

Authorship: A Tale

John Neal

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Authorship: A Tale

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*AUTHORSHIP ,
A TALE .
BY A NEW ENGLANDER OVER-SEA .*

CHAPTER I.

YANKEE IN WESTMINSTER-ABBEY: FAITHFUL ACCOUNT OF THE WONDERS THERE...
ADVENTURE.

I must be allowed to tell my story in my own way; and though I speak in the first person, I hope to have it attributed to the true cause a desire to be understood.

I left America and went to England, not to see Westminster-Abbey, nor any other `part of the British-Constitution,' whatever the Quarterly-Review may suppose,1 but in the hope of seeing much there, that I hope never to see in America, much that I do hope to see here, and much that I should have looked upon, wherever I might see it, with more joy and a deeper emotion I dare say, than I ever yet felt or ever shall feel at the sight of abbeys and cathedrals, churches and castles, green with age though they be, rocking to the northern blast, or very dark with the shadows of centuries. Not that I did not go up to Westminster-Abbey the Sepulchre of

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Kings with a sort of awe, which, republican though I was, I could not well get the better of: nor do I mean to say that I ever was, or that I ever hope to be, so reasonable as to find just what your over-reasonable creature¹ would look for and no more in the ruins of such a place the wreck of what in the day of its power was only the strong-hold of Superstition, or a part of the huge outworks of Tyranny. But if I *had* perceived the truth; if I had gone back to that age, when the very foundations of military and religious power were laid in Europe, where would have been the evil, where the mischief I pray you, of that awe which I suffered to creep over me like the penumbra of a great eclipse happening at noon-day in the depth of summer? Why may not the strong holds of Superstition or the outworks of Tyranny (if dilapidated) be worth a voyage over sea, to the poet or the dreamer, to the artist or the philosopher, to the man or the statesman? People may say what they please; but though I was not boy enough to go a thousand leagues, nor boy enough to talk as if I thought it worth while for another to go so far, merely to get a peep at Westminster-Abbey to say nothing of Magna-Charta and the House-of-Lords still, when I had arrived there, I could not overlook what I saw before me, nor outrage the spirit of the place by considering what must have been the substance of that power, the very type and shadow of which six hundred years after the glory had departed from it, was awful to the heart, and oppressive to the mind of man. Nor was I fool enough either to put off my shoes, or to say that I felt as if I should put them off, or as if it were sacrilege to walk otherwise than barefooted, when I drew near the arched door-way the holy spot, where you pay sixpence to a man with a stick, for leave to run by the poet's corner a marble congress of `Gods and Godlike men,' whose mighty ashes after all, are *not* in Westminster-Abbey, but somewhere in the depths of the sea, or in the far parts of the earth. But still, though I was not blockhead enough either to behave or to talk as it would appear to be the fashion for the people who have strayed away from the woods and waters of America to behave and talk, when they have got fairly ashore in the heart of Westminster-Abbey especially if they were landed at the custom-house, or shipped to the care of S. W. or B. B. & Co. I could not laugh at every thing I saw, though much of it was very laughable; nor could I philosophize over the origin of what was before me, and about me, and above me, till I forgot where I was, and had no pleasure in what I saw; nor behold without emotion the barbarous beauty that overshadowed me so superior to the classical beauty that other men love to talk about, or the savage pomp that arose on every side of me, as with a spring, and over-arched my way, and shut in my view whithersoever I went, like a no, *not* like a spider-net sky of solid stone, nor a carved or fretted sky, nor a firmament of tracery, but very much like a roof built of oak timber, wrought with the chisel and hewed with the axe of mortal man.

Others may be able to see more especially if they go to the Abbey when it is getting dark; others have been able to see more I confess, for their money. But as I live, though I paid my sixpence at the door, and my eighteen-pence after I got into the church, and although I took off my hat, and particularly desired to see every thing I did not see a fortieth part of what I expected to see, after reading the Sketch-Book and the Quarterly-Review. I saw no huge canopy of interlacing tree-tops, like the inside of a vaulted wilderness. I saw little or nothing to remind me of the great woods of North-America. I saw no sceptred shadows gliding hither and thither among the pillars and tombs; no crowned nor headless apparitions parading slowly in the `dim religious light'; no heavy-armed spectres either on horse-back or afoot, watching over their buried households, or keeping guard night and day, in this, the marble city of the dead; neither Gog nor Magog nor any other part of the British-Constitution. But if I saw nothing of this, I saw much that would appear to have escaped the observation of other people. I saw antiquity refreshed before my face. I saw a live man at work renewing a part of Henry the Seventh's chapel,¹ re-carving the imperishable beauty thereof at so much a-day, covering up the signs of old age, and rebuilding with sacrilegious new stone, the very parts which, if antiquity were so awful as men say, he would have been afraid to touch; the very parts indeed which wore the most of that very look, and were the fullest of that very virtue, which they would have you believe it were worth going three thousand miles to see the look of old age, the virtue of antiquity.

I saw too a crowd of people, with their hands in their pockets, running about after a guide, all bare-headed and most of them with lips blue and teeth chattering perhaps with awe perhaps with cold. I saw moreover a marble countess on her way up to a marble sky² with a chair of state placed for her in the clouds, and a marble cherub, who occupied another chair, waiting for her to arrive. I saw men of a warlike shape armed cap-a-pie, with wigs

on. I saw the figure of death, a skeleton such as we see in our picturebooks, or in our sleep when we are naughty, issuing out of a marble safe with iron doors and aiming a sort of spear at a marble woman, which a marble man was upholding, if I do not mistake, with his right arm in the air.³ I saw a party of sober people, who had come to the show and paid their sixpences a little too late, galloping after the guide, just near enough to be always a little too late for whatever he had to say; so that while he was describing the achievements of Edward the Black-Prince, they were looking at Queen Elizabeth; and all the notice he took of them was to order their hats off, 'by order of the Dean,' though we were shivering with cold, and they hot with exercise. I saw too and you may judge of the fear that oppressed me, you that have seen live kings, and live heroes with your own eyes a troop of royal personages in a glass case, all standing in a row, and all made of wax, and rigged out in all the finery of the stage (the stage of Bart!my Fair too), and a figure of Lord Nelson, also made of wax, in a part of the very clothes he wore at Trafalgar clothes which were evidently made for somebody else. Think of that a group of waxen images wax heroes and kings fairly set up for show in the habiliments of the toy-shop among the sepulchres and solitudes of Westminster-Abbey! Who would not have come over the waters for a peep at such a spectacle in such a place? and who would not, if such a thing were told of the barbarians of the South-Sea, or of the Dutch, who would not speak of it as altogether characteristic of their barbarous condition, or deplorable want of taste?

