory in the future : but it is probable the enemy will take measures to meet the emergency created by our famous weapons and give us a warm reception the next time."

To which his companion in arms replied : —

" Whatever may be the issues of the future there is one thing certain, neither enemies nor friends will soon forget the Battle of the Boundary."

Then they separated for the night.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A SETTLEMENT WITH OLD FRIENDS

THE victory won by the Republican troops under General Hefton, in the recent battle on the boundary of Liebadthore, created a profound sensation throughout the country. Instead of being decisive for peace it stirred up to greater activity the elements of war.

The opposing parties disregarded everything of minor importance for the supreme issue of battle. On this account lawlessness prevailed to an alarming extent. Individuals apart from the army were obliged to defend themselves after their own methods, as best they could.

Thieves saw in it a propitious season ; and ghouls a time in which to ply their hideous trade.

The additional duty devolved upon Zanthon of appropriating the munitions of war captured, or rather abandoned by the retreating army. The battery of six guns fell into his hands, as well as a large number of muskets, accouterments, horses and wagons, besides provisions for the field and treasure. His labors were in this manner increased to a great extent, as it was with difficulty he could find capable persons to fill all the places of trust in his gift.

After having hastily established a depot of supplies and the nucleus of a brigade for the army at Fawndell, he detached one hundred mounted men to accompany him as an escort and departed for Kindleton, with the view of making a similar provision at that place.

On entering the town he was accorded a brilliant reception. The great bulk of the population who had been previously informed of his coming thronged the streets to see him pass, waving hats, handkerchiefs and banneretts in testimony of their appreciation of his services. When about to enter the hotel assigned to him he turned and spoke to the multitude in these words : —

"Be not hasty in your judgments regarding the final results, of the present war. We can only congratulate ourselves on having won the first battle. Our enemies are strong ; our resources weak or limited in extent and kind. We who are foremost in the strife for freedom accept cheerfully the consequences arising from such situation ; but caution should characterize *your* conduct towards it, until more definite prospects assure you of your party's success.

Everyone is not conscious of right ; and there are many who will not tolerate the administration of justice to others if it infringe in the least degree on their interests, or controvert their opinions.

Darkness yet prevails in the political heaven of the world, as well as in the minds of men.

Old systems of government which have ruled the people for centuries are not easily eradicated, especially as the substitutes offered for them remain yet mere experiments without the sustenance of political machinery to strengthen them. Therefore respect the rights of others and otherwise love the dictates of law, so as to make known to your enemies that you have a right to what you seek, the independence of your country and the privilege of governing yourselves."

The wisdom of Zanthon's remarks was praised by all his hearers ; and some avowed he would be the first President of the Republic.

Lest he should compromise the future safety of his friend Mr. Gangpond, he sent him a note stating he would not call at

his residence, but informed him of the principal incidents connected with his career since their parting.

Mr. Gangpond answered the missive in person. He shook Zanthon's hand vigorously, called him "Governor" and spoke throughout the interview in the most affectionate terms, adding also that his house was open to him, if he desired to accept its hospitality.

Zanthon thanked him but declined the proffered kindness.

Soon after this agreeable meeting Zanthon was still further surprised by the visit of two other old friends, namely Mrs. Figbit and Big Nancy. Although both appeared in good health, Time seemed to have wrought changes in them indicative of the lessening of their vital powers.

Mrs. Figbit's features had grown sharp, her frame attenuated and her hair was beginning to turn white ; while in Nancy's case, the eyes had retreated inward, leaving large cavities in front, the color of the face assumed a darker hue and the body began to bend slightly.

Nevertheless when Zanthon stood before them in all his comeliness of glowing youth and beauty they became animated with such pleasure as made them appear young again.

"My dear Governor," said Mrs. Figbit, after the first greeting terminated, "I would prefer seeing you in a station less dangerous than the one you now hold." To which he replied : —

"I am willing to make any sacrifice in favor of national independence."

"You are too liberal, Governor. Some of the people you are risking so much to free are not worthy of it."

"In that case my efforts will be doubly meritorious. It is the duty of men who understand the value of political freedom in a nation, to establish it at all hazards, regardless of opposition from friends or foes. This is the purpose of the supreme powers in order to bring mankind to harmonize with the unwritten law of the universe."

"It may be, Governor, but it is not my idea to see you, on any account, give up your life for others. However you will excuse me, knowing my failing of old, to contradict everyone that speaks to me, right or wrong. Now, what do you think of your future success in the revolution?"

"It is impossible to divine at present. Successful to-day, we may be defeated to-morrow, and that brings me to a subject I desire very much to discuss, namely a settlement with my old friends. Conceal nothing from me. My allowances are large; my personal expenses small. I have more money than I need. Therefore tell me how I can benefit you and Nancy, so that you may be financially independent all your lives."

Mrs. Figbit and Nancy were both visibly touched by this speech.

After a few moments' deep reflection the elder woman answered:

"You are good as well as being great. I know you wish from your heart to make us comfortable and I will speak my mind honestly as if I was going before my Maker. Lend me the equivalent of five hundred dollars. It must be only a loan. I will take my own time to repay you.

In the next place I want fifty dollars for Nancy. On that amount I will make her fortune."

Zanthon smiled incredulously at this statement, seeing which the woman resumed: —

"My dear Governor, it is sufficient. In a poor country like this, that sum, small as you think it, will go a long way. I will tell you my plan. Nancy can come with me to the country. By her work there, she may make a good living such as country folks are used to. I will be with her. Thirty of her fifty dollars will purchase six calves and the balance will more than pay for their grass from May to November. On this arrangement she will be rich in five years from now."

Nancy was crying with delight at the prospect of being the owner of calves; and Zanthon seeing the force of Mrs. Figbit's

reasoning produced the money and deposited it in her hands. Then as the cares of office demanded immediate attention he bade them good-bye and expressed the hope of meeting them again.

He had no sooner turned away than an incident in the street brought him and a squad of mounted men hastily to the scene. He was told an aristocrat had been arrested and the people in charge of him requested judgment to be delivered as to whether they would hang him or throw him bodily into the river.

Coming up to the place, the local guards fell back to permit Zanthon to pass ; for they had brought the prisoner and his followers to apartments in the courthouse or jail for trial.

What was his surprise, and we may add irritability, on seeing before him his former friends, the Flippingtons.

Directing one of his men to keep watch at the door to prevent persons entering through it, he uncovered his head and addressing them in a cheerful tone of voice, said : —

"I am Zanthon ; do you not know me ?"

Then he greeted each in turn ; for besides Flippington, his wife and Miss Cora were also there ; and sat near them in order to hear the causes of their present trouble.

Mrs. Flippington related the principal facts in the case.

They had tried hard to keep boys at Flippington Lodge to perform household duties after Zanthon left. The disproportion of intelligence existing between them and him, caused Flippington to be averse to their presence in the house. Besides Mony's exactness which was severe enough, he fell into the habit of inflicting petty annoyances, such as throwing water on their heads, concealing stones in their pockets and cawing like a rook at them, to indicate his displeasure. Hence every month they had a new boy.

"I began seriously to consider," said Mrs. Flippington, "if it would not be better after all to employ a middle-aged man instead of a boy and solve the difficulty by that means. In consultation with Cora and Arch my proposition was sustained.

We intended as you know to purchase a carriage and horse suitable to our needs; and we did so. Then we looked around the neighborhood for a man; he, too, came. It was in the afternoon; but before evening he quit; having broken the kitchen window and attempted to run Mony through the back with the pitch-fork!

They quarreled while we were at dinner, Mony having told him he did not know how to curry a horse. He answered by throwing a large sponge at her head. She reviled him in the most scathing terms, which he finally resented by following her with the implement already mentioned. She retreated into the kitchen; but with a rock he broke the window and left.

Then we advertised once more for another man and still another until every description of individual had been given a trial, without being able to secure any of them for permanent employment.

Finally, after a year's experience, during which twenty-seven men, at least, threw down the mace of office at Mony's feet, we secured the person we have now.

His work consists of taking care of the horse and driving when we go out. He never enters the Lodge. The apartment adjoining the stable is his place of abode. Mony used to speak harshly to him in the beginning, but as he never answered her she stopped. His meals are placed outside the kitchen door where he finds them when ready to eat, and carries them off to his room. We think him splendid. Mony calls him the 'Knight of Day,' because, mentally, he appears so dark, but his real name is Tacklefield. Of course his looks are not prepossessing. Notwithstanding the good food given him he is hungry to all appearances. The right foot is larger than the left; the right shoulder elevated more than its fellow; he has to wear a shade over one of his eyes, and the remaining organ is troubled by inflammation. He will not answer a call when at home, so we have agreed to ring a bell as a signal to him that the carriage is wanted. With these rules and observances

we get along very well; but you see, now, the character of our situation. As regards the accusations made against us here, they have risen from the same causes. The men and boys whom we discharged vowed vengeance against Arch, thinking he was to blame; and when they saw us in Kindleton believed it a favorable time to urge the Republican authorities to have us arrested as disturbers of the public peace, and aristocrats."

As a matter of course, Zanthon exonerated Flippington from the charges preferred against him, spoke to the people in his favor requesting absolute protection for him and his family, as well as immunity from attack for their residence, saying he, Zanthon, would be his guarantee or bondsman.

When this decision was rendered and the people concerned dispersed, Flippington was almost overpowered with joy. He was not able to skip about as he had been accustomed to do formerly, but he laughed a great deal and playfully struck the air with his hands, saying:

"You are inestimable, Governor. You are inestimable. I always knew it. I always saw it. A noble boy makes a noble man."

Mrs. Flippington spoke to Zanthon as a highly cultured lady would to a person of equal rank with herself; and Miss Cora was profuse in expressions of esteem for their young friend.

Zanthon did not remain long with them. He said, in effect, that the times being so much disturbed, he wished they would dwell in peace at home so as not to be compromised by the political situation or those concerned in it, meaning himself. He would instruct the Republican authorities in the neighborhood of Flippington Lodge to afford protection to the inmates thereof, as if they were already sworn followers of their principles.

Finding on inquiry that their carriage, under the management of Tacklefield, was in the courtyard of the fashionable hotel in town, he dispatched a messenger for it. When it drew up in front of them, Flippington said in a low voice to Zanthon:

"Look at the Knight! See the embodyment of chivalry, caution and business tact which prevails in and around him. How he lurches to one side like a pugilist afraid of his opponent. Has defeated the shadow, though. Think of it! I can bet a hundred to one on him any time, and win easily."

Then he entered the carriage with his family and was driven home.

As Zanthon had been informed that old Jemmy whom he wished to see was in the county hospital, having been admitted to it from the district of Lennabean through the intercession of friends, he dispensed with the services of his attendants and walked there alone, the institution being near the suburbs of the town.

To avoid recognition by his enemies, the time he selected for his visit was at nightfall.

The woman who opened the door to admit him said:

"Old Jemmy was alive, sir, until about five minutes ago; he was expecting some friend to come to see him, and I told him to hold out and live longer if he could, as perhaps his friend *would* come in the long run; but he wasn't able to bear up, sir, so he died."

"Was he lucid toward the end?" asked Zanthon.

"No, sir, on the contrary he was warm in his feet and hands."

"Was he intellectually clear?"

"As clear as a bell, sir. He spoke about horses and races and such things, besides a child that he called Baby Zanty."

"Ah! Tell me what used he say about this child?"

"It was before he died, sir, I think he was partly out of his head.

'Oh, Baby Zanty,' said he, 'come and see the horses. The black gelding with the yellow colors on the jockey is getting the best of them. See how he takes the leap, my boy! and bends to his work beyond without a moment's delay. That's where he gains on them. Look, Zanty, the blue is coming up

close and the red following. Murder, what a race it is! The yellow is in. It is over!' That's all I heard him say, sir."

Zanthon was deeply affected by the woman's account of the last moments of his old friend. Expressing a wish to view the remains, she led the way to a room at the end of the hall where the poor man's body lay at rest. It was a little room having a narrow window like a door panel in one corner and a mean bed in the other, besides a small table and broken chair, both black from age.

The features of the old man wore an expression of surprise, probably on account of seeing the black gelding win the race; but otherwise they were peculiarly calm.

Zanthon, returning to his apartments much depressed in spirits on account of old memories brought up by Jemmy's decease, was astonished to meet Earing and Mehill waiting to speak to him. They had heard wild stories of his valor as well as incidents pertaining to the war of the rebellion, and were anxious to congratulate him in person on his promotion.

Earing, who as usual became the speaker, intimated they were not afraid of the enemy, "because they did not do nothing to nobody."

Mehill on entering the apartment to which he and Earing had been invited by Zanthon, took from the band-box, heretofore carried in his hand, the new hat he would not wear in public, and placed it on his own head. Zanthon understanding Mehill's peculiarities and pride became demonstrative in his praise under the fashionable headgear, and sat near him.

Then he questioned him; but Earing answered for Mehill, who, on his part gave an affirmative response.

"There are a number of situations in my gift," said the young Governor, "any one of which I will give to Mehill."

"Thank you, kindly," replied Earing.

"Thank you," responded Mehill.

"I will have him appointed crier of a court," continued Zanthon.

As Earing did not know what such an office entailed, she was puzzled in regard to the character of her answer. Hence she said :

"It would be nice for you to cry in coort."

"It would," said Mehill, with a grim smile at such a happy prospect.

"Or he might take a position in a bank."

"Is it where all the money is kept ? "

"Yes."

"Isn't that a grand place ? "

"It is," answered Mehill. Earing continued :

"They might take all we have from us."

"They might."

"My influence can make him Captain of a troop of huzzars. His non. coms. will look after the business while he will have nothing to do but draw his pay ! "

"Nobody ever heard the beat of *that*," exclaimed the woman.

"No," said Mehill. Earing continued : —

"To have nothing to do with your non-cums, but draw your pay. It's illegant."

"It is," responded Mehill.

"Then there is another office superior to any yet named. The province is divided into a number of states. I have power sufficient to create him Governor of one of these states ; a western one perhaps would be best. He will be sure of re-election if he vetoes every measure that comes before him in the interests of the people. In fact he need do nothing but veto."

"Oh, what a fine place that is," said Earing.

"Yes," responded Mehill. The woman resumed : —

"All the trouble you'll have will be to exercise your few toes maybe to dance on thim."

"Dance on me toes," answered the man.

"The state printer will put up his speech, on great occasions ; and his secretary can read it for him," remarked Zanthon.

"You'll have a printer and a sickatarry," continued Earing.

"I will," responded Mehill.

"Now, which of these places does he desire," said Zanthon; "or is there any other kind of business he would prefer?"

Earing reflected for a few moments and Mehill assumed a profound attitude.

"Your better off," she said, turning to her husband.

"I'm better off," reiterated Mehill. Earing continued:

"It is this way, Master Zanthon; we're thankful to you as much as if you did the world for us; but leave him where he is. He couldn't do anything but work in the fields with a spade and shovel; and if he didn't do that he wouldn't know what to do."

Zanthon knowing that this termination or settlement of his plans regarding Mehill was final, presented each of his visitors with proper souvenirs of his esteem. Then as the man had replaced the new hat in the band box and donned the old one with the intention of leaving for home, he grasped him by the hand and said: —

"Mehill, you deserve to be called great.

The simplicity of your life is as uniform and distinguished as the rising and setting of the sun. In animated nature nothing exceeds this characteristic, as a means of securing a comfortable transit through the valley of death. It brings peace, then power. From these two conditions arise gleams of happiness such as the beings of another world might envy.

You hearken to wisdom when she speaks. You obey her dictates, as one moved by some mysterious voice, knowing it is for good.

With you there is no evil; because you know not of its existence. Although your house is marked with the signs of poverty, yet you dwell in the region of the gods. Farewell!"

Mehill answered by squeezing Zanthon's hand and twisting his closed lips to one side of his mouth as if he meant to say, "You struck it there," then with Earing departed full of joy,

as a consequence of the agreeable entertainment accorded them by their young friend.

That night there was a tumult in the streets.

The irresponsible class, generally known as the rabble, issuing from the back lanes and alleys moved in a dark mass towards the northern suburbs of the town.

Their leaders had evidently some terrible work in hand.

Zanthon perceived how powerless his rules of law stood, as a means of restraining such a multitude. With some of his attendants he joined the mob to ascertain its purpose.

In reply to a question, a man said :—

"We want reprisals. The foreigners took all they could from us long enough. It is time to take something back."

"What are you going to capture?"

"The residence of a low-bred aristocrat."

"How do you call it?"

"Dawnford Castle."

"Is the owner a foreigner?"

"No; but he is worse. He is an upstart that sold himself to the enemy; an absentee spending his money in other countries while his own is being ruined. He is of no use or benefit here: therefore we'll run him out."

Zanthon had heard of Zerlin's character previously. There were so many aristocratic dwellings in the country surrounding Kindleton, that the stories told of Dawnford Castle passed without eliciting much attention.

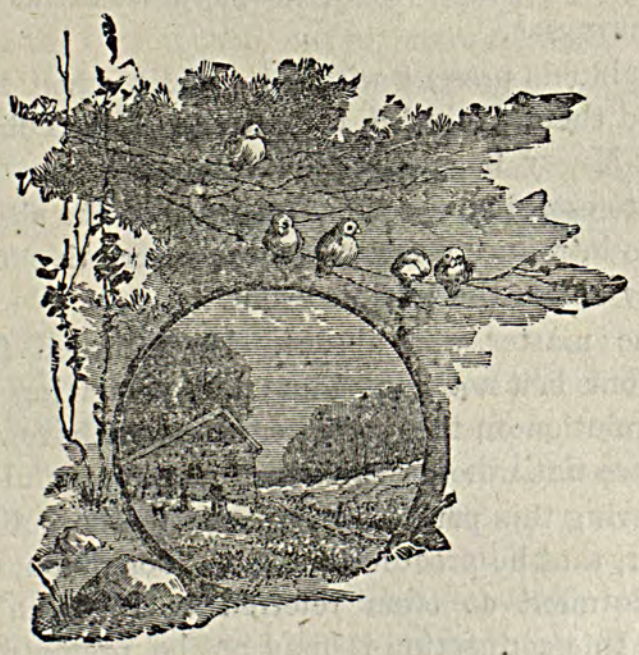
Had he known that it was there Amby had spent several years of her life pining for home, he would have been the first to assault the place, but as he remained in complete ignorance of the facts, he turned away disgusted with the action of the people.

Later in the night the northern heavens were illuminated by a red light which gradually increased until an immense space had been involved. It was fringed with huge masses of curling smoke as they ascended upward out of view; and flakes of

fire filled the air in the neighborhood of the conflagration as if a volcano had burst open.

The pale faces looking through the windows of their homes, at the night, in Kindleton, knew the mob had completed its work.

Dawnford Castle was in flames!



CHAPTER XXXIV

TWO OF A KIND.

THE inmates of Dawnford Castle were secretly apprised of the contemplated attack of the populace about an hour before the occurrence.

The individuals present within its walls, when the information reached them, included Mrs. Rinser, Mrs. Tuberfoot, Mrs. Aloes, Miss Mussy Boggleton and Antony Firfag.

In order to establish a correct estimate of the situation, it is necessary to introduce a few sentences descriptive of the period immediately before the terrible event.

Zerlin, the master, was absent. He returned from Paris, once, since our last notice of him; but perceiving the indications of revolution on the increase, wisely withdrew to his foreign residence until the prevalence of more peaceful times.

It was during this period, in response to the solicitations of Mrs. Rinser, that he procured for Ham Boggleton, the government appointment so often referred to by members of the family. In this connection it may not be premature to mention, that the crafty housekeeper at Dawnford Castle finally persuaded Amby Marlband to accept Ham as her husband; and go with him to his new station, in accordance with the programme she had originally mapped out.

This crowning act of Mrs. Rinser's life had no more than reached consummation, when she began to experience uneasiness from causes not very clear to her own mind.

She felt oppression, as if it had emanated from the calmness pervading the castle. Zerlin, Ham and Amby gone ; Antony Firfag rarely visited the place. The dull routine of her life seemed reduced to stagnation.

She was so much engaged with Amby's presence in the past that her absence appeared like the shutting out of the sun !

Where she expected to realize glory in having her brother marry the Rebel's daughter, she found nothing but desolation and heartache.

From having been an exponent of loquacity such as is seldom encountered in ordinary life, she suddenly turned to meditation as a means of relieving her distress. Her sisters favored this innovation ; for they moved out of her way, on every possible occasion as if attentive only to their own business, but in reality to permit its full development.

It was a failure. After a short experience during which she reviewed Amby's history since her abduction and Zerlin's fear of popular resentment her situation became unendurable.

Dreadful ideas seized her like one gazing into a chasm where murder was being perpetrated.

In the depths of her reflections the mental vision uppermost within her saw images that made her tremble. Amby's riven heart. Her long years of waiting for some hopeful news of her lost friends. Her innocence victimized by systematic lying and misrepresentation. Her tears, pleadings and dreams of happiness with those she loved recited so often ; and the fearful ordeal to which she had been subjected by her marriage with a man whom she could not even venerate or respect.

Fear of some indefinable character gradually came to Mrs. Rinser from these thoughts. If Zerlin was in danger on account of being a mere aristocrat, how much more, she, who had planned the execution of diabolical acts and encouraged the captivity of a blameless girl ? Oh ! she must revive the habit of talking or death would be the consequence ; unless, indeed, she became a raving maniac ! Hence Antony Firfag

was installed an inmate of the castle, so as to serve the double purpose of hearing the housekeeper talk and afford a man's protection to the persons residing in it.

Then Mrs. Rinser attempted by the exercise of her volubility to regain her former self-possession and indifference to worldly care.

She spoke for hours at a time to the henchman, without the interruption of a single word from him; or even a gesture such as might probably indicate dissent from her views; yet the rotundity of her body began to diminish, her features assumed a pale aspect and a peculiar light in her eyes became conspicuous, showing some chronic trouble had taken possession of her mind.

Whatever his suspicions, as to the causes of these changes in Mrs. Rinser, Antony never mentioned them. His own case absorbed most of his attention. While pretending to listen attentively to her discourses on the extravagances of Lady Yore, whom she had known in her youth, or other subjects equally interesting, his mind was wrestling with some point connected directly or remotely with Amby Marlband's abduction.

It was strange, the same theme that operated so powerfully to chastise Mrs. Rinser, struck him with terror like a thunderbolt.

It lured him into the depths of thought until he became fascinated with the prospect of eternal doom in this world of unrest, from which he could not escape.

There was a look of resignation on his grim, cold face, intensified by the sharp outline of the parts, the twinkling of the small lusterless eyes and the compressed lips, as if he gloried in hugging his damnation.

The advent of the revolution and success of the patriots introduced another phase into the mental strain borne by Mrs. Rinser and Antony Firfag. The government protection which heretofore stood in their defense was now suspended, thus leaving them at the mercy of the populace.

Their condition was fearful to contemplate.

First, smote by an unseen power whose lash never grew light even for an instant of time, then deprived of all security in property and life through the domination of the people whom they were accustomed to despise.

To whatever point they turned nothing but darkness appeared. There was an idea entertained for a short time that within the castle they would find ample protection; but the opinions and rumors which Antony collected on the outside dispelled such hope. Not that the hostile party of people intended attacking the Boggletons and Antony especially. Indeed the truth was that the hostility existed on Zerlin's account and the system which had been pursued in his entire establishment. As a matter of course the present inhabitants of the castle did not know these nice distinctions; and therefore concluded that they would fall before the resentment of the storming party when the members of it concluded to carry their designs into execution.

At length the exact time became known. Some person, an old woman, peering through the bars of the iron gate at the front entrance one evening when the twilight was giving place to darkness, said to Antony Firfag, who was standing within:

"I tell you as an act of charity, the big house will lose the laurels to-night. Get out of it at once. Tell the women. Let them go some place. Don't stay. It's not for the love of you or yours, but my own sake, I do it. If you didn't remember the poor, that's no reason why the poor shouldn't remember you."

With lips apart and face pale as a corpse, Antony sought Mrs. Rinser. He found her in one of the living rooms near the kitchen busy at some light work.

"Our time is come at last, ma'am," he said as he crossed the threshold of the door, and stood before her like one risen from the grave.

"Whose time, Antony? I mean what time; that is, which time?" she replied quickly.

"*Your* turn and *my* turn," answered the serf, bending himself half way to the ground, and emphasizing the possessive pronouns with peculiar force.

"How he does rave lately. I believe the man is possessed. I declare he is trembling. As I said to Mrs. Tuberfoot, youth is full of folly and age of infirmity; but of course there must be pity somewhere as well as patience."

"Stop your gab," said Antony, at the top of his voice. "Get ready for the road, I tell you. The rebels is comin' on us. They'll burn the castle and everything in it before they stop. Oh, why did I ever live to see this night!"

"Mercy!" cried Mrs. Rinser, clasping her hands together; but the other women coming hastily into the apartment, a general exchange of opinions on the situation took place. The truth soon became known.

Feeling the dissolution of the establishment to be near, Antony assumed a fiendish dictatorship over the others while giving orders in regard to the property each person would be capable of carrying when leaving the castle; for that course was agreed to. All fear of Mrs. Rinser's opposition, all regard for future consequences, all respect, even, for age or sex vanished from his mind in his desire to ventilate the despair which threatened to wreck his soul.

He cursed with such fury that the saliva between his lips turned white, and his eyes became red like living coals of fire. Suddenly turning to Mrs. Rinser, while she was depositing her money in a small satchel, he said:

"This is your doings. It's *your* work that brought the rebels to the door. No other one is to blame, an' the curses of us all will fall on your head."

"Don't make me worse than what I am," she answered meekly, now thoroughly humbled. "What have I done that you revile me in such a manner?"

"Well you know what you've done. I needn't go behind the

door to tell you. The same thing was troubling you this long time, because I *seen* it in your face."

"I do not understand ; that is, I don't know what you mean, old man, meaning Antony, dear me, how terrible you are."

"Ah! ha! well I knew the way the trouble came. The girl you took from her people is coming back on you. Her friends *is* in the mob ready to hang you ; but it's no more nor you deserve."

"There's two of a kind of us," she replied, white with fear, "the more's the pity. As I said to Mrs. Tuberfoot, it was Antony Firfag that suggested, I may say declared, Amby should be taken, poor dear, from her home by force."

"I had good backing from you there," said Antony between his teeth.

The woman resumed :

"And moreover it was Antony that carried her off—"

"Stop that talk!" he shouted, advancing towards her in a threatening manner. "Don't put lies on me. I was bad enough. I went out of my way to please you and your fool of a brother, but I didn't keep the girl from her people like the rest, nor hide her in the carriage. I know who'll answer for that much."

The woman resumed :

"I treated her well. She had a good home here ; in fact, *very* good as I often remarked to Mrs. Tuberfoot ; better than she could in her own house."

"Why had you cunning ways for her, and a false tongue? Didn't she pine away like a bird in a cage, and the hardness of your cold heart never stopped."

"The law allowed it."

"Ah! that wasn't the law, but what's comin' is. I didn't know myself but that the government could do everything to keep us safe as long as we stayed inside the walls, but now I believe different. The God that made the girl will be on her side and take revenge."

"Oh, Antony, be reasonable in this dreadful time. Where will we go? Don't be so hard with me. I am guilty, but I suffered for it night and day ever since it occurred."

Before he answered, Miss Mussy reported having seen from one of the upper windows of the castle, a dark mass of people approaching it over the road with torches, evidently employed to guide their footsteps hither. Antony cried out:

"Two come with me. It makes no difference which two it is. I'll take my share in the boat across the river. That's all it will hold. We can hide in the country for awhile. I know places where we can pay our way and there will be nothing said."

"And the other two?" inquired Mrs. Rinser.

"Let them go back to the northwest corner of the ground behind the castle. They'll find there a place where they can climb to the top of the wall and jump over. Then they know how to walk to the country and stay in it as they were before."