But while I was there, keeping rather aloof, as my habit is when I desire to enjoy what I see, musing over the biography of the dead who were about me, loitering on the way, and wondering why it was that I had no such sorrowful thoughts no such beautiful faith as Addison had, or as Irving had, while they were in the heart of Westminster Abbey, or as I myself might have had a few years before, when that which I believe to be the common-sense of my nature now, was nothing but poetry pure poetry I found myself so far behind the rest of the company, that I could only hear their footsteps every minute or two as they hurried away from chapel to chapel, after the voice of their guide. Being in no hurry either to get away or to overtake the others, I walked into a niche, where stood many altars like tombs, and gave myself up to the luxury of meditation. It was indeed a luxury, though not of the graver sort; for I was just asking myself, I remember, what would be thought of the age of Elizabeth now (Not *her* age, but the age of her people), if the rude statuary that I saw before me, covered with paint, with filigree-work, and with gold leaf, were dug up out of the earth by a strange people, otherwise ignorant of that age. There was the statue of Elizabeth herself the carved image of power. It would have passed for a bit of Mexican sculpture, if it had been dug up in that part of the world. But before I could satisfy myself on this head, or shake off the deep thoughtfulness which had begun to steal over me like the shadow of another world, in spite of the provoking absurdities that lay heaped up on every side of my path, my attention was called off by the sound of approaching footsteps footsteps that followed mine afar off, stopping where I stopped, and loitering where I loitered a few minutes before. Ah! said I to myself, here is another of our tribe I dare say, who comes hither to indulge as I do, apart and away from the rest of the world; or to mock at the deep-seated prejudice of our day that sanctifies every part of a pile, no part of which is what men believe it to be; or mayhap to wander as I do in the everlasting twilight here, and brave the awful spirit of the place the overshadowing spirit of gone-by ages, the mystery and the pomp of the sepulchre of kings; or he may have come up hither to write poetry, to breathe an over-peopled atmosphere, to undergo a sort of transfiguration to find material for a job; in which case, it may be the delightful author of the Sketch-Book himself, or it may be some other shrewd speculator from over sea, who goes about the world very much as I go about the Abbey just now, with a desire to see and not be seen. If so, what a capital joke to turn the tables upon him, to beat the spy at his own game, to I was interrupted. Two persons appeared coming toward me with a very slow step, a man and a woman. The step of the two was like the step of one. He appeared to be lost in thought; for his hat was on his head, contrary to the law of the church, and pulled over his eyes; and she was leaning with all her weight upon his arm, both her hands locked over it, and her face upturned to his, in that indescribable way which every body knows to be peculiar to a doting wife at a particular period of her love. They passed me while I was debating with myself whether I should move on, or make a noise to let them perceive that if they spoke above a whisper, they would be overheard (for walls have ears, at such a time), or whether I should remain where I was, without moving or breathing till they were safe safe I say for though neither of them spoke, I knew by the step and by the whole manner of the female that she had come to the Abbey for other purposes than to see the Abbey, and I could not bear the idea of giving pain to a creature who leant so lovingly upon the arm of any man, as she did upon his. You may smile; but I assure you that I would not

have had her see me for the world; and that although it was getting rather dark, and I could not see much of her face, and they were in sight for hardly a minute; before they had gone by, I felt assured, perfectly assured of three things reader which I dare say will surprise you. I felt assured that she loved him that she was a wife and that probably *he* was not her husband.

Reader, you are shocked. I am sorry for it, especially if you are a no, if you are a woman, I am *not* sorry for it; I am glad of it (for in that feeling is our safety), although I had no desire to shock you. I was merely describing what I saw and felt at the time I speak of. But how could I know that he was not her brother? *How* I knew it I cannot say but I did know it, as well as you know the step or the carriage of one man from the step or the carriage of another. How do you know this? You do know it, and so does every body; but who is there able to say how he knows it? No woman ever looked up into the face of a brother as this woman did into the face of the man I saw. Well, but how could I be sure that she was not a widow nor a maid nor his own wife nor his child? I do not know, I say again but still I was quite sure. A widow may be known by her step, her look, her most guarded speech, nay by her very mode of sitting on a chair. It requires no great experience to detect a widow, or a married woman, or a woman who ought to be married. You do not believe this, I dare say. If you do not, allow me to ask you one question. Do you not feel pretty sure, without knowing why, when you see a stranger pretty sure that he is, or is not a married man? Stay that is awkwardly expressed what I meant to ask you was, whether you do not feel pretty sure that such and such persons, although you may know very little of them, are *not* married? and that others, of whom you know as little, *are* married? pretty sure, though you have never been told and have no reason to believe, except from their general behaviour, that these are married, or those unmarried? Look about you, if you would have more proof, and fix your thoughts upon some individual, who *may* be married for aught you know, but whom you have always regarded, you know not why, as unmarried. Are you prepared? Have you some such individual in your eye? If so let me ask you how you would behave, were you told by a trustworthy person, that, after all, he was a married man after all! Would you not be astonished? Of course you would, and that proves what I wish to prove namely, that there is a look, a manner, a something about the behaviour of the married, which serves to distinguish them every where from the unmarried. If you believe this (And if you are twenty years of age, without believing it, there is no hope for you), you may conceive it possible for a keen observer to know by the carriage, yea by the very step of a woman, whether she is a maid, a wife, or a widow.

But how could I be sure that she was not *his* wife? I was not sure not perfectly sure, I confess; for though she hung upon his arm as if she were a newly-made wife (Not like the unvisited maiden, for *she* never betrays her love in that way), she appeared strangely shy and anxious, and kept away from the more frequented parts of the church, and avoided the light, and stole through the shadow with a slow step; not like the newly married when they are with their lawful partners; but like one that has little to be proud of, or much to fear.

Well, they passed by me and left me, and laughable as it may appear, I cannot help saying that I felt unhappy when I could no longer distinguish her step. My heart was heavy with inquietude with a sort of sorrow for the woman. I felt as if I knew her as if she were in great peril, and as if I, with power to help, had forsaken her as if I should never see her again as if we had parted for ever as if, to say all in a word, as if she was the very woman that I could love with all my heart and with all my strength, and as if I would give the world (my share of it, I mean) to be so loved by her as that man was. Reader bear with me; what I tell you is the simple truth, and I wish to preserve the recollection of what happened to me on my first visit to Westminster-Abbey. It may encourage others to tell the truth, after they have been there. It may serve to show that even there, unholy thoughts may intrude.

Let me pursue my story. I waited a full half-hour I suppose after they had gone, before I completed the tour of the church; I lingered and lingered with a feeling which I cannot describe, though it was much like what used to be called the home-sickness when I was a boy; and I should have staid, I know not how long, if the man with a stick had not come up to me as if I had no business there, and told me with a bow, that all the rest of the company had been gone for at least an hour. So I followed him off; but just as I came to the place where they receive the money, I heard a quick breathing and a step that startled me. I looked up the woman herself was before me, the

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woman that I was already in love with (I am quite serious), although I had never seen her face, nor heard her speak; in love with her merely because I saw that with a superb figure and the walk of a Spanish woman, she knew how to love. She wore a thick veil, but she turned her face toward me as if she knew me, and caught by her companion's arm with a sort of convulsive hurry, and waited my approach as if she thought I was going to speak to her. But I had no such idea I was only anxious to get by, so as to relieve her from the visible dread she was in. We were close to the door, and I observed that instead of turning to look at me as she did, the man drew up, as if collecting himself, and put his hand upon hers with a strong, though gentle pressure, as it lay upon his arm, and then as I made my bow and passed out of the door, he turned slowly toward me, so that I had full view of his face. I never shall forget his look. He was a pale grave man, with a steady eye, which awed me in spite of myself as I darted away. He looked me through and through, and I felt I assure you, not as if I had caught him, but as if he had caught me with another man's wife.

Footnotes

1 The Quarterly-Review has declared Westminster-Abbey to be a *part of the British-Constitution*; and supposes that Americans go abroad chiefly to see that and other similar passages of what never existed the British Constitution.

1 Such as the Utilitarians of the celebrated Westminster-Review.

1 They have been re-building, or rather re-carving and restoring the celebrated chapel of Henry the Seventh.

2 These are facts; the statuary of Westminster-Abbey, the wax-work, and the monuments are just what I have described.

3 The renowned group, to which our amiable countryman, the author of the Sketch-Book, and all the London guides, refer with unspeakable enthusiasm. It was by Roubilliac.

CHAPTER II.

ISLE-OF-WIGHT... PORTSMOUTH... ENGLISH INNS: WONDERS OF THE ISLE.

Month after month passed away, year after year, and though I went much into public in the hope of seeing somebody with or without a veil to remind me of her that I saw in the shadowy depth of Westminster-Abbey, and for full three years never entered a theatre, a ball-room, nor a church, nor any other place where the beautiful and high-bred congregate for show, without recalling her proud step and haughty carriage at the door, the trepidation that she betrayed when she saw me approach, although she stood up like another Cleopatra to receive me, and her loving affectionate way the deep humility of her manner, so long as she thought herself unobserved: for three whole years! and in all that time, I had met with nobody to remind me of her no shape like hers no tread like hers no love like hers nothing to make my heart leap and thrill as it did when she passed by me without seeing me, though I stood near enough to lay my hand upon hers without stretching forth my arm.