Owing to the pressure of time this arrangement was final.

It was decided Mrs. Rinser and Miss Mussy would accompany Antony over the river, while Mrs. Tuberfoot and Mrs. Aloes, in obedience to instructions, must attempt escape, favored by the darkness, to the house of an acquaintance in the district where they formerly resided.

Without a word of farewell, the members of the group hurried to the front entrance and separated, each party going in the direction before indicated. The light from the torches of the mob became visible beyond the wall on the west side of the enclosure as Antony and his affrighted companions passed along the gravel walks of the garden on the east side and emerged through the wicket over the river bank.

A sharp exclamation of wonder escaped the man as he glanced at the water. The river appeared filled with a great flood.

In their excitement the fact was forgotten that a large quantity of rain had fallen two days in succession previously.

This water-course drained an extensive valley as well as a large district of mountain land. On the present occasion the rush and plenitude of the current of many streams culminated here in an immense tide! Viewed by the little light coming from an opening in the clouds, its characteristics made it terrible.

The headlong speed at which it went induced the belief, that the power impelling it, designed the completion of some great work, before the next day's sun arose.

It was turbulent, too; lashed into mad disquietude partly by its own elements, the conditions surrounding it, and the lowering of the atmosphere. One could see an expression of anger pervading the surface, as if it possessed animation. It was not so much a scowl, as a threatening look concentrated into fierceness, supported by the energy of the whole body. Waves crossed each other at right angles, some coming from the shore forcing intrusion on such as had been formed by the wind or current. Huge cylindrical masses of the water rolled across or with the tide; their dark forms shocking the beholder with the idea, that they were monsters from the sea sent here in order to contribute additional terrors to the appalling scene.

Irregular prominences started up continuously between the waves, as if contending for places, some of them discharging, at the same time, jets of their native element high into the air.

Patches adjoining the banks leaped against the sides as if desirous of escaping from the turmoil without; and after being resisted sought other places forward, for the purpose of making a similar effort.

The multitude of indentations which appeared, some deep like the openings to caverns, others small and flat, accompanied by twisted lines, as well as distorted curves, made the surface acquire a speckled aspect, doubly dark and horrible.

Miniature whirlpools careered through the hollows of immense swells, like toys designed for the childish among infernal spirits.

Where obstructions presented themselves, eddies prevailed, tearing at the roots of vegetation and the cohesion of rocks.

The foam was broken into fragments of various forms, giving to the face of the stream a character resembling that of the surf of the ocean ; but destitute of its never ceasing clearness.

The vast body tossed itself in agony !

Surprised into undue emotion it seemed aggrieved ; and endeavored to taunt the authority of the superior power by writhing angrily in its presence.

It hissed displeasure.

The seething of the mass was so pronounced as to promote a suspicion that it held direct communication with the fire of the bottomless pit. The atmosphere was filled with its mysterious moaning ; and sympathetically favored the congregation of black clouds which hung around the horizon and over the inscribed plain in order to conceal its distress.

The three helpless individuals viewed the fearful phenomenon and trembled. For the first time they were face to face with the terrible, depending for life on its caprice.

They could have sinned with impunity during the past, in their own estimation and smothered its recollection while appearing innocent to the world ; but in the presence of this monstrous avenger they dare not even *think* of injustice.

Evil was eliminated from their souls, like water from a sponge under pressure.

Fear drove them to piety.

Hardihood in crime availed nothing to sustain their strength, while such awful power from the unknown seemed waiting to overwhelm them. The women prayed aloud, the man answered the responses.

The darkness appeared to permeate each individuality as if to encourage it to despair, even while the lips of all craved mercy, making that hour as torturing as the first one of eternal woe.

There was a sharp breeze blowing across the waters, whose doleful peans resembled the requiems for the dead. It was troubled, perhaps, about catastrophe happening or to happen. The fugitives listened as if to interpret the sounds and gather from them information or consolation, but alas! they had never studied nature and knew nothing of her mysteries. When the people were dying of hunger they laughed and securely enjoyed themselves, heedless of the wants of others.

Now the void, which remembers everything, made them a sport for its terrors, at a time when those whom they disregarded were exultant.

Thus did it equalize justice.

In the midst of their cogitations a wild shout from the rabble startled them. Instinctively they understood that the iron gate, or main entrance in the boundary wall had been forced and their enemies were rushing on the castle itself. Indeed the noise of rapid footsteps on the gravel walks proved beyond all doubt their conjectures to be true.

In another minute they might be captured and slain; the garden only separated them from the executioners. Theirs was a terrible predicament.

On one side the flood, the instrument of chastisement in the custody of the invisible; on the other the mob, the retaliatory weapon of the people.

The one operated without compunction; the other smote without mercy!

Antony Firfag made no further delay. His decision reached maturity while yet the echoes of the shouting were around him. He would prefer to intrust his life to circumstances amid the dangers of the deep, than with the fury of the multitude.

The boat lay in a small cove at right angles to the stream moored to an iron ring in the garden wall. It was a poor craft being flat-bottomed and known to fishermen as a "cot." In calm weather and during the absence of freshets it was pro-

pelled by means of a large pole ; but on other occasions two small oars were employed for that purpose.

The man stepped backward into the garden and returned immediately with the oars. It was customary to keep them suspended behind the door securely covered to prevent damage by rain. Then having placed them in the boat which he held by the bow to steady its motion he desired Mrs. Rinser and Miss Mussy to enter. After the difficult task of seating them was accomplished, for the boat lurched fearfully, Antony asked Mrs. Rinser to place the oars in position so as to be ready to push from the shore when he took his place. This could be easily done because the boat had iron tolepins and in each oar was an iron ring to fit them like the adjustment in a cobble.

The woman having seen the rush of waters and beholding the man scarcely able to sustain the upright position dreaded the voyage. She said : —

" I am stronger than you, Antony. I can pull the boat."

"Are you stronger nor *that* ?" he inquired pointing to the flood.

" What I said was heard. I'm stronger than *you*," she reiterated. " It is not that I want to be, goodness knows, far from it ; for that's not here nor there ; but what can I do when one is. As I said to Mrs. Tuberfoot ; it is no use in blaming the weather when the snow is on the ground ; nor trying to mend a broken egg after it drops on the floor."

Antony would have burst into invective at the conclusion of this speech if it had not been for the terrors which surrounded him. He only said : —

" You don't know no more about the ways of that boat, Mrs. Rinser, nor me of what one fish says to another. Why should you ? You never learned her, nor pushed her head or back, this way or that way.

You couldn't keep her agin the current if you didn't dip your oars kindly. The water can catch your oar and twist it out of your hand like a knitting-needle. I know the strin'th that's in

it. You'd turn her mouth under before we knew that we were alive or dead, if you couldn't rise your oar the right way out of the water. I'm not hard on you ; but its your own fault. Your tongue is too quick and your head too light for any good on this journey."

"I must say something, Antony, I'm to blame, no doubt. As you said about the knitting-needle, it ain't no oar ; and the river is stronger than me, to be sure ; but as I said to Mrs. Tuberfoot we must put up with one thing or the other as it comes."

Antony who had taken his seat in the boat and seized the oars pointed the prow of his little craft against the wind and tide. In this position he calculated keeping her afloat while the current carried them far down the stream and to the opposite bank where the river curved. As a precautionary measure in this connection he said to the women :

" Now be quiet. Don't stir. The boat feels every move you make. She's uneasy at people when they're fidgety. She'll do her best ; but let her alone, an' keep civil tongues in your heads. The night is listenin' to everything you say. It might turn from us like the rest. It can't be trusted after hearing a wŏman's tongue. Besides the flood is ugly. It hates to hear anyone talk ; because, maybe, it isn't like its own."

Admonished by these remarks the women remained perfectly still. Antony's appearance did not, however, inspire them with much confidence in his ability as boatman. Indeed Mrs. Rinser trembled when she seriously contemplated the helplessness of the figure before her.

The head covered by an old hunting cap had shrunk so as to exhibit large hollows at the sides and front. The eyes, always small, now became almost imperceptible to view beneath the ill-looking brows. The cheek-bones were prominent and the skin over them copper colored. The attenuated nose appeared ghastly above the lips of the mouth ; but the chin beneath protruded forward. The rest of his body had shriveled pro-

portionately with the parts mentioned, especially the neck and arms.

What power could such miserable hands as his command? thought the woman.

In the darkness he seemed to take the shape of an inferior animal, or a spirit clothed in some hideous form.

Bending forward with his hands on the oars his aspect was shocking. Well might he be accounted a concomitant of darkness designed to lurk in its deepest shades and hover over its most intricate destinies.

Antony had been an expert oarsman. His skill stood well by him on the present occasion; for feeble as he was, a few strokes of his oars, made with but little effort, brought the boat into the stream, where she began to drift rapidly downward. Still intent on further success, he changed her head a point eastward; then using his full strength, he drove her out from the waters comparatively calm to the places where the fury of the tide prevailed.

What a change was here!

The first dip of the oar in the strong current proved disastrous. Antony was laid prostrate by the handle of the oar striking him in the breast while the implement wrenched from its fastening floated off with the current. Then the boat spun itself round like a deranged thing completely at the mercy of the tide, threatening every instant to throw its occupants into the water.

In this extremity the man shouted: "For your life, don't stir."

Regaining his feet he struck the water with the remaining oar which brought his boat into line with the torrent, saving her from being capsized; but she labored terribly in the trough of the billows, rising and falling across short thick waves heavily and shipping considerable water.

Mrs. Rinser and Miss Mussy terrorized by the surrounding dangers, remained silent witnesses of Antony's combat with

the stormy waters ; but they wept and prayed for mercy and life. The elder woman, despairing of safety, said to her sister : —

"If I saw Amby one moment, I'd be content. Not that she would say 'Mrs. Rinser, I do not understand,' far from it ; but she might tell me, 'God forgive you, for you need it.'

I did the best I could, small blame to me. I had to look after our brother Ham ; because he could not look after himself, poor boy. I knew no better. I paid Mrs. Timbertoe for nothing, for all the good was done ; but as I said before that's not here nor there."

Antony's struggle with the tide was of short duration.

Excitement stimulated him to undue efforts which when at their height, failed utterly to proceed further, like a cord in high tension snapping into two parts when the work it was expected to perform neared completion. The oar fell from his hands into the river. He trembled violently a few seconds, then sank into his seat powerless as a dead man. It was with difficulty, even, that he could bemoan the fate which had overtaken him during the intervals between his gasps for breath.

"I'm lost in the long run," he said to himself.

"There's no use trying any more. Me strin'th is gone. The hands I cannot rise even. If I could only grab a stick or a board I might be able to manage her yet, but I must be paralyzed out an' out. Oh, what'ill I do or where'ill I turn ?"

Besides the characteristics of the freshet already mentioned, there was drift-wood carried down with it which might prove dangerous to small boats attempting the passage of the stream.

Antony and his companions had not thought of this feature previously. Reminded of it now in their helplessness by perceiving several large trees pass near them with threatening attitude, they began to scan the waters closely. This was a new terror, and doubly dreadful, because it emanated from the darkness. They were liable to be surprised in an instant by it ; nay, overwhelmed, run down, sunk in the twinkling of an eye beneath

the dark waters never to rise. Hence, each passenger turned to scrutinize more minutely than heretofore, the depths of the night and the angry face of the flood.

Suddenly their eyes were riveted on an object in it, above them, whose movements took away their breath, almost, with suspense and dread. It was a heavy spar, coming from some unknown point, with the swiftness of a messenger riding for life or death.

Headlong it plunged; the motion being accelerated by the smoothness of its own surface and weight of the body. It shot through waves like an arrow. It overthrew kindred logs which accidentally came in the way. Nothing seemed to be able to divert it from its hidden purpose.

It came towards the boat in a direct line. Its resemblance to a huge sea-serpent was remarkable; for the skin in which it was incased seemed to glance above the water, occasionally, as if intended to create terror in all who beheld its awful form.

In an instant it was upon them. There was not time for a single thought; but one wild shriek came up from the group into the atmosphere as the spar hit the boat on the side and drove it beneath the surface!

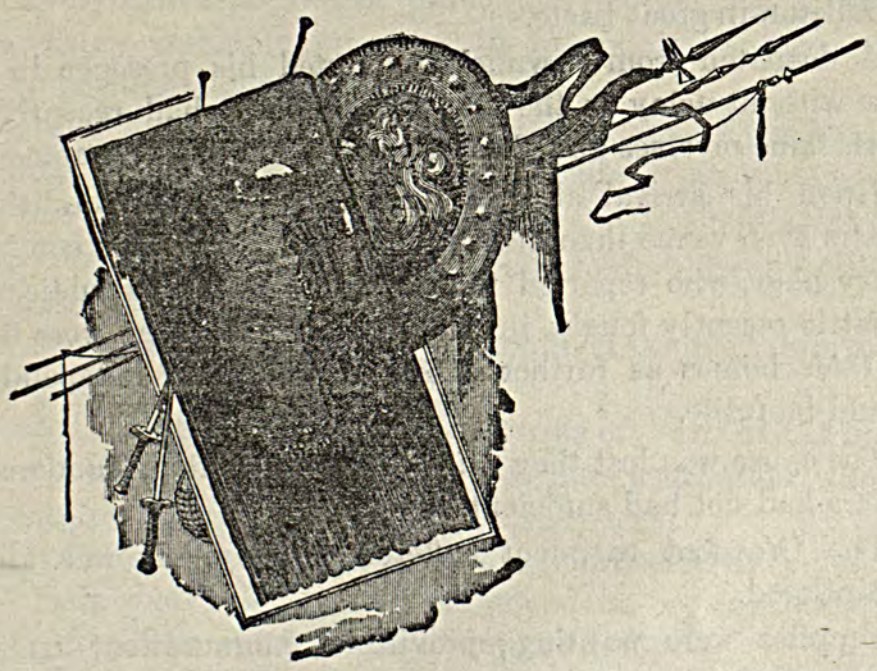
There were a few more cries of distress as Antony and Mrs. Rinser struggled in the surf for life; but it was soon over. Miss Mussy was saved, having held to the boat which arose and remained on the surface, and was finally thrown against the opposite bank far down the stream, but her two companions were drowned.