At last, after I had given up all thought of ever seeing her again all hope I should say, for it *was* hope, and a hope that I could not bear to part with, even while I knew that I was behaving more like a great green boy, or a youthful poet crazy with such love as they retail in the toy-shops and circulating libraries, than like what I was a man of the world a circumstance brought us together.

I had long been wishing to see the Isle-of-Wight; and by the merest accident in the world I found myself there in the beautiful autumn of eighteen hundred and twenty . Such weather I had never seen before out of America. It was the very counterpart of our Indian-summer, that we brag so much of. I do not know what other men may feel,

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but *I* feel in the rich drowsy atmosphere of that particular season very much as if I could make love to any body or any thing that fell in my way. To breathe was a luxury. To tread the green turf, to walk under the great beech-trees that overshadowed my path, to look up at the sky and out upon the sea, from every side of "the Garden of England," as they call it there a miniature picture of England, *I* should call it was to be happy, to be charitable, and to be at peace with all the world authors excepted. For about a week we had had a regular alternation of good weather and bad weather first a rainy day and then a fair day. Of course therefore we were trebly happy when a fair day *did* arrive; and at every change from fair to foul, we had so little to hope for the morrow, that if the morrow turned out fair, it was enough to make a fellow jump for joy. Every clear sunshiny day was a miracle, after a day of white fog and heavy rain, such as we had had every other twenty-four hours for a whole week; and every body knows or should know that miracles do not last for ever.

I had gone to bed with a secret fear that my trip was all over, that I had come rather too late in the season for such a tour as other people talked of, and that the next day could not by any possibility be fair the chances were a million to one; for the day before had been a beautiful day, and the day but one before that, and the day but one before that; every *other* day for a week, while every intervening day was bad very bad much too bad for the travellers of our age. Of course therefore, when I packed off to bed, though I desired to be called at six on the morrow if it should happen to be clear I had no great hope for the morrow. But lo! on the morrow, when I awoke I do not say when they woke me, for they never do such things in the Isle-of-Wight, nor on the way to the Isle-of-Wight, I am sure. If you behave well, they do not like to part with you, however much you may desire to part with them. Nothing can persuade them to disturb your sleep they are too civil for that and though you were to bribe all the chamber-maids, all the boots, and all the porters between the Pavilion Hotel at Brighton and the Bugle-Inn at Newport, or the Sand-Rock Hotel (Of which a word or two more by and by), you would have to wake yourself in the morning at a guess, or lie half a day on the watch, afraid one hour of oversleeping yourself, and the next, of being up too early for the waiters and chamber-maids, or the coach, or the boot-black. What a parenthesis However, when I awoke, the whole sky was bright with sunshine, the new air alive with it. I never saw a finer day.

So I set off on my pilgrimage from Ryde, I after running down to the pier for the fourth time, to look at the Portsmouth shore as it lay glittering afar off through the thin haze and over the smooth beautifully-shadowed sea, like a sort of aërial panorama. Stop, reader I must try to give you a notion of Portsmouth as it appeared to me at the time I speak of, whether you have or have not stood upon the pier at Ryde, while the waters were spread before you like a sheet of changeable satin changeable with shadow and light and with every hue between the deep yellow of the shore and the deep strange blue of the sea I must I must whatever may become of my story, my heroine, or myself. Two or three nights before, I had been struck with the amazing beauty of a sunset, which I saw from the Portsmouth side it was like the sunsets of North American; not so brilliant however, nor dyed with such exalted and fervent hues, but *like* them in the stillness of their beauty, when to look at them is enough to bring the water into your eyes and to make your heart run over especially if there is a woman at your side. I grew melancholy, and I thought how very little we know of each other in this world, nations of nations, neighbours of neighbours, brothers of brothers. On every side of me was the proof; on every side of me beauty and power that were considered peculiar to America; a real Indian-summer that Sabbath of the whole year; a superb sunset, and huge trees overloaded with foliage that appeared like a sort of gorgeous blazonry. Their colors were not so vivid as we have them in America, nor so various, nor did they overhang all the mountain-sides, and all the rocks, and every foot of the earth as far as the eye could reach, with a sort of ponderous and fluctuating shadow; but they had a beauty of their own, a beauty that we never see in the New-World, a sort of pomp which is not the pomp of the wilderness, and a sort of wealth which is not the wealth of our everlasting woods, but graver and quieter. They swell up to the eye, cloud over cloud, with colors that we love to see in a picture. Not so with our savage North-American landscapes they would startle and scare you if they were painted with fidelity. If you had gathered your ideas of nature from Claude or Poussin or Hobbima, or Both, or Ruysdäl, or from any body that ever painted a landscape in Europe, you would never be able to endure the truth in a landscape of North-America. The bright blue, the deep fiery crimson, the scarlet and gold, the orange and purple, the innumerable shades of brown would appear unworthy of a picture. You would feel as men who have been brought up to the stage do,

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when they see the terrible passions at work off the stage you would swear that Nature herself was unnatural.

So much for the sunset which I had seen two or three nights before; but nothing that I saw then, though it was all that I have described it to be, could equal the view that I had now of the Portsmouth shore off Gosport, of the shipping, of the military works, and of the far blue sea with a fleet riding slowly over the dim barrier which hardly separated it from the far blue sky launching away, ship after ship into the unfathomable air, as if they knew, like the huge birds of South–America when they float over the top of the Andes *into* the sky with all their mighty wings outspread, that there was no power in heaven or earth able to wreck them, or shatter them, or disturb them on their way. It was a picture to be remembered for life to be carried away on the heart, as if the colors were burnt there, and the moveable beauty of a camera obscura had been shut up for another day, or melted into the material and fixed there for ever and ever.

The broad–striped waters were like a smooth satin, glossy with light, and rippling with a low soft air that stole over the green surface like a shadow. You could see it move. They were green too of a beautiful positive green, such as I never saw any where else; no doubt owing to the mixture of a sober yellowish dye produced by the sands near the shore with the cold blue of the ocean a blue that appeared as black as midnight, where the waters were very deep. On every side of me were happy faces grown–up children wading about on the shore, and looking as if they had never heard the name of sorrow, as if to them life were but one long holyday; barges and wherries dipping to the swell; great ships at anchor with their sides turned up to the air as if they had been cast away in the very middle of the great deep; and others afar off towering into the sky like prodigies, or floating up and fading away, like so many superb creatures of the air, each abroad on some great particular errand of its own.

The night before there had been a gale, which prepared the way for what I saw now. I stood on the pier and saw it approach the breeze sounding over the deep, the mist rolling toward me like a heavy white smoke, the tide moving with a steady roar, which grew louder and louder as it heaved and weltered underneath our feet; and the Portsmouth shore, while it seemed very high and very far off, breaking through the mist with an effect such as I never saw before, either in life or in poetry, either in pictures or in sleep. The sky was cloudy it was even dark there was nothing above able to produce what I saw, nothing of brightness in that part of the above which I could see; and yet the high lands of the opposite shore, lands that were neither high nor picturesque when the wind was another way, were gleaming with a sort of mysterious beauty, such as you may conceive would be the character of a fine painting, if it were covered with a grey gauze and lighted up from within. It was what I should call, if I were not afraid of being charged with affectation, a *sketch* by the Deity, a shadow of the landscapes that we are to see hereafter; so faint, so ethereal was it, so unlike the landscapes of our earth.

After looking at what I have tried to describe, and feeling what I *have* described, I turned away from the multitude who were enjoying it with me, and was about leaving the pier, when I saw a crowd of people pressing up over the end of it in such numbers that I stopped to look at them. It appeared as if they were coming up out of the sea, shoal after shoal, or as if they had found a highway under the waters, a sort of tunnel, such as they are to have under the bed of the Thames. A three–year–old habit is not so easily thrown off as the reader may imagine. I felt this, for before I well knew what I was about, I found myself occupied once more in watching every woman that passed me, while I stood on the top of the broad green slippery stairs, at the bottom of which a steam–boat and half a score of little galloping wherries were discharging their live–stock. Off guard, if you please, reader. I am laying no trap for you, though I am sure you expect one. You are already more than half prepared for a surprise, on the score of that heroine I told you of. You foresee that I am going to find her at last among the people of the steam–boat. No such thing, reader; I shall do no such thing. Ah but, Mr. Author, a trap's a trap, and you may as well catch us one way as another. You did mean to bait for a serious, or mayhap for a pathetic interview; but just when you had got to the pinch, either your heart failed you, or you took it into your head that if you had been at all anticipated by the reader it would be a capital joke to disappoint him. So *that* for your catastrophe, snapping your fingers we are on our guard now. We are up to your tricks.

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No such thing reader, no such thing, I tell you. I had no idea of the sort; for the truth of the story is, that I *did* see a woman while I stood on the top of the stairs, waiting for the approach of the boat a woman whose air and step were enough like the air and step of the proud creature I was in search of, to make me feel as I had not felt for three years before; but when I saw her face, and saw her look at me without a tragedy-fling, I felt, I have an idea, pretty much as the man felt, who had been very civil to a woman that rode with him all night in a stage-coach, when there was daylight enough to show him that the lady he had been so very attentive to, was a thick-lipped Ethiope. Even so with me. I could not bear to think of the imperial step I have said so much of, nor of the august carriage I mean to say more of, in the same week with the intrepid eye and little prim positive mouth, and large feet of this woman of the sea. And so that my dream, which I still hoarded up as a mother would a sick babe, the more because no other creature alive would care a fig for it, my dream of what I would still go very far to see, a proud woman deeply, desperately, irretrievably in love, might not be wrecked for ever, and so wrecked as to leave me no joy in the recollection of it, I hurried away from the pier, leaving the feet, and the shape, and the face that I saw, at the bottom of the stairs, to help one another up as they best could over their slippery path; jumped into the first coach I saw, and never looked behind me till it stopped in Newport at the door of the Bugle-Inn a very good house by the by, and the only house that I know of in that part of the world, where a man may get so much as a comfortable breakfast, either for love or money, to say nothing of a tolerable dinner. I do wish I could say a fortieth part as much of the Pavilion-Hotel,¹ or the Sand-Rock Hotel,² houses that I mean to bestow a paragraph upon before I leave the subject, and houses that I shall dream of, I dare say, for the rest of my life, whenever I am troubled with the night-mare. At the Bugle, a very good house I say again, with a cordial gush of the heart, for it was there I found what I had not seen for weeks before, a good cup of tea, good cream, good bread, and good butter, luxuries, downright luxuries to the traveller who has been a week or two at Brighton, a day or two at Portsmouth, or a single hour in the trap at Sand-Rock; a very good house, believe me, (mind I speak here of the Bugle) though even there, if you go to bed in the hope of being called at a future day, you may never be thought of again, or be told as they told me, when you have got up an age too late (As if you were one of those who go to bed when they have nothing else to do, and get up occasionally), that you *had* been called half a day before, and that either you answered in your sleep, or that somebody else answered for you somebody else who occupied one of the four-and-forty next-rooms, every door of which opened either into yours or so as to darken yours, and who had been so very obliging as to wake in your place, and get up in your stead; a story which you are obliged to be satisfied with, for a sure way of making the affair forty times more disagreeable than ever a joke was yet, would be to regard it as no joke: a very good house, after all though, where I contrived to get a boy for a guide, a very decent horse, and a very tolerable gig.

Before two o'clock on that every day, the morning of which operated on me as if I were breathing sunshine the vitality of the sky I found myself stretched out with all my length upon the little narrow unsteady seat, which is fixed near the verge of the precipice at Shanklin-Chine, the flat wide sea before me, and the waves breaking with a steady roar underneath my very feet; a troop of young happy creatures below me, far, far below me, running about on the pebbly beach with their clothes up to their knees, dipping their little dainty feet one after another into the salt sea, and shaking them very much as a cat would hers, or coquetting with a surge as it breaks afar off and floats over their path till they are overtaken by a huge wave or entrapped while pursuing it; when they stop and cry out as if they were all overboard, drop their clothes and scamper off with a backward step and a delightful show of childish joy and yet more childish terror wondering at their own courage and rejoicing at their narrow escape; a group here digging after shells for a trophy, or sea-weed for a weathergage, or sifting the wet heavy sand through their fingers, or wading about half-leg deep among the smooth pebbles and white glossy gravel thrown up in huge furrows and heaps all along the shore feats to be told of when they have got home: here a grave idler with a basket and a hammer, a book and a magnifying-glass, abroad after flowers and butterflies or bits of variegated flint; and there another group, their cheeks flushed with joy and their eyes lighted with girlish hope, ascending and descending by the hour like the shapes that were seen by the patriarch between the top of the cliff and the narrow beach below, and by a path as like a ladder as a path could well be: here a cottage or two half buried among the trees, and there a fisherman's hut which appears either to have slipped down, hut hedges earth and all, from the very top of the cliff, or to have been carried where it is by a very high tide.

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I grew sleepy. The sky and the waters, the blue deep and the noise of the blue deep, the warm smooth atmosphere, so like the breath of one you love, and the fatigue of the day made me so; and as I did not like the idea of rolling over the cliff into the nest of a sea-bird, or plump through the fisherman's hut into the lap of somebody below; and as I knew very well that if I did sleep, I should either dream of that provoking mouth, or those ugly feet, which whenever I shut my eyes appeared to be coming toward me, I got up, shook myself, threw away my guide-book with a very audible pshaw, and set off down the path, leap after leap, with a feeling here here that I would not forego, if I might have it again, for all the sober joy of a week wisely occupied it was the very outgushing of childhood.

Having satisfied myself with a peep or two from below that I had acted with singular propriety in descending the way I did, I dipped my foot into the sea, like the other children as if the sea were a new thing to a fellow who had grown up so near it as to be nearly amphibious and came away weary and vexed with my own thoughts; for, go whither I would and do what I would, the disagreeable idea would keep returning to me, that if I should ever be so happy as to meet with her whose imperial shadow had haunted me so long, year after year, by night and by day, and whether I was awake or asleep, it was quite possible I could not bear to say probable that she might have as bad a mouth, if not altogether so bad a foot, as the shape that I saw coming up out of the agitated sea, as I stood leaning over the rail of the pier, just ready to drop into it.

Footnotes

1 It is told of Cleopatra and believed, that strangers were so transported by her magnificent carriage, that many sold themselves to death for an opportunity of being with her a little time.

1 Ryde, or Ride, on the Isle-of-Wight, opposite Portsmouth.

1 A somewhat celebrated hotel at Brighton, where I *put up* (with more than ever mortal did before) on my way to Portsmouth.

2 A trap so called on the Isle-of-Wight.

CHAPTER III.

TOUR OF THE ISLE... HOME... LABOR DISTINGUISHED FROM EXERCISE... GRAVE-YARD.