Then the flood proceeded onward exultantly.

It sped to the sea where it told how the powers of the universe combined in the absence of human aid, to avenge the wrongs perpetrated against the rebel's daughter. How it smote her abductors in the darkest hour of their lives, surrounding them with woe such as might be suitable for those who have been promised eternal torments on account of crime; and how it listened to their wailing without pity or remorse.

In line with this retributive agent appeared the fire which consumed Dawnford Castle.

Over the shrill cries of the dying ; above the silence of the dead it darted upward in joyous tongues ; beckoning as it were to the unknown to turn and behold the wretched ending of the two individuals now sleeping their long unconsciousness in the dark waters beneath.



CHAPTER XXXV.

THE GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENT

BEFORE any investigation could be instituted in regard to the wanton destruction of Dawnford Castle Zanthon left Kindleton in great haste.

A despatch from Fawndell requested his presence in that city without delay as the Republican arms had recently met with some reverses and the boundary itself was threatened.

Upon his arrival at that place he found the condition of affairs even worse than anticipated. Fugitives were coming in every hour, who reported the overthrow of the Republicans at a battle recently fought in the interior. The men were flying to their homes as further efforts in behalf of independence would be futile.

The cause was lost they said. General Hefton, Tanders and others had not had sufficient support.

The Crowfoot regiment suffered terribly. It was almost annihilated.

Supplies were wanting; provisions, ammunition, arms, as well as men.

All this proved true in every particular.

The government had placed three armies in the field the least containing over fifty thousand men. These subdued every appearance of rebellion and re-established confidence in the power of the monarchy.

General Hefton's command leaving Liebadthore, attempted a junction with the French contingent, which after landing had defeated the enemy in several engagements, but the presence of immense numbers in opposition to theirs with all the best appliances of war prevented the accomplishment of the design. Hefton was slain, his troops defeated, the allies captured and liberty laid prostrate in the dust!

Then began wild scenes of carnage such as the battle field, even, did not present. The government troops butchered men by the wayside, insulted women, sacked villages and destroyed the property of the inhabitants.

In the midst of the disorder when individuals were scattering in every direction to seek protection in obscurity, a party of the enemy suddenly appeared in Fawndell, captured the patriots' position and arrested Zanthon.

As orders for his detention had been issued by persons in high authority, he was not slain on sight, like some of his comrades, but thrown into prison to await trial and execution as an example for others of his countrymen to avoid similar situations in future.

The structure where Zanthon was confined assumed immense proportions.

Situated in one of the Northern suburbs of Fawndell it harmonized with the spirit of intolerance and usurpation which distinguished the age in that country.

Built of huge rocks laid in cement, it afforded to its founders ample means of holding political offenders or criminals in security, free from outside interference or escape.

The main building was five stories in height, flanked on the right and left by wings running backward and partly enclosing a rectangular piece of land about four acres in extent. The remainder of this space had been bounded by a lesser building of the same material with strong stone and mortar connections to prevent egress or ingress.

It was here special classes of criminals used to be confined;

idiots, sick persons and those belonging to the establishments afflicted with contagious diseases. Around the entire institute appeared a boundary wall sixteen feet high and two hundred feet from the basement of it which checked forever all aspirations for liberty which might otherwise have been entertained by unfortunate occupants.

In the south side of the great wall skirted by a suburban street which came direct from the city, was situated the sole entrance. A huge gate of wood and iron securely bolted; but to facilitate the movement of individuals through it there was a small door or wicket for that purpose, merely held in place by a strong lock.

An old war veteran, in the service of the government, held the place of gate-keeper, having a small apartment on the inside in which he lived, but to protect him in case of assault, as also to stop attempts of prisoners at escape, a sentinel was posted in the space between the buildings and the boundary wall, who paraded its whole extent every half hour, thus making four revolutions during his watch. The headquarters of this guard held station in or near the infirmary quite convenient to the dead-house, which position had been assigned to it, no doubt, on account of the kinship existing between the two institutions.

The external appearance of the prison was repulsive. It was inordinately strong to retain the lines of beauty peculiar to individual residences; the dark walls unbroken by a single additional color were shocking in eternal samenesss. Iron grating in front of the windows brought recollections of excruciating tortures and shrieks of despair within their confines to the mind of the beholder and all the train of philosophic thought leading to the problem of man's injustice to man!

At a distance it stood, in the face of daylight, like an obstruction, rearing its deformity against the sky as if it meant to be offensive or threatening even to the law of eternal order above. It darkened the atmosphere like a cloud at the time a

thunderstorm is in progress ; but in the gloom of twilight its broad compass of murky shade whose fastenings went far into the domain of night, was appalling. Bats and owls frequented the place ; while some said, the evil beyond and the evil *this* side the grave, met there on common ground.

The apartments for the accommodation of the governor of the jail, for it had one, stood immediately inside the front door of the main building. The hall, about eight feet wide extended the width of this part of the edifice the floor consisting of stone-flags ; but light was admitted through a large transom over the door. To the right a parlor or dining room, sixteen feet square, handsomely furnished. To the left the office where the books and accounts of the establishment were kept ; and the governor could be met, usually, for the transaction of business.

Lying adjacent to these were other necessary apartments ; store-rooms, pantry, dairy, laundry, kitchen and scullery ; besides, on the floor above, three additional rooms had been furnished for his use, accessible through passages leading from the hall beneath. In addition to the main door there appeared one on each side of it, distant about a hundred feet, which opened into a system of cells for prisoners.

The patch of ground before each of these doors had been separated from the front entrance by a low fence enclosing a small flower-garden into which the governor's windows looked and where his wife and child occasionally amused themselves, doubtless to avoid the monotony of the abode within.

It is desirable to introduce this lady to the attention of the reader the day of Zanthon's incarceration in the prison.

She was a woman in the prime of life endowed with great beauty.

The tinting of her cheeks, no doubt, had changed from what it had been in early youth, delicate pink, to the complete rose-color of maturity. The eyes were full of lustre, inclined to be critically correct in their scrutiny of persons or other objects ; and her figure might readily be taken for that of a goddess.

Her movements were exquisite examples of dignity and grace to which all persons in her presence were more or less attracted.

The business of the world made her stern; but she never descended to rudeness or manners unbecoming a lady of the highest order of society. The books in the office were all in her writing; beautiful tracings of penmanship; and on account of performing such important labor the authorities allowed her the salary of assistant governor. Her responsibility did not end here, however. Every incident pertaining to the inmates of the prison; every detail connected with its supplies; every case demanding the interference of the local ruler came to her for final settlement.

Her decisions were never questioned; for it appeared the administrative ability displayed harmonized with law; so acute and varied were the scholarly adornments of her mind.

With the passage of years her labors increased.

She solved great problems; instituted reforms and made the establishment famous as a place where supervision exhibited extraordinary results beneficial to all parties.

Notwithstanding the glow of health upon her cheeks, there was an expression of care over her features, that could not escape observation: either, because her duties were too heavy, or that some disappointment in the past fixed its effects permanently on her countenance, as if determined on marring its handsome outline.

Her husband, the governor, little better than a figurehead possessed a great deal of pompous assurance; but no capacity for the performance of executive work, which as before said devolved upon his helpmate. Their child was a boy named Philistine, now over six years of age.

The governor superintended in person, the imprisonment of Zanthon in one of the cells to the left of his own quarters. The prisoner had been accompanied by a troop of horse, the commander of which handed to the governor sealed orders con-

cerning the disposition of Zanthon and the necessity that existed of keeping him in close confinement. In the street outside the boundary wall, the cavalry would parade night and day until he was executed.

In the office the facts having been communicated to the governor's wife she proceeded to make the usual entry in the register:

"Zanthon, eighteen years of age, place of birth unknown, resided at Kindleton in the province of Liebadthore, fair complexion, brown eyes, dark brown hair, height about five feet eight, comely person, no relatives, arch-rebel."

When this entry was completed the lady read it over two or three times, and began musing on its strange character.

"Zanthon is intended to cover his real name," she thought. "Brown hair, brown eyes, and eighteen! Well, well; how these facts strike to the heart, as if they related to *me* by some deep mystery.

No relatives, comely person, resided at Kindleton, but actual place of birth unknown. "Good God!" she exclaimed rising suddenly, "this is identical with the description of my younger brother. Perhaps, like me, he was kidnapped and kept concealed in some hideous den until he burst his bonds to find himself heir only to a worse fate! Oh, how my limbs tremble!" She quitted the office, and avoiding the opposite apartment, where the Governor was talking to some acquaintances, went upstairs to her own rooms.

Finding her son engaged in studying his lessons in one of them, she made an effort to control her feelings while she questioned him.

"Have you seen the arch-rebel, Philistine?"

"Yes, mamma. I followed papa and the turnkey to the cell where he was placed."

"How did he comport himself?"

"Like a person of a noble nature. He was grave, but serenely mild as the evening."

"Did you notice his garments?"

"He was dressed in dark green cloth, the rebel uniform, without facings. The hat had a thick cord around it, with two tassels."

"What words did he speak?"

"None that I heard; but, mamma, I looked at him very closely."

"For what purpose, my son?"

"Because I thought he resembled some one known to me."

"You did?"

"Some one near me."

The woman became visibly agitated. She ceased speaking; but the boy continued, coming closer to his mother:

"He is like *you*, mamma. I couldn't help thinking him good."

The lady turned suddenly pale, while her lips trembled, essaying to speak, but could not. Finally she said:

"Remain at your books, Philistine, until I return."

Then she left the apartment. Retracing her steps to the office she took from a close closet in the wall a key, hanging over the number "three." This was the number of Zanthon's cell. On account of his distinguished character he was given in charge to the Governor specially, who had him placed in an apartment that did not come under the continuous watch of the turnkeys or guards. This place was one of a series of twelve, designed for special purpose, such as the case now in hand. The door, however, was bolted on the outside as well as locked, and a small aperture appeared in the center of it, through which the prisoner could be seen.

In a few minutes after leaving the office the lady was before this door peering cautiously at the inside, where Zanthon was seated. The afternoon sun was streaming through his window, giving her ample opportunity of scrutinizing his countenance. The apartment was not devoid of comfort as well as

that it was in the front of the main building, with a pleasant view from it of the country beyond the boundary wall.

As she continued to gaze at him her breathing could be heard coming quick and short, as if laboring under some great emotion. "I could know him among ten thousand," she said to herself. "There can be no mistake in regard to the identity of *our* family. The characters are too plainly marked, the expressions too significant. I see traces of my father's features on this young man's face. The same look, the proud bearing, the gentleness ; aye, the man !

Oh ! mercy, it is Clare, the greatest of us all, brought here to suffer martyrdom for his country's sake !"

A few sobs escaped her. She twisted herself, so as to control a pain at her heart, and wrung her hands in agony — nay, whined until the agitation of her mind could no longer be borne.

Then undoing the fastenings of the door and throwing it open, she entered the cell, crying out :

"Clare, my brother ! I am Amby !"

Springing to his feet with the swiftness of a wounded fawn, Zanthon's responsive cry was heard :

"Amby ! Sunshine of my heart, is it you ?"

In an instant he was in her arms, while she wept passionately and piteously.

"Oh, God !" she murmured. "I thank Thee. Out of the fullness of thy bounty thou hast given me a minute worth a thousand years. Like a gem from thy crown. Like the essence of truth that assuages all sorrow. How wonderful is thy power. I asked, even without hope, that I might not die until I saw Clare, and thou hast produced him, as if yielding him up from the shades of death !

My beautiful brother ! like the rosy-tinted morning blooming in youth."

Continuing in this strain for some time, she finally released

Zanthon to enable both to be seated, in order to determine as to the course to pursue in this great emergency.

"Relate to me the history of your disappearance and the cause of your presence here," said the brother, regardless of his own safety. Amby gave a brief sketch of the incidents relating to her abduction and confinement in Dawnford Castle, as already known to the reader.

In continuation, she said:

"When I found from reports that all had been lost, ambition died within me. If I attempted to plan other methods of investigation in Kindleton or Fawndell, I was always met by disapprobation and false statements. I was never permitted to go out alone, lest information would be conveyed to me, hurtful to the designs of my captors in the castle.

After consultation with a notorious fortune teller named Mrs. Timbertoe, the housekeeper, Mrs. Rinser, introduced the subject of my marriage with her brother, Ham Boggleton. I repudiated the idea with scorn. This did not move her from the purpose in view. She was patient. Perseverance seemed a part of her nature. Every ingenious device her mind was capable of conceiving, or which it was possible to procure from others, was employed to induce me to yield acquiescence to her wishes.

Marriage was abhorrent to me. I felt like one who had been crushed in some great accident and required a long time to recuperate before venturing into the ordinary pursuits of life.

My spirit seemed broken, my senses subdued under a threatening influence that might at any time renew its hostility to me and extinguish life itself. Therefore I dare not even hope for happier times. About this period it became known that a government appointment was available for Ham Boggleton. The news awakened great pleasure in the minds of his friends, seeing how long and persistently they had hoped for his aggrandizement through that means. There was only one

obstacle to the completion of this great project: Boggleton must be married.

My sympathies were invoked; his condition appealed to my mercy.

They asked me to be charitable for the sake of my dead friends.

Then I consented to be his wife; but informed him the marriage would be a mere contract; wherein love, so far as I was concerned, would play no part.

When the character of the position intended for Boggleton and myself became known it shocked me. He was to be governor of this jail; and I must perform the executive duties.

Taking up our residence here, my life became one continued act of slavery unbroken by contentment or pleasure. Society was dead to me. I had no friends; for those who had finally succeeded in placing me in this dreadful situation made no attempt to disturb the monotony of my life by their presence or correspondence. Business left no time for visits elsewhere. The people I met, daily, were of the criminal classes, burdened with great troubles or diseases mental and physical.