So, leaving those who had no such dread of the sea, as I now began to have, nor any such dread of sleep as I thought I soon should have, to pursue their search after smooth white pebbles and other like wonders of the deep, I reascended the cliff, called the boy away from his beer, tumbled into the gig as if it were a wherry, and left him to steer whithersoever he would, until he drew up and asked me if I had not better leave him where he was, and walk round by a little church and a cottage or two, that I saw huddled up together among the trees a great way below the wood. It was quite impossible to stay in the gig after one look at the entrance to the cool shadowy hollow where these cottages were concealed a green cave, a narrow path-way, a thatched-roof, and large trees were before me; but they were not long *before* me, I promise you. Ere the boy could make me understand where I was to meet him, I had escaped through the cloudy path-way and arrived at a large barn the very counterpart of the barns that we have in America, where we never think of leaving either hay or wheat exposed to the open air. Attracted by the familiar noise of the flail, I drew near and saw a sight worth going a voyage for, one that I never shall forget, I am persuaded never the longest day I have to live. I stopped I stood still every thing about me, every thing I heard, every thing I saw reminded me of America, and of the habits there while they were happy, and before they had begun to tread out their grain with the feet of young horses, driven about in a circle. Two young men were at work, in a stillness like that of the Sabbath-day, and in a strong current of air, with a pile of wheat on every side of them as high as they could reach, and cartloads of straw at the door. The barn where they

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worked was all open to the sky. I could see through and through it, and there was nothing to impede my view but a mass of bright green foliage that overhung the further door-way with a sort of transparent shadow I never did see any thing so beautiful. I could have sworn that the very sky itself was covered with grape-leaves.

I inquired my way to Bow-Church, and they directed me without looking up. I was to keep the path and go through a wicket, when I would see the church `right afore me'; if I stepped quick, I might overtake a lady and a gentleman who had preceded me but a very few minutes. Now, though I am not of a very hard or unsocial temper I flatter myself, nor much given to solitary indulgences, I declare to you reader, that after I had gone a little way, I would rather have met the ahem or any thing else alive or dead, a ghost or a bailiff, than such a thing as a gentleman or a lady in my path. A man or a woman, or any other natural thing I could put up with in a place like that which I saw before me, though I would rather be alone I confess altogether alone, if I could not have with me some one of the six or eight brave girls that I might happen to be over head and ears in love with at the time girls of the sky, creatures of the blue atmosphere, the blue sea, or the green wood, superb spiritualities I mean reader of course. A man or a woman I could bear but God preserve me from those who prattle when a shadow is all about their feet, when they live and breathe and move in a shadow, and the great green trees are above their way and about their way, go whithersoever they will; creatures who dare not breathe as we breathe, who dare not step on the wet grass, nor move without being tied up and laced up, from the very crown of the head to the sole of the foot, and who look as if, in spite of all their outcry and artificial rapture, nothing on earth would provoke them to a hearty romp. I speak of the male creatures too, the tidy little things who run about in the woods a-tiptoe, and who if they ever happen to be caught in such a grave-yard as I saw before me, a grave-yard all open to the sea and sky; or on the top of a great hill (such as Leith-Hill) with an empire lying under their feet like a map; or at any other place where a *man* would be sure to hold his breath, are pretty sure to be occupied in picking their teeth, or in wiping their new hats or their new boots (both of which it would be torture to wear) with a white pocket-handkerchief. *Gentle*-men forsooth! As if to be without manhood were to be gentle; as if to be gentle were to be weaker and more helpless than a great girl; and as if it were worthier of a man to have a little white hand, or smooth soft hair, than it would be to have a little white face, or no beard.

I know very well that if you hope to enjoy any thing here, (in this world I mean,) a walk in the woods, or over the hills, or along the shore, by night or by day, you must have a woman with you for a man, if he is a man, will be very sure to disturb you with argument or philosophy or something worse; a woman too that you are in love with, and just enough in love with, to enable you to see and feel the beauty and the power of solitude. If there be too much love between you, you may overlook the landscape and forget every thing but each other; if too little you have no relish for what you see, you might as well be with a man. With a man! ay, with a dog you had much better be a dog, yourself and be *with* a dog; for you are a slave without even the reward of a slave, or the privilege of one.

But while it is very true that if you are to enjoy a walk any where, you must have a woman with you, and such a woman as I say, with wit enough to know when to talk and when to hold her tongue a beloved wife who is able to understand you and make herself understood without speech; and while it is true, that in no other way can you enjoy a walk or a stroll as they are to be enjoyed by the true epicure, it is also true that if you wish to be tired before your blood is warm, weary before you know why, fatigued before you are exhilarated; or if you are to walk for your sins, and have done something or thought something, for which a trip to the pole with peas in your shoes were too mild a punishment, you have only to take a woman with you a lady for whom you don't care a fig.

Labor is not exercise. Fatigue is not exhilaration. Therefore I say to those who walk much Do not walk alone, for if you do, it is fifty to one that your mind is harder at work, than it would be in your study; you might as well rock in a chair till you dropped out of it, or run up stairs and down till you were ready to cry with fatigue. But if you do walk alone, beware how you walk the self-same road as a great many do, day after day year after year. You had much better be at home; you would have as good air, nay better, nine tenths of the time, and you would not be half so likely to overdo your mind for the mind and the body will work together. And if you walk where there is nothing new to make you loiter on the way, you soon get walking faster than you should; for the mind will hurry

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on if there be no check nor stay to the current of thought, and the body will keep step with it, like a soldier treading to music. But your step may be quick, whatever be the state of your mind. If it be cheerful and your thoughts flow like a river, you are anxious to get home, where you may turn that river to account; if it be perplexed and your thoughts flow like the drops that are wrung out of the body by hard labor, you are only the more anxious to be at home; for it is there, if any where, that you hope to meet with and overcome your adversary. I never knew a solitary walker who did not begin with walking a much slower pace than he left off with; nor one who was not sure to outwalk other people whenever he got on a road which he was familiar with; nor one who did not walk as if he had a job waiting for him at home, or as if the walk itself were a job, which he would be glad to have ended. Of what avail are such walks? They are downright labor; they beget no exhilaration; they are sure to be followed with a sense of fatigue a sign of itself that you have not been relieved by your walk, either in body or mind. They are all this even if they are made in fair weather; but how much worse are they, when made in foul damp weather? I have an idea that I could tell by the very step of a man, by the swing of his arms, by the stoop of his neck, by the lounge of his whole body, or by his half-military air, not only whether he was in the habit of walking much alone, but whether he was in the habit of walking much over the same road.

If you wish to profit by a walk therefore, do not walk alone. But whether you walk alone or not, never walk the same road till you are tired of it, or so familiar with it as to remember nothing of your walk after you have got home, save that you have been to a particular house, or a particular tree; in which case it would be well for you never to go that road again till you had forgotten every step of the way. Otherwise, your walk would be of no use to you, either in body or mind; you might as well trot round a cage of six feet by four. Above all, do not walk with a woman, if she be not of those, who while they are very dear to you, as I have hinted already, are not so very dear as to shorten your walk or spoil it. Nevertheless, if there be no other way, if you must walk or die, you may take the air with a female you don't care a fig for; you may even go out with a dog, or a stick, or a child, if it be to save your life; but let nothing induce you, nothing, to walk with a gentleman or a *lady*, in a place that you ever hope to see again with pleasure.

There! will any body tell me now that my story has no moral to it? Or will any body say that I have not packed up as much good new and useful truth in it, as the age will bear?

So, such being my notions of the matter, I need say no more to convince you that instead of trying to overtake the lady and gentleman who had `stepped' a little before me, I rather chose to keep out of their way. I did so for a good while, when at last, having got near enough to peep into the little grave-yard it was like that of one family, the graves were so few and so near to each other, and the whole were so near the sea, that a stranger would have thought a brave ship had been wrecked there with all her crew, and the church had been built over them near enough to peep into the grave-yard, to reconnoitre all the paths about, and to satisfy myself that I had nothing to fear from the lady, I sprang over the barrier, with a step not well suited, I confess, to the green dwelling of the dead, the antechamber of the sky; and after looking into the little portico of the church it was all written over with names that nobody knew, and with dates that nobody cared for, scored on the white-washed wall or cut into the wood, I had begun to puzzle out a few of the epitaphs that were mouldering away, virtue by virtue, from the wooden tombstones about me, and was getting ahead bravely, when I lighted upon one a very droll affair, which I knew that I had seen somewhere else, but where I could not remember for a long while. It ran thus

`I hope the change is for the best To live with Christ and be at rest.'