Love, benevolence, joy, peace and other human acquisitions which decorate life in the homes of mankind, fled from this dismal abode, like flowers from a barren plain.

The world itself appeared desolate to my view; yet I labored assiduously for duty's sake. I lived for one purpose only; obedience to the superior power as I understood or interpreted its requirements. See what reward I have been given at last; you here! I am satisfied. Great was the burden with which I was encumbered; but it is insignificant when weighed in the balance with my joy!

My son Philistine is interesting. I believed he too was sent to me from God as a panacea."

When Amby finished this part of her story, Zanthon hurriedly told her the principal facts of his life from the time of her disappearance at Footford to the date of his imprison-

ment, not omitting to dilate on the untimely end of Mrs. Rinser and Antony Firfag, as well as the fate of Dawnford Castle; also their relation to the rebel chief. Then they turned to examine what the future contained for them, whether liberty, imprisonment or death?

"I will not have you die by the hands of these low-bred officials," said Amby. "Before witnessing such a fate I would destroy you with my own."

"I do not fear death," returned Zanthon. "I undertook the chances of a soldier and will abide by the results."

"The grandson of Merraloon must not fall like a criminal," resumed Amby proudly, "it would be honorable for you to await the decision of your enemies if they had pursued a fair line of conduct towards your country, but their presence here has been marked by the most unscrupulous and high-handed acts of injustice, spoliation, outrage, murder of helpless innocence, scorn and ruin! Therefore you are relieved from all obligation to them, directly or indirectly."

"What would you have me do, Amby?"

"Escape."

"If this were possible, where can safety be found?"

"In America."

"I cannot abandon my comrades in arms."

"No hope of success remains for them. The enemy is too strong. Besides your death would add nothing to their influence."

"And *you*, Amby; how could I ever be reconciled to liberty if it would, in any way, compromise your position here?"

"I would glory in the compromise. With me, any change is relief. Listen. When you are again free, enjoying those traits of life peculiar to good persons, unclouded by tyranny, I will join you in that home beyond the Atlantic, where the will of a united people is the supreme law; but should accident intervene to prevent this hope being realized, my spirit will dwell with you, wherever you go."

"Would you come alone?"

"No. The family, as it is called, must accompany me and be my escort."

"I am unable to see any means of escape from this prison."

"It is possible. We shall examine our resources systematically. You have comrades?"

"They have been defeated, and may not be within reach. Perhaps in the days of their strength they would be unequal to the task of overcoming the strong guards that surround the wall."

"Who commanded them?"

"Tanders is my best friend."

"We shall begin with him. The troops have fallen back on Fawndell. He will doubtless be found here."

"I know his place of resort."

"Give the name to me; he must be sought at once."

Amby arose and after having been furnished with the desired address, left the cell, securing the door on the outside, so as to prevent suspicion arising in regard to interference with the prisoner. Even her husband must not be informed of her relationship with Zanthon, lest the knowledge might defeat her plans for his escape.

Returned to her apartments she began to write hurriedly. On the face of the epistle appeared these words.

"The sister of Zanthon desires his release. His trial will begin to-morrow and there is reason to believe he will be executed the following morning. Rally his army friends. Bring them to his rescue. Force the gate in the boundary wall of the prison in the gloom of the evening next after this and I will have him there. I am the wife of the governor of the prison and can accomplish what I promise."

Folding this document in a small roll and writing "Tanders," over it she called her son Philistine.

"When the provision wagon goes into the city to-day you accompany it; and deliver this small roll of paper to the pro-

prietor of the hotel called "Sweatsons, situated at the junction of Goliah and Pelican streets. Remember my instructions, Philistine. The clerk at the hotel will inform the proprietor that a lad wants to see him on business. After you give up the paper wait until you receive some message to bring back to me."

"How shall I know friends from enemies mamma ?"

"Do not attempt to solve such a question ; because it might involve you in much trouble, until time supplies you with pointers or explanations too clear to be doubted. Sometimes there is a great show of friendship over selfish natures ; and many whom you may have regarded as enemies if their false opinions of you were overcome by acquaintanceship would prove themselves your benefactors. You must not imagine my boy that every person who offers you a so-called kindness is necessarily your friend ; or a rebuff, your enemy. These are delusions that originate a great amount of hardship among the people who permit themselves to be guided by their dictates. Therefore in the present case be silent ; because the people you encounter in the city may strive to obtain valuable information from you by persuasion, trusting to your innocence and youth."

"What shall I conceal or what may I tell them if I'm questioned mamma ?"

"Say nothing about the business of the prison , but you might give your individual opinions regarding the weather and the prices of produce in the markets, if desired."

"If they ask me how the sympathies of my parents tend ; whether towards the royal troops or the patriots, must I still be silent ?"

"Reply Philistine, the parents will answer for themselves."

"But should they yet go further and inquire to whom would I give my support in case of need, tell me mamma how I ought to speak ?"

"Be outspoken in vindication of justice and fear not to speak

truth. Answer: 'He who loves not his kindred, race, or country, is unworthy the name or fellowship of man. The unknown will brand him with iniquity and the void afford him no relief. In the unseen record of time his reckoning will be in line with despicable forms and destructive elements; and in life the sweetness of nature closed against his desires. In the country of the royal troops I would admire their discipline, but the patriots are my people and it is my duty to defend them. This invasion and usurpation of my country is not in the order of unseen law: therefore an outrage. Look well to it. The institution which gives it strength will be stricken with decrepitude when those in other nations acquire power, like the sun ascending the meridian.

It will cry aloud for mercy unheard. The disease of wrong-doing will make it appear odious; and the world demand its removal, lest civilization should suffer injury from contact with its contagious nature.

Nothing in ancient or modern times is so significant of national disintegration than the spectacle presented in the enemy's home of a clever statesman being obliged to condone the crimes of a prince.

All the laurels he had won in scientific debate favorable to the interests of the crown; all the fame arising through his individual ability; all the aspirations entertained for the nation's progress, withered and became ineffective in the presence of this woeful necessity.

Now Philistine be careful, and when you return we shall have an entertainment enlivened by further conversation about our patriot friends."

At the appointed time the boy departed and Amby busied herself to avoid notice until his reappearance. She appeared pale and careworn. The present undertaking involved fearful consequences which she did not wish to examine. If it failed on account of Tanders' absence or inability to act according to her plan she must try some other method. She was fortu-

nate that no suspicion of her relationship with Zanthon had yet been aroused. Boggleton was too dull to notice their resemblance and she cautioned Philistine not to mention the circumstance to any one in future. Hence the escape must take place while his enemies are ignorant of the real situation.

The boy did not come back immediately. She imagined the course of time had stopped so tardy was its passage. Gazing through the window at intervals, every minute seemed to possess the length of an hour.

Yet on reflection the delay indicated there was hope of Tanders' presence in the city ; for the message would have been sent to him and the boy detained. This view proved correct. Philistine came in after three hours' absence. He was excited, good-humoredly ; and disposed to dilate on what he had seen and heard since leaving the prison, but his mother stopped him.

On the small piece of brown paper which she received as the reply to her note, were these words unaccompanied by any signature : —

" I will be there ! "

Then she knew there was hope.



CHAPTER XXXVI.

COMPLETING THE RECORD.

THE remnant of the Crowfoot Regiment had fallen back on Fawndell at the time of Zanthon's capture. Tanders the original colonel and Hordance his successor still lived, but Taffles and a majority of the officers fell in battle.

As disaster appeared on all sides making it evident the Republican power was suspended at least for the present, the survivors of this famous regiment, about one hundred and fifty in number, received orders to return to their homes.

The gallant fellows had exchanged the uniforms for civilian clothing; and were resting quietly in the houses of sympathizers in the city, when news reached them that their services were again demanded. Tanders and Hordance made the preliminary arrangements and advanced the proposition of Zanthon's rescue, to which every man responded in the affirmative.

At the appointed hour the men repaired to the place of meeting indicated by the officers. They moved singly or in small squads to avoid notice. Each soldier carried a brace of revolvers celebrated for their efficient work in the battle of the boundary. These arms were easily concealed in their clothing. As the duty to which they were called involved the most serious consequences yet encountered, a final settlement of worldly affairs became the order of the day, and one by one the men parted with their friends as if no hope of return was possible.

The street in front of the prison was flanked on the south side by a number of cottages having gardens behind them. All the families residing in these domiciles were friendly to the patriots, and it was here where Tanders' command assembled.

The government cavalry, one hundred strong, paraded on the road between the houses and the boundary wall, this number being deemed sufficient to guard the prisoner in the absence of hostile troops. A little distance above the point where the guard wheeled to return, which was identical with the western line of the prison grounds, the patriots congregated behind one of the cottage gardens, where they stood concealed from view.

It was decided that Tanders would accompany Zanthon in his flight, but Hordance volunteered to lead the troops as of yore. His bravery never flagged for an instant, nor his fierce defiance of the enemy's rule. On the present occasion he was dressed in a suit of light clothing, as if he intended going to an evening party or entertainment.

After exchanging some words with Tanders when the men had all reported for duty, he stood erect and silent a few minutes, doubtless reflecting on the nature of the subject he was about to disclose. Then he spoke with the calm deliberation of a stoic. He said :

"Comrades, we are going to engage in our last fight. When it is finished your record will be complete. You have been faithful to duty. All our expectations concerning your action in battle have been realized.

The enemy fled before your bullets like dust seeking shelter from stormy winds.

The opinions which your conduct as civilians formerly invoked gave place to wonder when the world read of your achievement in the battle of the boundary.

The fire from our guns awoke the subtile adjudicator of the unknown, and commendation arose to crown our efforts; because we attempted to establish the liberty of mankind in conformity with the dictates of unwritten law.

To-day you will bring additional lustre to the success already won. In behalf of country and home our lives were first offered; now they are voluntarily imperiled to save a good man from death. The perishable wealth of the world would be insufficient as a reward for such greatness of soul; but the glory of a soldier, which never dies, will be your portion. On the pages of history it will endure with a brilliancy as tangible as the magnanimity of Cyrus, the intrepidity of Alexander, the perseverance of Hannibal, the boldness of Napoleon.

As civilians, society ignored your relationship. You were dragged by circumstances through degraded situations, so as to create phases of low resort in a world already full of crime. People kicked you when convenient, imagining it good; but hereafter the light of your fame will dazzle the eyes of the multitude in the political heaven of our country, while time rolls on to unknown periods over centuries of the future.

Think not unkindness will pursue you when lying alone in the cold earth on the floor of the silent narrow house designed for man. The roar of the cataract, the voice of the storm, the deep reverberation of the thunder, the shock of final dissolution will be unable to disturb your sweet slumber!

Come, therefore, once again, unloose the fastenings of the lightning and hurl the deadly thunderbolt at the enemy, that we may uphold the rectitude of God while vindicating the justice of his law in making the tyrants tremble."

Drawing two pistols from his belt Hordance wheeled to the left and stepped lightly into the street, followed closely by his men.

The twilight had not yet disappeared. Objects could be readily distinguished in the street. One-half the patriots moved in single file forward, occupying the whole width of the street; the others kept near the south wall, so as to elude the fire of the enemy as much as possible and save their own ammunition.

Hordance was on the left of the line. The cavalry were coming back, and evidently had seen the men form, for they brought their horses into a brisk trot. Hordance, seeing it, cried out: —

"Ready!"

Then running in front a few paces he shouted to the advancing troop:

"Halt!" This was to prevent bloodshed if possible. He was answered by a wild cheer as the cavalry men, in obedience to orders, drew their sabers and dashed forward at full gallop.

In an instant Hordance regained his position.

"Fire!" he cried, as he discharged his own weapons at the enemy. Then ensued a terrible fusilade. Fifty saddles were emptied at the first fire.

The commander of the troop, the individual who had arrested Zanthon, was dead before his body reached the ground, with a bullet through his heart and a bullet through his head. The next officer assuming charge, ordered a retreat, seeing he was outnumbered and surprised. This movement was executed quickly, and in a few moments the remnant of the cavalry was making all haste to the town for reinforcement and to apprise the authorities of the new symptoms of rebellion which had broken out so unexpectedly. They were followed by the patriots, who intended to hold the street clear until Zanthon regained his liberty.

Tanders, who, up to this time, remained concealed, now came forward, accompanied by three men with heavy axes, and laid siege to the wicket of the gate in the boundary wall.

While these thrilling events transpired, Amby made active preparations within the prison for Zanthon's escape. She secured the key of his cell, examined the door leading out of the prison near it; and arranged her own dining-room, opposite the office, so that her husband could be locked in, when she started to execute the final movement of release, without noticing anything unusual, perhaps, until her return.

When the firing commenced Boggleton, Philistine and Amby were seated in the dining-room. Amby understood its significance; but Boggleton and the boy were stricken with terror. Ham had grown corpulent since flourishing at Dawnford Castle. The governorship of the prison suited his condition admirably, especially as he performed little or no service. As seen now he was dressed in broadcloth, had his hair parted in the center, wore the accustomed jocular air of a person of consequence; and carried a silk handkerchief in his pocket saturated with perfume so as to impregnate the atmosphere around him with delicious odors.

The late news promulgated through the papers was discouraging to him; because his friends had to fly before the fury of the mob in Kindleton; and this fierce contest in front of the jail might signify an attempt to destroy himself. Indeed he actually imagined he heard persons call his name.

Whatever his failings Boggleton loved his wife. He was one of a class who by fraud, cajolery or force bring about a marriage with a handsome woman; never ceasing in the pursuit until all opposition is overcome. These individuals are characterized principally by thick-necked, stubborn selfishness, or effeminate animal longing.

"The duece take the rebellion, Amby dear," said Ham rising and looking through one of the windows at the smoke floating lazily on the calm evening air.

"I believe, upon my honor, I think, perhaps, the war has begun afresh."

"The firing is indicative of trouble," answered Amby.

"Do you think, my dear, the people, that is the rebels, will attack the prison, us I mean?"

"It appears as if the work had commenced."

"How terrible all this is. Not a safe place to retreat to on my honor. You will be treated well I know; but I, where can I go?"

"You might conceal yourself in one of the prison cells until the government troops came to your relief."