Why, Voltaire could not have expressed himself with more caution. *To live with Christ* and be at rest *I hope* the change is for the best! Well, well, it was a very odd epitaph but where had I seen it before? After a few minutes I recollected where it was in a church-yard at Dorking Surrey. At Dorking Surrey in a moment in the twinkling of an eye, the whole course of my thought was changed I forgot where I was I saw nothing more of the church nor the church-yard I thought only of Box-Hill, of Leith Hill, of the heights, and of the Holm-wood, of the barren heath, so like the lands of America that have been exhausted by tobacco, and of the wild shrubbery; of all I had seen, of all I had thought for an age, in that glorious and beautiful part of our earth, where if the wind shifted,

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or the sky changed, while we were out in the high places among the purple heather, every part of the landscape would come and go with a perpetual variety, wearing every minute a new shape, and looking every day as if we had never seen it before. What business had I in a grave-yard, while my heart was heaving with such recollections? Very little, I fear and so I came away, and pursued my walk for a good while without looking up or turning aside in the narrow pathway which I had stumbled upon so still was it, and so like a path made by the feet of children or lovers or sheep. I know not how long I might have walked here, if I had not been roused by the approach of a dog the finest dog I ever saw. I called him to me, and was trying to get acquainted with his cur-ship (I borrow that idea from the philosopher of Q. S. P.), when I heard a whistle in the sky, and immediately after that, a voice, the tone of which I shall never forget. I looked up and saw a man far above me on a huge pile of rock that appeared to have been hewed for a pedestal, ages ago, with a flag-staff rooted in the middle of it. I started for the shape of the man was that of him I had encountered three years before in the solitudes of Westminster-Abbey. But what of that? Who cares for a shape? In the course of that period, had I not seen fifty people with a shape like his, and half a score that were otherwise like him? And if it should prove to be the same individual that I saw there, of what use would that be to me? I did not care to see him: It was the woman I was after (in a lawful way), not the man. Very true but but if I were to fall in the way of the man, would not that be one step toward falling in the way of the woman, or at least of learning who and what she was, and whether married or single? Ah but if she were married if she should turn out to be that man's wife? or any other man's wife, and very beautiful or very wise, what would become of me? It would be unlawful, you know very unlawful to care a fig for another man's wife; and so and so and so, while I was determining to avoid the mischief and keep clear of the temptation for the rest of my life, I found myself, I never knew how, at the foot of the rock, on the top of which I had seen the stranger not five minutes before.

Footnotes

1 Near Dorking Surrey, celebrated for its broad, variegated, and very *English* prospect.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CELEBRATED WALL... THE LAND-SLIP... SCENERY... COMFORTS OF DINING... SAND-ROCK HOTEL.

I hurried up he was gone. But whither and why and how? Did he know me? Was he trying to avoid me, as I avoided other people? Did he mistake me for a gentleman? I hope not; I had as lief be mistaken for a lady, or a lap-dog.

It would be altogether vain for me to try to describe what I saw from the top of the rock; for my thoughts were away, far, far away, and my heart was heavy, and I felt some how or other as if I myself were away among the solitudes of North-America, by the river-side or the water-fall, in the darkness and beauty of another world, `with one fair spirit for my minister.'

The view was delightful, and rich, and various, and like nothing I had ever seen before. I remember thus much, and I remember too that whatever there was to see, I saw, and that before the day was well over, I (But for my life I cannot say now whether it was while I stood on that rock or after I had peeped over and crawled away) among a multitude of things, the memory of which had escaped me before my head was on the pillow that very night, I saw a huge high wall so huge as to appear like a part of the foundations of our earth, and so high that I mistook a white cloud sailing over the top, for smoke. It was like the vapor that follows the discharge of cannon that are too far off to be heard; a wall stretching over leagues and leagues of territory; cottages underneath my very feet (I could have jumped through the roofs) grouped here and there among the trees and the rocks, and the gushing water and the wild shrubbery, as if they were copied from old pictures; on every side of me the bulwarks of an empire, great square blocks which appeared as if they had been wrought by the hands, or piled up where

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they lay by the power of giants; here a cottage or two garnered up in the holes of the rocks, and there half a dozen more literally folded among the ruins of what appeared like the overthrown barrier of a huge citadel a barrier overthrown by flood, or by earthquake, or by fire from above not by the wrath of mortal man; here a heap of the greenest foliage I ever saw, overhanging a roof, the loveliest I ever saw (not seven feet high), and a little bit of smooth rich turf, yet greener than the foliage of the young trees, and as lively as the plumage of a parrot 'Green to the very door' and hedged about with flowering shrubs and great rocks, much higher than the roof, and scattered clumps of blackberry bushes, with never a bit of a pathway to be seen, so that you could not conceive how the people got there alive, nor how they got the children there that you saw laughing and rolling about, or hiding in the shadow of the rocks, or creeping half sideways over the smooth turf.

All this I did see, and I saw it either while I was on the top of that rock, holding by the flag-staff, afraid to move lest the rock should tip over among the houses, and afraid to let go, lest I should be blown away; or I saw it, after I had escaped; but furthermore I cannot say, for while I was looking about me and wondering at the beauty of the landscape, and wishing I had thought of looking at the dog's collar when he was with me, by which I might have been able to guess out the name of his master, my attention was caught by a well drawn figure on the flag-staff a figure that that upon my word I begin to be half afraid of telling the truth you will think me mad I am sure, and I confess that I began to feel rather shy on that score myself when I thought over all the occurrences of the day. First I had met with a female shape which I mistook for that of the woman I had met in the Abbey three years before. Hardly had I got over that shock the shock that followed a near view of her face and her feet when I fell in the way of another shape, so like that of the male apparition who walked by her side in the Abbey, as to throw me into a grievous flutter, and provoke me to pursue it up a huge pile of rock I hardly know how; in the hope of I hardly know what; for I should have looked rather sheepish I fear, if when I arrived at the top of the pile I had found the stranger there, alive and occupied in sketching the admirable figure that I saw before me. But the truth must be told, whatever you may think of such folly. I could not be mistaken now the figure that I saw on the flag-staff *was* the figure of the female I had met in Westminster Abbey. A mere sketch, a mere outline, though it was, still the air, the carriage, the superb height, every thing was like her and like nobody else. But for whom was it made, wherefore, and how? And *by* whom? Was he a lover? I looked at the sketch again; I tried to transfer it to my pocket-book I did not succeed. He was not only her lover then it was not enough to have her image in his heart as I had, but he must have been a capital draughtsman I caught my breath and perhaps I caught my breath again perhaps, the proud woman herself was at his elbow leaning over him while he was at work, just as he had represented her in the sketch. I now saw another figure partially effaced, and after looking awhile, aided perhaps by a little imagination, I succeeded in persuading myself that I knew just how the whole originated. The drawing was the work of two hands of that I was perfectly sure. One part was the work of a pupil, the other part the work of a master. But which was the master? and which the pupil? One figure appeared to be sitting with a large book upon his knee, peradventure a Sketch-Book; the other, a female, was standing up and overlooking the first while he appeared to be reading or drawing. The sitting figure, though nearly obliterated, so that I could not so well judge of the execution, was clearly the work of a hand much inferior to that which drew the upright figure. Was it not very probable therefore that one of the two persons who had clambered up the precipice for a view, was a teacher of drawing, the other his pupil? What could be more so? Was it not very probable moreover, that while he was occupied with the large book upon his knee, sketching a part of the landscape, she had been at work on the flag-staff trying to sketch her master? And that he, having caught her in the fact, had the impudence to portray her in the attitude that vexed me, (the wretch,) leaning over his shoulder, with one elbow resting upon it as if she were a newly-made wife? And that she, indignant at such audacity, had thereupon rubbed out the figure below? And that, in a word, whatever else they were, they were not on such familiar terms with each other as to admit of their being coupled in this way. For about five minutes, nothing could have been more delightful nor more satisfactory than the conclusion to which I had now arrived. But before the next five minutes were over, I had begun to fear that possibly possibly by some possibility I might be mistaken. If she rubbed out his figure in wrath, why the devil had she not rubbed out her own? If he was able to prevent her from destroying the beautiful sketch of herself, why could he not prevent her from destroying the sketch of another? For a while I could not escape she had suffered her portrait to remain she had therefore not rubbed out *his* with a feeling of displeasure, but perhaps from a feeling of dissatisfaction; it was not enough like him perhaps, or perhaps not worthy of his

pupil, or perhaps I began to feel as if I should certainly cut his throat if I ever came in his way. But softly was there not a hope still? a chance of a hope the hope of a chance the hope of a hope? There was there was I perceived the truth now it was clear as noon-day I only wondered I had not seen it before. She was a very good girl, and she had been up there and made a sketch before breakfast, and not being half satisfied with it, she had rubbed her pretty fingers over it, and effaced every line of the whole as she thought, and come away. But after breakfast, another had gone up, the fellow that I saw, and he had partially restored her sketch and put in the figure that I saw. This idea did very well too for about an hour; at the end of which time I had begun to ask myself whether it was not very possible just within the limits of possibility that the woman I saw on the steps of the pier might after all be a relation or a sister of the shape that I saw in the Abbey; and if so, whether it was not very possible that I had come in the way of the family at last without knowing it popped into their very hiding-place by the merest accident in the world. But if it should prove, as it possibly might, after all *if* it should prove that the woman of the Abbey was like the woman of the sea; or if it should prove that the woman of the Abbey and the woman of the sea were after all one and the same person, what on earth was to become of me? Should I hang myself, or jump overboard? hang up in that very niche where I first began to make a fool of myself; or go back to the pier at Ryde where I had first begun to behave like a booby, and jump into the sea?

Before I could make up my mind which course to pursue, I had arrived at the Sand-Rock Hotel, where I suffered so much from a sort of trouble which few have the courage to speak of, that I must I *will* give a history of what occurred to me there. I should remark before I begin however, that on my way to this Hotel, I saw on every side of my path wonders which appear to me now, like what I have seen somewhere in my sleep; and beauty and verdure that I never can lose the memory of, though it is out of my power to say in what part of my road they broke upon me. There was the great wall as before the outworks of another Babylon; there was the great sea too, and look where I would, there was a bit of lovely pure landscape, with a cottage nestling under the rocks, and a few sheep, and a few trees, and mayhap a little stream of water to encourage me on; but still every thing that I saw is like a dream to me now. My thoughts were so occupied with the earlier occurrences of the day, that I rode through a part of the most beautiful country in the world, as if the ride were to continue for ever. Of course I had no safe recollection of what I saw before I slept; and after I had slept, so carried away was I, by the hope of what was to occur during the day, and so teased by the petty vexations about me, that I could hardly remember how I had come; and before that day was over, such was the variety and such the strangeness of the incidents that occurred in the course of a single hour, that I could not have said whether much that I have related here was not a dream. Others I dare say have been so perplexed when they were at sea, or travelling, as not to know the day of the week, or the day of the month; but as for me, I could not have told what month it was without a deal of consideration, nor whether I had been one, two, or three days on the road. I do not say that I had actually lost the run of the year at the time I speak of; but I do say, that if I had been fool enough to stay twenty-four hours longer at the Sand-Rock Hotel, I should have lost my senses. But let me give the reader a notion of what may be endured by a man half crazy with love, when he has an idea that he is under the same roof with the woman he loves, and separated from her, as people are separated from death at sea, by a half-inch board (more or less.) It may be well to begin at the very beginning.

The approach to the house delighted me. The roof was thatched, there was a green piazza running the whole length of the house, and there was a very pretty patch of green turf spreading out before the piazza far enough to allow a sort of a promenade. As I drove up to the door, I saw several faces at the window but I could not see of what shape or form they were, much as I desired it; for there was a bit of thin white drapery between the faces and me. At the door too, several persons appeared, and others were walking about on the little patch of green; but nobody in the shape of a landlord or waiter, chamber-maid or hostler. I went up to the door, and was going in to look for the coffee-room, or the traveller's room, or a room where I could see somebody belonging to the house, when I perceived that I should get into the kitchen if I stirred either way, or into the room at the window of which the faces appeared. A knocker was on the door I believe but I dare not be certain, for I have quite forgotten much that I saw there, and I hope to forget the rest before I die. But whether a knocker was on the door or not, I knocked; and after awhile faith, it was a good while too, so long that I began to fear the guide had brought me to a private house, and that the people about me were the retired nobility of our age a very good sort of a man

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appeared, with a face that I took the liberty to be pleased with. I asked for a room. He hesitated. For the coffee-room, there was no coffee-room. For the traveller's-room, there was no such room to be had; he was very sorry. Could I have a private room? or a place to eat my dinner? I was hungry as a tiger. He did not know, but would inquire. He left me standing at the door, and after a few minutes came back, and desiring me to follow him, took me round the house on the outside, and opening a door which led me up a narrow stair-case, entrapped me into a room so meagre, so desolate, and so like the rooms we see in the new public-houses of my country when they stand out of the general thoroughfare, that I felt rather inclined to be merry by occupying all the furniture I saw. Pray, *Sir*, said I, where am I to sleep? He did not know as he knew, but he would inquire. Very well what can you give me for dinner? What should you like, *Sir*? Any thing, whatever you can get me soonest a mutton-chop or a rump-steak, or whatever you please; I should like a bit of cold chicken, or beef, or in short, any thing eatable. You can have a chop, *Sir*. Have you nothing else? No, *Sir*. But you have a tart, I suppose, or a pie? Neither *Sir*; but if you would like some fritters, he added with a bow. Fritters! the very thing mutton-chop and fritters! The very idea was enough to make a starved man cheerful. But when are they to be ready? In half an hour. I pulled out my watch it is now six; I am now going out for a walk, and at half past six I shall be ready, if you are.

Having settled this matter, I walked off to see what I could see in the neighbourhood; rejoicing all the way that I had been so lucky as to find a sitting-room and a bed-room, with such a delightful walk between the two as I foresaw that I was likely to have. The great wall was before me, hardly a gun-shot off, and there was just light enough in the sky to see my way up.

So up I went by a perpendicular path-way, which had once been made use of, but having been found too dangerous, it had been stopped with a sort of loose wall, which it was not a very safe nor easy thing for a man to get over. I got over it nevertheless, and before five minutes were over I stood on the top of the precipice, looking down upon the houses below me, and feeling as if with one effort of my foot, if I were a large man, I could bury them where they stood in earth and rubbish for ever. But if the getting up was unsafe, the getting down was a great deal more so; for I soon discovered that I had not courage enough to come down by the way that I had gone up by so different is the measure we take of heights when we are looking up, from what we do when looking down. It was now getting dark, and my dinner was ready, and I saw people at the windows of the tavern looking up at me as if they had gathered together in a hurry; and among others, a female, who stood as if expecting me to step over the precipice. I did not much like my situation I saw that I had no time to lose and I persuaded myself once more that I could see a resemblance in her figure to that of the woman I was in search of. Not another moment would I have staid where I was, for ten times more than I was likely to get by my voyage of discovery; and so I gave it up, and seeing a deep fissure in the rocks running from the very top to the bottom, with irregular projections all the way, which I thought I could manage to hold on by, long enough at any rate to secure my passage from one to another, I undertook a descent in that manner; and after groping my way for a minute or two, and slipping my hold once where if I had not instantly caught again, I should have broken my neck to a dead certainty, I arrived safely at the bottom; proceeded directly to the house full of the strange hope the strange fear, I might as well say, that I had now come to the place where I was pre-ordained to meet her that I was in search of, and see the mystery cleared up.