"Upon my honor, yes; no; that is, it might be dangerous; if some one should take me for a prisoner, you know, it would be deuced unfortunate."

"Then remain here with Philistine while I examine the part of the institute liable to be forced."

"No, Amby, on my honor, no; I'm afraid without you, really. I tremble."

"Does *conscience* disturb your peace so much?" said his wife with a little severity in her voice.

"It is the rebels, my dear, the deuced villains that will not be quiet."

"Ah! I should not have mentioned it. Animal instinct designed merely for self preservation needs no conscience. Where ignorance is exercised for intelligence selfishness is law. Stay, the combatants are moving in the direction of the city." She arose suddenly and continued: —

"Philistine, keep your father here until quiet is restored on the outside. He needs attention. Do not leave him for an instant and for yourself be not afraid." Amby left the apartment.

In a few moments she reached Zanthon's cell, opened the door and entered. It was at the instant when the cavalry retreated past the gate pursued by the patriots.

"The time for escape is near at hand, my brother," she said, "your comrades are brave men."

"Aye! they have the true instinct of soldiers," he replied. "Nay, their friendship is like a divine gift, the longer it endures the more brilliant it becomes. Tanders is as faithful to me and rectitude as sunshine to the earth. Hordance resembles the stern aspect of a mountain reared to defend its country from the invasion of strangers. The other men of the old regiment, for doubtless they are the persons concerned in this undertaking, are heroes worthy of all praise."

"Hark! They have assaulted the gate. Come Clare; we must hurry or the government troops will return and your escape would then be impossible."

While saying this they stood at the outer door from which they could see the wicket just then burst open and two men securing the old gate-keeper by locking him up in his box.

"Quick!" said Amby, taking Zanthon by the hand so as to run across the intervening space that separated him from liberty.

"I will go alone," said Zanthon; "you will be in danger. Remain here. Good-bye my sister. God bless you until we meet again."

"I will not leave you until safe beyond the wall," she replied.

"I can hear the tumult re-awaking this side the city. Your friends will be slaughtered without mercy. Do not disappoint their last brave effort in your behalf. They are yielding up their lives so that you may enjoy liberty in a free land. Now run. Keep close to me."

They bounded forward hand in hand.

While thus engaged the patriots were sorely pressed by the enemy. Being afoot, the horsemen sent for re-inforcements, soon gained the desired station and fresh troops sallied forth to the relief of their comrades.

Then indeed did the few remaining friends of Zanthon show the courage with which they were animated. Where the street joined the town they sought temporary cover and drove back the cavalry, which had been re-inforced by a full troop, at every attempt to proceed in the direction of the prison. Seeing this the enemy ordered a regiment of infantry to the scene of the action. This coming up, it was ordered to carry both flanks of the Republicans while the mounted troops charged the center.

At this double movement the patriots gave way slowly.

Hordance fell mortally wounded. He said to one of his men even with his last breath :

" Let no man fail to complete his record."

It was about this time Amby and Zanthon were running towards the open wicket. As they went, loving words of farewell were exchanged between them. Amby had said : —

" God be with you, Clare. Remember me ! "

Suddenly their ears were assailed by a terrible voice coming from the place they had quitted. It sounded like a death warning, or a blast from the last trumpet to sinners. Sternly it rang out : —

" Halt ! "

Again it repeated : —

" Halt ! "

Amby had forgotten. It was one of the inside guard which, as will be remembered, had been stationed near the infirmary so as to permit its members keep watch for prisoners attempting escape. The truth flashed upon her in an instant ; yet she would not be defeated in her purpose. Dropping behind her brother she pushed him forward just as the sentinel's second command reached them. Finally the last moment had come. Zanthon urged by Amby turned from the direct line into the custody of Tanders, as she with clasped hands was saying:

" It is finished. He is safe," when the report of the sentinel's gun was heard, the bullet intended for the brother sped through the loving sister's heart and beautiful, faithful Amby fell in the roadway, within the gate, a corpse !

Then the commotion in the street increased. It came towards the prison gradually like a thunderstorm approaching a climax.

Volley after volley of musketry sounded through the air ; and the loud shouts of command commingled with the groans of the dying. When the cavalry reached the gate their opponents were not in view. The firing ceased. The Crowfoot regiment had been mustered out.

The remnant of it which distinguished itself so nobly in the late contest was no more, for its members lay dead in their tracks. The night wind came out from the gloom and cried sorrowfully over them ; the stars looked down from heaven, in pity at their helplessness and nature, regardless of praise or censure extended her hand above their heads, sealing up each individuality in eternal slumber !

Tanders delayed not an instant after Zanthon emerged through the prison-gate. Favored by the absence of troops as well as by the increasing darkness the two friends hastily passed into one of the houses near the street, according to previous arrangement, then through the garden and mounting two horses which had been waiting for them rode rapidly away in the direction of the coast-line west from Fawndell. No one knew the difficulties and the safety of this route better than Tanders. In youth his footsteps were directed frequently over passes of the mountain range which, coming from the interior terminated at the coast in high peaks and bold headlands. He was bred a mountaineer. Every glen and gorge, every road and byway, every spring and river in this wild district were familiar to him.

He knew the situation of the movable rock, the ghost's hiding-place, the peak of the miser, the giant's hunting-ground, the ford of the foxes and many other places of curiosity.

It may be seen therefore how well qualified he was to be Zanthon's guide from imprisonment to liberty.

The ride from Fawndell westward was over the public road thirty miles, before the friends reached the mountainous country. As the enemies' guards at two or three places along this way, had not yet been replaced, since their withdrawal, before the battle of the boundary, no danger was apprehended from that source. However but little was said by the horsemen, as they sped over the road until the desired point was gained. A noticeable feature of the journey was the noiseless tread of the

horses due to the fact of their shoes having been covered with strips of leather designed to deaden sound.

From the highway Tanders and Zanthon turned to the left into a trail shaded by low trees.

It was then about midnight and the calculation was to travel uninterruptedly across the spurs of the mountain before taking rest or refreshment.

Feeling secure in their new situation Zanthon questioned Tanders regarding the salient facts connected with the defeat which they had sustained recently in the interior.

"I commanded a brigade of five regiments," he replied, and as in the first battle became the aggressor. I attempted to turn the enemy's flank ; but was met by heavy round shot and shell obliging me to retreat with great loss, the old regiment having been almost destroyed.

Hefton calculated on reinforcements which did not come ; and to tell you the truth the small army he *did* command was partly demoralized from various causes, such as want of food, clothing, drunkenness, sickness and desertion."

"Did the pike men afford much assistance ?"

"Yes ; but they suffered terribly. All our positions were shelled at long range. We could not therefore bring the pike-men into action until chance offered a prospect of success at close quarters. As the cavalry did not charge we ordered the pike men to storm a breastwork held by infantry. They failed to capture it and left their dead on the field in the retreat ; for in addition to its known strength that earthwork concealed a battery which tore our ranks to pieces.

"Where is Hordance ?"

"He fell with the last of the Crowfoot regiment fighting for your liberation !"

"What noble men they were, my dear Tanders, and your-self the most remarkable of them all."

"My dear boy, the incidents of the war were sources o amusement to me. A diversion from the dull routine of every-

day life: a kind of picnic that created a side show wherein I saw the realties of life illustrated to perfection."

"And what do you propose doing now?"

"Get into the old rut of living as usual. I have a wife and six children to look after, or rather they look after me, whichever way you wish to take it. I will settle down in Philadelphia where the wife has friends. She will join me soon after I arrive there, coming out on an emigrant ship."

"Then we travel together to America?"

"Yes, my dear boy, we are on the way. It is a rough one to be sure, but quite safe. The three men who forced the gate when you were released are the only survivors of the Crowfoot regiment. As I needed their services afterwards they did not join in the fight but awaited my orders. One I dispatched to a powerful friend of ours who owns a yacht. This will bring him and his craft round to the point we are making about to-morrow evening. He is as true as steel. We will sail for France and thence to America.

The second man I sent to Kindleton with a letter to my wife, informing her of our destination and requesting her to transfer to the place indicated without delay. The last man I set free, giving him money to bear his expenses to foreign parts if he felt desirous of going."

"We, too, will require expenses, my dear Tanders."

"Why that reminds me, my dear boy, of something I was charged to give you by a lady about two days ago. I was seated outside the bar at Sweatson's, when a little woman dressed in black tapped me on the shoulder with a riding-whip, accompanying her action with the inquiry:

'Is your name Tanders, my good gentleman?' to which I mildly replied:

'Yes, ma'am, to the best of my knowledge, that is it.'

'And did you happen to know Governor Zanthon in your time?' she said, tremulous like, as if afraid to speak boldly.

'Hem! haw, why, I believe so, ma'am,' I answered, half suspecting she might be a spy in disguise.

'You are his friend?'

'Well, I am everybody's friend in time of need.'

'Don't be afraid. I want you to take a message to him if possible. You are the only man who can do it, and I'll trust you. If there's a chance for him give him this,' and she placed a purse of money in my hands. I was astonished and pleased, being then engaged in making arrangements for your escape. The woman continued:

'My name is Figbit. Tell Zanthon this is the money I borrowed from him on purpose, so as to return it when he required it most. I knew the revolution would fail and that his young life would be sacrificed for the sake of others.'

'He will not die,' I said, to comfort her, for she began weeping.

'Tell him Nancy will get rich on the calves, and we are both doing splendid business. She wanted to sell them and send the money with me, but I would not let her do so, as I knew Zanthon would sooner have the original plan carried out than disturb it in his own favor.'

'You are a wonderful woman, Mrs. Figbit,' I remarked, 'and far-seeing besides.'

'Thank you, good man,' she responded. 'I have my reasons for seeing the world as it is. Many a thing I could change for the better if people followed my advice; but when they go their own way they see both sides at last, sometimes sore and sorry.'

'Your forethought has resulted in great benefit to our friend on this occasion,' I resumed.

'Well, he deserves it,' she continued. 'A good man deserves all that can be given him. His gentle manners gave me great comfort when I suffered from mind troubles. Tell him to remember me when far away. If he gets off safe I will die content; and tell him God bless him wherever he goes.' Then she disappeared."

Zanthon, touched by this story of faithfulness in the woman, related to Tanders what he knew of her kindness and magnanimity, ending by saying:

"I will never forget her disinterested goodness, and the lesson which it teaches will stand near me as a guiding light, illuminating dark pages of my study of the future."

The journey of the travelers was tedious. As day broke the wild grandeur of the mountain region relieved them somewhat of the distress they felt on account of the want of sleep. Farther on, while winding through a deep ravine the sun arose; but it was noon before they reached a house, where they procured refreshments.

Tanders spoke to the mountaineer in a language known only to themselves, which had the effect of bringing out the best food in the house for their accommodation. When the horses finished feeding they resumed the march, and before sundown came in view of the sea and a few fishermen's huts on the beach. When within a short distance of this village Tanders alighted, threw the reins to Zanthon, desiring him to remain there until his return, then strode afoot to the houses.

His mission was to negotiate with some of the men for transportation from the beach to the yacht, which would stand far out at sea to avoid recognition by government coast guards.

The fishermen knew Tanders well and felt themselves bound to prove their patriotism by giving all the assistance in their power. They would accept his offer of the two horses to pay all hands concerned in the trip, for they could be readily sold for high prices if returned to Fawndell.

As he had received intimation from the owner of the yacht a few days before that it would be in readiness to convey him and his friends to a place of safety, Tanders felt certain they would not be disappointed on the present occasion.

Hence, when the sun went down preparations were made for the voyage. The craft was a heavy open yawl, pointed at the

ends and shaped somewhat like a lifeboat. With four men on the oars and a helmsman it went frequently twenty miles to sea in perfect safety. Now it was similarly manned. Tanders and Zanthon taking seats in the bow and the others being ready, the helmsman gave the signal, and the boat moved from the shore swiftly, as if anxious to glide over the surface of the waters where it was designed to play.

Gradually the receding land was folded up in gloom. Zanthon felt this to be the last time he would ever again behold its outline, and with his hands crossed over his breast, sat gazing at it, meditating in the meantime on his strange fate. He was going into exile. All that was dear to the heart of man had been wrested from him unceremoniously, and he was now adrift on the high seas, as helpless almost as a bird which needs no more than the shelter of a leaf to protect it from the wind.

It appeared as if mysterious agents were at work clothing the mountain peaks in night robes and spreading dark mantles above the plains.

He saw the changes going on and wished they would cease until he feasted his eyes once more on the land that gave him birth. How vain was the thought.

Nature was operating in her accustomed way far above the interference of individual demands.

The gloom thickened, the dark mass reaching into the sky; the seething of the sea began to predominate over everything else. It resembled the breathing of a monster. A faint light struggled to maintain itself around the boat.

The land was blotted out. Then he heard Tanders say:

"Our yacht is in view," and turning he saw the light of a stately boat some distance ahead.

A few minutes brought them alongside. The captain greeted them warmly as they sprang on deck. The yawl pushed off to return, and wearing round to catch a fair wind, the vessel containing the exiles set its course toward France.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

AMBY DEAD.

THE news of Amby's tragic death filled the minds of the people with consternation and sorrow.

Soon after the occurrence of the fatal incident, rough hands raised the body and carried it to the prison, where carefully tended, it was laid on a couch covered with crimson cloth in the center of the room opposite the office in which she had heretofore labored so assiduously.

When the night-watchers retired from the scene, the morning entered pale and full of melancholy; but friends came also carrying a profusion of flowers to decorate the apartment and the casket where the remains would rest.

Then the sunshine peered through the windows, coming at first in minute quantity, but before noon it filled all the space around the bier with golden light.

Amby, its counterpart, was there. It seemed appropriate that such meeting, the incomparable with its prototype, should produce wonderment, startling and grievous, in beings endowed with inferior perceptive power.

Her hair, exquisitely adjusted, gave back the tinting of the sun through points of lovely sheen, as if intent on producing excellence never previously witnessed. Certainly the aspect of the one and the responsive nature of the other appeared gifted with a mysterious consciousness peculiar only to themselves.

Sympathetic and beautiful, affinity induced them to play, even in the presence of death, apart altogether from the consid-

eration that their action while united had been justified by Divine privilege.

Both were heavenly, and therefore need not suffer grief.

The countenancc was radiant with a joyful expression, the one entertained for her brother at parting.

Triumph was inscribed in its folds. Exultation could be readily perceived amid the lines.

Something great had been accomplished, and her soul fixed the record of it on the features above the interference of death; its origin, no doubt, securing for it this exalted power.

The freedom of her brother became sufficient reward for all her life adhesion to duty, suspension of animation, and consequent loss of earthly things.

It was apparent she was satisfied. The long yearning exchanged for unconsciousness, the toil for quiet, the heartache for oblivion.

Tranquillity rested on her face this first day of her decease like the glory of the sun in the morning after it has forced the night to fly beyond the western horizon.

Those who came to pity her wondered at what they beheld: happiness in death. The smile of an angel in league with the divinity of God meeting the look of the observer, and giving assurance that the dread destroyer of human life was incapable of producing terrors in *all* his victims.

Hard-hearted men, sinners, criminals, those who had not shed a tear in half a century wept at the sight.

It was so beautiful and terrible!

Like nothing on earth in reality, but the semblance of that which might be seen in some of the golden chambers of the sun where superior beings sleep a thousand years before transmission to eternal glory.

The careworn tracing observable during life in the last years had wholly disappeared. The full measure of beauty and benignity were there without the presence of the most trifling irregularity to mar the effect, like the sea beneath a glassy sur-

face, or the sun on the meridian. Even as time fled the expression grew richer, more delicate, deeper dyed in the tinting and heavenly.

Child of nature! the day of her departure from human cares seemed like a carnival with the powers, for they spread around her remains grandeur more sublime than all that wealth could bestow on the bier of a monarch.

A marvelous softness overspread the cheeks despite the death rigor; and her brow appeared decked with some peculiar glow, wonderful in aspect as if the touch of divinity was present.

The eyelashes lay expectant above the junction of the lids, their dark curves being tinged with grief for the orbs that would shine no more. A smile encompassed the lips, the chin grew daintier than in life, and the neck full and rounded assumed the likeness of alabaster after the chiseling of a master hand.

Oh, no doubt, beings of another world came to witness the transformations enacted for Amby before the work of final destruction began. Had they confined themselves to their own spheres, a light would have been extinguished in the firmament to indicate the withdrawal of a beautiful life from earth.

With her hands by her sides above the exterior covering it appeared as if she slept and was dreaming of Clare and their prospective meeting in America.

Amby dead! the world lost a portion of its rectitude, which it would take years of time to recover, for the niceties of right and wrong were familiar to her, and the justice of law the guide by which she had been directed.

Amby dead! virtue decreased, honor lessened, the glory attending the life of a good citizen grew faint, and the depths of the unknown were shocked at the profound catastrophe.

Amby dead! a light was removed from the dark sphere of earth to illuminate the heavens in the eternity beyond time.

Amby dead! it is suitable our theme should end after due regard has been paid the ends of the threads we have been weaving, that she may sleep sweetly undisturbed by further

debate; with the grass and the wild flowers blooming over her grave and the wind singing for her a pean of eternal rest.

The government officials did not succeed in getting the whole truth regarding the recent street fight and the causes which lead to its enactment.

It became known in a general way that the remnant of the Crowfoot Regiment rescued Governor Zanthon from imprisonment; but his relationship with Amby remained a secret. Hence it was stated she had lost her life while attempting to prevent the prisoner's escape. Thus it transpired that even the enemies of her brother praised her; and no one was found who did not act in a similar manner while referring to the subjects of her life and death.

At the funeral an immense concourse of people attended.

It was believed at first the remains would be sent to Kindleton for interment with the family of the owner of Dawnford Castle, but the idea was abandoned in view of recent events at that place and they were deposited in the cemetery at Fawndell.

Next to the incident itself nothing excited public sympathy so much as the grief of Ham Boggleton and his son Philistine.

That part of his history involving Amby's abduction was unknown, but it had been quite apparent to every one who saw them during their married life that he loved her to distraction.

When the news of her death was circulated in the prison; when Philistine came running to tell his father of the dreadful occurrence; when borne by the attendants the body of Amby passed through the hall into a reception-room to be prepared for the bier and that Ham Boggleton saw her and the beautiful smile on her face, he fell to the ground, sick at heart, his limbs refusing to support him in the upright position.

He was carried upstairs to his bed-room, where after he had wept considerably and been examined by a physician the case was called *dementia* or a loss of the mental powers.

Philistine's efforts to bring him back to reason proved ineffectual.

"We will meet mamma again," the boy said while holding his father's hand. "This cruel separation will be mended some time ; because people see each other after death.

We have only to wait a little while.

Remember she told me to look out for you.

Now be strong.

Talk.

Look at me how I bear up against trouble. I ought to be an example for you."

Ham made no response to these assertions.

Of course the authorities were not slow in placing competent persons in charge of all the departments of the prison where required. Hence when preparation was made for Amby's funeral Philistine lead his father who had recovered sufficiently to walk, into the open space in front and secured a conveyance, but when the ceremonies were concluded at the cemetery ; when the coffin was covered up and the people began hurrying back to their homes father and son abandoned the carriage and joined the crowd of pedestrians who had followed the sad cortege and were now returning to the city.

This movement was explained by Philistine's language spoken to his father on the supposition that he was understood although Boggleton's mind had become a total wreck.

"We will never go to the old place again now that mamma is dead. I couldn't bear to stay in it ; and I'm sure *you* wouldn't. In the best of times it was a dark hole. I only wonder we ever were satisfied to remain there, long as we did.

What will we do you think ?

I know very well what to do.

I'll beg our way. That's how.

The people will give me something when they see that you are not strong.

I'll get lots of things for us ; turnips and potatoes, hard bread, onions, sour milk, and maybe a half-penny.

I'll tell you what I'll do though, we will keep the potatoes until they come to a stone weight, then sell them.

When scarce they're worth six half pence for the stone.

I will roll the money up and hide it in my clothes.

We'll be rich.

Keep your mouth shut that way. Nobody will know our business when you can't talk about it. Better it is no worse.

While I'm managing our affairs, people won't be the wiser.

They'll think a boy don't know anything. That's what will make us safe where there are so many thieves."

The programme sketched by Philistine was literally carried out. The late governor of the prison lead by his son wandered through the country in search of a livelihood, professional beggars !

Boggleton submitted placidly to the ordeal, knowing instinctively perhaps, that his son would take care of him.

In a short time Philistine became quite expert at the business. No one interfered with them as they were harmless and honest.

They slept in all kinds of places ; stables, barns, hay-lofts, old coaches, deserted cabins, empty lime kilns, the floors of poor people's houses, sidewalks, garrets, public stairways and such like.

They had no settled place of abode.

From Fawndell they traveled to Kindleton. Here the son found that his father was well known and concluded it would be wise to leave the place, so they moved forward taking an easterly direction towards the mountains through which they passed. In the country they traveled from house to house on their line of march, seldom failing to gain shelter at night for the rural folks were hospitable and Philistine repaid them by information gathered on his travels.

One day being anxious to find a route by which they could return homeward the boy and his father came to a well appointed cottage surrounded by shrubbery and flowers. A gorge opened from the place westward between the bluffs of high land through which also a river ran. A woman was standing at the door of the cottage. She appeared thin and angular, was slightly bent at the shoulders, had hard features, iron-gray hair and keen penetrating eyes.

The reader may recognize her as Mrs. Timbertoe, but Philistine had no knowledge of her personality or connection with any of the characters described in this history.

Seeing the demented man and the brave boy attending to his wants she invited them to rest saying : —

"The place is getting more lonely than it used to be. My husband is dead. My sons have married and gone into the mountain glens to make homes for themselves ; but the girls, my daughters, are finding husbands on the plains. Only one is left with me and she too is married, bless you ; and her children are beginning to come around me like the old ones."

"You are lucky," remarked Philistine after meditating on the import of her words, and he continued : —

" We were well off once."

" And what may your name be, young sir ? " inquired the woman.

"Boggleton, ma'am. My father is Ham Boggleton and I am Philistine."

Mrs Timbertoe looked surprised; nay turned pale as she resumed : —

" Did he ever live in Dawnford Castle ? "

"Yes. I heard him say so many a time."

"And was your mother the beautiful woman that resided there also ? "

" I heard that too. She was beautiful. No one could be better or grander. My father never recovered after her death."

" How did she die, my boy ? "

"Shot, ma'am, through the heart during the rebellion."

Mrs. Timbertoe groaned aloud.

"I thank God," she said, "I had neither act nor part in it," alluding to Ham's marriage to Amby, which being unknown to the boy he said: —

"We found out it was one of the guards that shot her, not anyone else ma'am."

"My boy, don't you know —" she was going to reveal all she knew of the history of Philistine's parents; but restrained herself by a great effort. Then she left her seat and walked nervously around the room uttering exclamations of distress. Continuing she was heard to say:

"This is the end of the plot, a man without reason or understanding wandering helplessly through the country equipped as a beggar; and the woman cold in her grave. Oh dear! Oh dear! You had an aunt, Mrs. Rinser, where is she?"

"Drowned in the waters of a great flood that swept past the castle the night it was burned."

"And Antony Firfag, the old huntsman?"

"Died like her. They were in the same boat."

"The Lord be praised," resumed the woman. "He knows what is right."

Then she procured food for the travelers, the best in the pantry; and while they were eating she went into one of the corners of the apartment and kneeling down prayed; but neither the words nor the nature of the petition became known. It is probable, fearing calamity might overtake her on account of the advice given Mrs. Rinser, as related in a previous chapter, she endeavored to avert it by this means. Nor did she stop here. Philistine and his father were invited to remain a few days at the cottage during which time their clothing was repaired or replaced by comfortable garments provided by Mrs. Timbertoe.

She showed them the well of the world's end, the collection

of rare shrubbery, as well as other curiosities within and without the house ; and when ready to depart carried them in her own dog-cart through the windy gap in the direction of Kindleton.

Philistine was well pleased with this treatment. He felt new life within him ; but his further progress was very tardy on account of his father being unable to travel much. Indeed Ham exhibited signs of weakness which threatened complete prostration.

Under these circumstances the boy was obliged to solicit transportation from farmers going to market on the public roads. On one occasion, during this period, he was surprised while resting in front of a house on the roadside, by a woman coming up to them and saying :

" Why this is my brother, Ham, if I'm not greatly mistaken. Poor as he looks I know him. Are you the son there was so much talk about ? "

" I am Philistine and this is my father, Ham Boggleton," said the boy.

Then the woman announced her relationship still further by saying she was Miss Mussy Boggleton, Ham's sister and Philistine's aunt.

When the mutual understanding grew up between them she related how after being thrown on the opposite bank of the river the night Mrs. Rinser and Antony Firfag were drowned, she was found by a couple of fishermen and rescued from death. Then she procured work in country houses ever since, getting very little money in return, but principally food and shelter.

Mrs. Tuberfoot and Mrs. Aloes encountered many difficulties during the night of their escape and both soon after died. As Miss Mussy and Ham were the only members living of the once famous family she would accompany them in future and attend to her brother's wants, thus relieving the boy of a great burden. She had an idea that Ham might be restored to rea-

son if brought into the neighborhood of Footford where he first saw Amby. Hence when they reached Kindleton, Miss Mussy hired a small two-wheeled wagon drawn by a donkey and drove in the direction of Footford. Coming by the mountain road to the river, a point between the old fort and the ruins of Marlband's house the party stopped to refresh themselves, as the place was secluded and inviting being covered with soft grass.

What was their surprise on hearing Ham exclaim hysterically: —

"It was here!" then see him fall back in the wagon and struggle a little while in convulsions.

They held his hands but he moved no more. They called but he did not answer. The name of Amby was mentioned as if to force him into animation; yet this powerful stimulant availed not for he was dead.

The eye of nature heheld the corpse of the wretched man, calmly.

The spot selected for his decease was that on which the crime of Amby's abduction had been perpetrated.

Equity appeared where secrecy was thought to prevail without interference.

Justice seemed slow in all these years, that intervened between the two incidents; but it was terribly accurate and merciless in its judgment finally.

The invisible executioner struck when it was time.

The witnesses were powerless to ward off the stroke; youth had fled, the glory of other days departed, the generation to which Ham belonged scattered over the earth or in the grave; and he, deprived of mental capacity, lay at the mercy of the void and the powers therein.

Like the worst kind of criminals he was carried on a common cart to the scene of his crime and executed.

A new period had changed the appearance of the place.

Signs of a little industry were perceptible where desolation

had reigned. Young people born since the famine were playing on the hills and the sun was out in full strength, as if exulting over the vindication of supreme law in his case.

Mussy and Philistine did not proceed to Footford but returned immediately to Kindleton with the remains of Ham, when after consultation with the authorities they had them buried in the potter's field.

Mussy found employment as a scullion and Philistine went to work in a stable.

During this time many changes transpired.

Zerlin, the owner of Dawnford Castle, disposed of all his property through his agent to a merchant of Kindleton and remained in France until his death.

His sons joined the French army and were killed in the war with a neigboring power.

Mussy Boggleton did not long survive her brother. The harshness of his death and the fearful ordeal to which the entire family had been subjected including the removal of Zerlin's interests from the country produced a mental depression in her which brought her to an early grave. Thus Philistine was left alone.

As he was attached to his business he grew in favor with his employers and on their recommendation became driver of the mail coach running between Kindleton and a seaport town, on the northwest coast, about forty miles distant.

Besides the mails in the boot of the coach he carried a great deal of local news in his head. For instance at the several stations on his route he told of the deaths, marriages, births and accidents occurring in Kindleton and the other towns during the few minutes left him while changing horses.

In the list which he furnished in this way, were found the names of Mr. Gangpond, Mehill, Earing, the grocer of Lennabean, Mrs. Fishpot, Mrs. Figbit, Big Nancy, Mrs. Timbertoe and many others of their contemporaries.

Still Philistine drove his four-in-hand and whistled or sang

joyfully on the box-seat of the mail coach one of the happiest individuals in the world.

The sadness which pursued him for years after the death of his mother blended into gravity; and while making him reflective gradually disappeared to make room for the contentment which an honest, reasonable, painstaking soul is sure to possess sooner or later.

On one of the return trips to Kindleton about twenty miles out a stranger climbed into the box-seat near the driver and began conversing with him.

"There's a cousin of mine," said he, "living within six or seven miles of your town that I want to take home with me. He has earned a little bit of money that may come in handy some day on the farm such as it is."

"What was his business?" inquired Philistine.

"Why, you see he was driver or coachman in a family for a long time. Everybody knew them in that neighborhood. They were called the Flippingtons."

"To be sure," replied Philistine, "I often saw them in Kindleton with this very man you speak of, driving. I think he is known as the knight."

"Sure enough that's what they say; and he is the person, my cousin."

"Why is he leaving so good a place?"

"Mrs. Flippington, the last of them, is dead and buried. First Miss Cora went. She was older than the others by nigh on to twenty years or more. They had a big funeral and the man and wife seemed to take her death greatly to heart. Still they lived on, contented like, for a couple of years, when Flippington himself died. My cousin, the knight, told me it was as good as a play to see the inside of the house at the time.

The man was foolish before death and ordering things done that had neither rhyme nor reason in them. The serving woman was trying to stop him but he used to laugh at her and

call her 'the shadow' as well as other names no one could recollect. Then he used to send his wife for my cousin and keep him sitting near the bed for hours, telling him he was a great man and raving about things he could not understand; but at last he fell into a sleep and never woke afterwards.

The big woman though, they called her Mony, looked after Mrs. Flippington well. She was never seen away from her a minute and very often carried her through the house in her arms. It is thought she left this woman a lot of ready money that no one is the wiser of."

"What will become of the property?"

"It's going into Chancery, they say, until relatives are found to come by it. My cousin will have plenty of clothes the balance of his life; but for the matter of that, he's old enough to die himself without fear or favor."

"Wonder your cousin, the knight, never attempted marriage with the serving woman," said Philistine in that lofty air peculiar to stage-drivers.

"That's what would lay him low in earnest," returned the man.

"She is a terrible hector, I have heard; there's no standing to her.

Her tongue is as heavy as her fist and that's like a sledge-hammer. Oh, everything in the world possible and impossible might occur but *that*."

"Where will the woman go?"

"Like my cousin to some relative in the country where she can live for a trifle and lose nothing in the long run. People like her and my cousin are thought much of; and its only reasonable they should, for they give a lift or a helping hand in times of black want."

"I believe Mrs. Flippington was highly esteemed."

"Her funeral showed as much. It was the longest ever seen in this part of the country. Big and little were at it. If it was an inch it was seven miles long and no end to it then.

The people came from all parts and went home satisfied they had done a good act."

At the desired place the stranger alighted from the coach to join his cousin in the village near Flippington lodge and Philistine proceeded on his journey to Kindleton reflecting on the changes incidental to life.

Feeling the loneliness of his position he soon married and fared ever after somewhat like the rest of mankind.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

IN AMERICA.

ZANTHON and Tanders along with other political refugees reached the United States of America in safety.

Landing at New York they were entertained by friends, but Zanthon's enthusiasm was surpressed when the account of Amby's death became known through dispatches received shortly after their arrival. Nothing heretofore produced such emotion in him as this deprivation of his sister's love. The sacrifice she had made on his account smote his heart with the keenest sorrow, and appealed to his generosity for a corresponding act of faithfulness, that in the estimate of divine judgment would perhaps endow her memory with some reward. Hence he said to Tanders: —

"Hereafter my dear Tanders I shall live with the spirit of my dead sister. It will inspire me with the desire to do good while in search of conclusions pertaining to earthly things. It will be a companionship I shall cultivate without ceasing, mysterious no doubt; but to my heart like the genial influence of a summer's evening when a heavenly glow pervades the atmosphere and the winds are at rest upon the mountains.

I shall neither permit its departure nor do ought to cause its desertion from me. I must live as one who belongs no more to earth; but a visitant intent on penetrating the dark caverns of philosophy where lie concealed the principles on whose conditions mankind may rise to eminence in all the departments pertaining to life."

Tanders shook his head dolefully, as if the course sketched by his companion was something to be regretted saying : —

"I understand my good Zanthon and appreciate your feelings ; but for my own part, my dear boy, I must journey to Philadelphia to meet the wife and children. Philosophy is excellent in its place ; fighting has charms ; a sumptuous repast, washed down by old liquor fascinates the soul to an alarming extent, but for a common man the greatest of all earthly acquisitions is the family. Not that it proves in reality the most pleasing ; but merely the safest place in which to confine him to the business of earthly cares. It is there the strokes of misfortune are felt the least ; the whips of conscience easiest concealed and the double thongs employed in the binding of him most pliant and readily borne."

Thus while each recognized the justice of the other's right to hold opinions suitable or pleasing to him, they agreed to separate. It seemed necessary under the circumstances stated.

They would be of more service to their fellowmen apart than united, like two lights ; besides each claimed exclusive attention for his special duties.

The parting was characterized by sadness, fortified, however, by manliness befitting men of noble minds.

"Good-bye Tanders."

"Good-bye Zanthon."

"May your wealth increase with the family until both become recognized additions to the nation's strength."

"Let us hope, my dear boy, that the light of your knowledge may never be extinguished."

"You will always be dear to me, in whatever part of the world I may reside and your generosity and honor associated with my recollection of those stirring times we two have met together."

"Don't mention it my dear boy. I regret to lose your company, and hope to meet you again at no distant day."

Tanders settled in Philadelphia where he engaged in business pursuits and ultimately acquired fortune and distinction.

Zanthon became a resident of New York. He was given a good position which afforded ample means for the comforts of life.

His leisure hours were devoted to the pursuit of literature and scientific research connected therewith.

Many men courted his friendship.

While taking no part in politics he studied American institutions from the standpoint of organic law.

The progress of the Republic, he thought, was retarded by men's opinions founded on ignorance of the questions at issue ; and sustained merely by self conceit or party interests.

These persons permeated all ranks of society.

The order of the universe, or unwritten law, sometimes also called the truth of first principles, he defined as the *standard* of right.

Every question pertaining to mankind, directly or indirectly must be referred to this source for solution, if not otherwise understood. The capacity of nature is unlimited as measured by human minds.

Like precious metals, law applicable to all cases lies concealed in nature, having been made before the beginning of ages of time, and needs only to be defined to be understood.

The successful operation of this rule requires the assistance of knowledge, sound reasoning and freedom from prejudice.

Experiment can accomplish much, but is not wholly reliable.

Law with men must have its counterpart in the universe or be accounted false. Rule may operate beneficially for a period. Truth is concealed in knowledge. As movement promotes and sustains material, so industry is the foundation of civilization among mankind.

Any theory tending to lessen the operation of labor, based on the hope of relief from it wholly in the future, is delusive and vicious. Labor deserves a full measure of reward, regu-

lated according to the quantity and quality of the work performed; but attempts to make capital subservient to its dictation is mere waste of energy without the achievement of favorable results.

As capital and labor are equivalent to pillars that uphold the prosperity of a State, whosoever recommends or engenders antagonism between them is an enemy to the nation, mankind and God.

Coercion on either side will never relieve the labor question of any of its difficulties. A so-called concession gained by this means will not endure long. Let it be remembered that the basis of a settlement must be founded on justice to capital and labor; that the representatives of both content themselves until the law or the justice of each case be fully determined. Persons qualified to perform this duty should be selected for the purpose, not on account of party bias, but knowledge.

Labor will gain more by the success of capital than otherwise. To enable the people to understand the proper application of law, education should be fostered and encouraged with the greatest possible care. In this connection it would be in order to establish schools for the teaching of common sense to old persons of both sexes.

Institutes for training mechanics should be maintained by the State.

To endow the government of the republic with superior powers, so as to control the operation of railroads and other business managed by corporations of the people, would be to aim at the return to monarchy and the re-establishment of a subserviency which a free nation should never tolerate.

Persons with healthy minds and bodies, willing to work for their financial independence, do not need or desire a poorhouse system of economy to maintain them.

While on this subject Zanthon came to consider the great law of variety, and that portion of it relating to mankind called individuality.

The care of the individual ought to constitute or sum up the whole business of life.

Nature indicated its purpose towards this end in the human race as in other departments of the physical world.

Human beings are each specially endowed, distinct and unequal as a whole, but designed to move harmoniously among each other like the globules of water in the ocean, or steadfast on their own ground of self-interests like the trees in a forest.

All law in relation to mankind in the custody of the universe contemplates the fulfillment of this harmony.

It appears strange that ignorance has opposed at all times the designs of nature calculated to bestow benefit and espoused error instead of truth.

Where she has displayed individuality ignorance has recommended combination. Where freedōm was contemplated men have fallen into slavery.

Instead of having the government, general and local, only to support, the individual is burdened with a number of collateral issues on the understanding that they have been formed for his aggrandizement; whereas, in reality, it is he who supports them, and cannot therefore gain anything desirable.

Thus, besides paying for the demands of his vicious habits, he is persuaded to subscribe to the club, the stock company, life insurance, secret societies and infatuations which induce him to gamble, besides many others due to taste or surroundings. With all these burdens on the individual, liberty is a myth. All that nature and ingenuity devised through the ages since the world began for man's emancipation from slavery is as a dead letter in the face of this condition.

Duty contemplates no more than this, obedience to the government of the country and God through the observance of law and attention to the business of one's station in life.

The protection of industries is one of the best methods known of increasing the wealth of a country, and therefore beneficial to poor and rich.

The spirit of the times should be shaped so as to attend more strictly than heretofore to the necessities of the human race through the individual.

If great results be regarded with favor, every good citizen deserves free education, free training for a position in life, and ample opportunity to earn his independence or support.

To begin with, every city, town and hamlet should have a permanent employment bureau fostered by the State.

When we are induced in reality to act towards each other in the spirit of just principles, showing that we have discovered where the law is to be found, the troubles of the times will be settled.

Superstitions will die, impositions cease, the light of intelligence shine brighter than heretofore, and knowledge multiply; nay, the discontented element now crying out for plunder, incendiarism and distribution of property will disappear like dark masses of mist rectified by the glory of the sun.

In this case let it be fully understood all classes must share equally in the observance of the laws which will bring about this state of things. There must be an honest day's labor given for good wages.

It is easily explained why people are, for the most part, unable to determine a right from a wrong course in the pursuit of fortune or other benefit. They concern themselves more with incidents than principles. Incidents or the transactions of every-day life originate opinions; while principles, concealed beneath the surface of things requiring reason to draw them forth, are generally unknown.

The Republic of the United States of America is the greatest institution the world ever beheld.

Like the ocean into which many streams flow it is the recipient of the oppressed people of all nations, the white races predominating. Despite the vicious intrigues of a European monarchy, and the carelessness of a large number of its own people, its powers have become so conspicuous as to tincture

the earth with benign influences, and stand like a bulwark between spoliation and the interests of its citizens. Its growth in jurisprudence and political economy is not complete, but new periods of time will bring improved resources and a lessening of the misunderstanding that carries so much trouble to the people of our day in these departments.

The constitution is the foundation to be maintained, and the structure of republicanism from which all mankind may draw hereafter political power and individual prosperity, should be permitted to rectify itself through increased knowledge.

The great questions awaiting solution at the door of the nation might easily be solved if prejudices were suppressed and more attention paid to scientific research; but when high classed publications appeal to men of money or notoriety instead of men of knowledge, there is little hope of reaching the truth.

The field is too barren.

The republic is the evidence that a new era beneficial to mankind has begun.

It is the pivot on which revolves human interests from bondage to freedom; idleness to activity; from poverty to competence; from degradation to equality; from darkness to light.

Every era has its conditions and peculiarities. The incapacity of human thought will always make it necessary to struggle for right or justice even against persons otherwise good. The crude obstinacy associated with ignorance appears as if designed to remain until death, in order to exemplify the law of variety in human minds. Like the formation of rock, or disintegration of a mountain true scientific progress is slow.

The same may be said of republicanism.

Its destiny to supersede feudalism, monarchy and serfdom in general is certain. To effect this desirable end all free men and women should give a helping hand, not from the product of their labor on which there are so many demands; but by eulogy, obedience to its laws and the diffusion of knowledge.

Zanthon lived a single life.

His studies brought him contentment and peace.

He saw enough of the universal plan to prevent repining on account of the inevitable, well assured that the supreme power would take care of him in the hereafter.

Like one wearied after a long journey, he sought rest in retirement. Hence he remained unknown to the great bulk of pushing, struggling humanity.

Time tempered the memory of the past. Like a skillful physician it removed the pains created by disappointments and healed the wounds left by the death of his friends. It surrounded him with pleasant attractions, brought trains of new ideas to relieve monotony and health to prosecute the business of the world. Thus when his own end approached it had no terrors for him.

On the day of his final departure from earthly cares everything in view wore a bright character. The sky was clear, the Hudson rolled solemnly, but majestically to the sea, the landscape smiled, the birds sang; there was music coming from the open windows of the dwellings in the neighborhood and nature bending herself to listen to the last sigh of a favorite child in the struggle with death, assured him by these signs that the Infinite was pleased with his work on earth.

There were a few friends near his bedside.

His face was turned towards the west; for through the window he could see a great distance in that direction.

The beauty of the prospect seemed the counterpart of his peace.

His placidity resembled a part of the glory of the day.

In a quiet voice he said: —

"When all the associates of my youth are gone, it is time that I, too, should depart.

How admirable is the law that regulates life and death.

How sweet to be at rest!"

He closed his eyes in slumber.

The sleep deepened into coma.

Zanthon was no more.

His friends began to weep and being asked by strangers when they went into the street the cause of their distress answered : —

"A good man is dead."



10/8.
Kalend.
$1.00