But I was not able to find my room. The house which I left on one side of me when I went up the hill, I found on the other, when I had got back. I went to the door and knocked; and after waiting the usual time, the waiter appeared and acted as guide. I was lucky enough to find the room; but where was the dinner? It was long past the hour agreed upon; and yet look which way I would, no sign of dinner was to be seen. The very cloth was not laid nor were the candles lighted. I had just begun to feel vexed, when the waiter appeared saying that two ladies had come who were obliged to drink tea in their bed-room, there being no spare room in the whole house. They are welcome to this room said I, the moment I have eaten my dinner, if that will do? No answer. They may have it now indeed, if you will give me a place where I can sit long enough to swallow a chop. No answer. You will inquire, if you please, and I beg you to say that I do not offer them a *share* of the room, but the whole of it. Still no answer. He leaves me and I have then leisure to think of what is to be done. If the ladies were kind enough to

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accept my offer, especially if it should happen to rain, what was I to do with no books not so much as a newspaper to keep me alive? I should have to go to bed. Before I have quite made up my mind to hang myself, if it should rain, the waiter brings me a heap of mutton steaks in capital order and leaves me to ring for whatever else I may think proper to need. After a while I ring. Nobody comes. I wait a few minutes and ring again. Still nobody comes. I get uneasy; I begin to ask myself whether I am quite safe in such a desolate room. At last however, I get some wretched wine, a spoon-full of sugar, and a few fritters; but before I can speak, the waiter is gone gone too, without saying whether he has made the offer to the ladies or not, and whether I am to go to bed, or turn out and walk till bed-time, without having a right to come back to the room I occupy, whatever may happen. It is very vexatious. Ring ring ring. After a while somebody appears at the door, and I beg to know what the ladies have concluded upon, that I may know what to do with myself till bed-time. Away goes the messenger, and I wait and ring, wait and ring, wait and ring, for another half hour; at the end of which time, I am told by a red-haired girl who peeps into the door just long enough to deliver the message, and let me hear the voices of people below as happy as heart could wish, that the ladies have concluded to take their tea in their bed-room without so much as a civil word to me for the offer I made them. Very well that affair being ended, I have nothing more to say, whatever I may think about such *ladies*; and off I go for a walk, I care not whither, noting the land-marks at every step as I proceed, and leaving a candle burning upon the table, that I may know which way to steer when I get back. I pursue the path for a whole hour, over a sort of broken-up highway on one side of me the everlasting wall with stars watching and burning along its verge on the other heaps of mighty rocks, piled up as if they were gathered by giants for battle, and the afar off great sea, black as midnight and awful as the grave. But with so much to chill me for the night is dark, the weather cool, and the prospect dreary as death my heart is bounding with hope, and go whither I will, every step of my foot is a spring. But why why who is there to explain this deep mystery? I am no longer a child; I know that I am above being disturbed as the youthful are, by dreams and presages. I have gone by that period, when the heart leaps for joy at the approach of a new face; that period when if we happen to be where we never have been before, we are sure to see more sights and meet with more adventures, laughable or serious, in a single day, than we should see or meet with in a twelvemonth if we were a few years older. And yet, although I have passed that age I pray you, do not jeer me I feel as if something is about to happen, something which is to have a material influence on my fate here and perhaps hereafter. I cannot shake off the persuasion I walk hurriedly on I breathe hard as I go, and my temples throb at every step; and yet I am trying to persuade myself that I do not care a fig for the past or the future (in this life), nor a fig for the female shape that I saw at the window holding herself apart from the rest, with an attitude expressive I am sure of deep anxiety no, not a fig, though it should prove to be the original of the sketch that I saw on the flag-staff, or the blessed creature who swept by me as I stood in the darkness of a gone-by age, among the marble creatures of WestminsterAbbey.

After a good hour's walk, I return flushed with exercise in spite of the cool night-air, and feverish with expectation. I go up to the door and lift the knocker and am just going to let it fall, when I recollect myself and hurry away, passing the window of a lighted room, within which I can see the shadow of two persons I would give the world to know who they are but I have not courage enough to ask: I tremble at the very idea of discovering that she whom I saw, is not so beautiful as I have thought her for three long years; or that she is a married woman, married perhaps to the very man that I saw her with; or that she is unworthy of the strange regard that I feel for her and shall feel for her to my dying day, if she be not more unworthy than I dare to suppose. I get up to my room as well as I can I throw myself into a chair I lean my head upon my hands I reproach myself a good half hour for my inconceivable folly, and finish by jumping up and ringing the bell, with a fixed determination to find out who the people are that I have seen below. I ring, and ring, and ring, at intervals, for about a quarter of an hour, when a good sort of a woman shows her head at the top of the stairs, in a very interesting situation. My courage is gone, I dare not speak a word I dare not ask who the people are, and I go up to her, that I may save her all the trouble I can, praying her to give me a newspaper I care not how old it may be or a book, I care not how worthless it may be (I could read one of my own, I verily believe now). Stop we must begin with a new chapter.

Footnotes

1 The geological phenomena of the Isle-of-Wight are as much celebrated as the scenery and fertility. Mr. Webster, in the second volume of the Transactions of the London Geological Society, says, 'The chalk covered by the London clay, passes under the channel, called the Solent, and rises in the middle of the island, forming a range of hills, which extends from Culver-Cliffs on the East to the Needles on the West. Here we meet with the only remarkable derangement of the beds of chalk, and the superior strata, which has been noticed in England. The strata of this range of hills, says Bakewell (in his Introduction to Geology) are thrown into a position *absolutely vertical*, evincing the action of some mighty disturbing force, which can be so often observed to have acted on the lower strata in various parts of the world, and also on the upper strata in the vicinity of the Alps.'

'The whole thickness of the beds in the Isle-of-Wight, *which are nearly vertical*, according to Mr. Webster's measurement, is not less than 3000 feet, including 1481 feet of strata above the chalk, about 987 feet of chalk, and 500 or 600 feet of lower strata. Farther south the strata under the chalk are seen again in their *original horizontal position*, and on the northern side there are hills composed of horizontal strata, evidently of a formation *posterior to the time when the chalk strata were overturned*.'

CHAPTER V.

ENGLISH INN FOR TOURISTS... ENGLISH BEDS... WAITERS... ENGLISH BREAKFAST... HOUSEHOLD PHILOSOPHY... ALLUM BAY... THE NEEDLES... THE LIGHT-HOUSE...

The landlady (for it was she) soon re-appeared, and I was careful to meet her again at the top of the stairs, and save her as much trouble as I could, in her peculiar situation, which was of a nature to render a woman very sacred in the eyes of a good man. She had brought a book to amuse me the second I had met with in the whole course of the day. The first I had got by heart it was a guide-book for the Isle-of-Wight in duodecimo; and this turned out to be a guide-book to the Isle-of-Wight in quarto. I could not enjoy such variety it reminded me of the fare I had been used to in the heart of New-England fish-and-potatoes one day, and potatoes-and-fish another; and after waiting a while in hope that some of the voices that I heard wrangling below might come within reach of mine, I took a chair and sat down by the bell-rope, knowing by experience what sort of a job I had before me, and forthwith began to pull a sort of triple-bob-major, with rests long enough to afford me a nap at the end of each bar: with much difficulty, and after I had played out all the tunes I knew, and was just going to begin again with variations of Yankee Doodle by Matthews, intending to accompany the air with the original words Five times five are twenty-five, And five times six are thirty; Five times seven are thirty-five, And five times eight are forty, &c. &c. I succeeded in getting a guide to my chamber, a corrotyhaired girl with a pretty good face, who after leading me out into the cool night air, as if that were a part of her duty before she put me to bed, conducted me through the kitchen, which was crowded with servants all talking together; and having apologized for leading me that way (the only way there was to my bed-room), she passed me over to the ugliest creature I ever saw in the shape of a chamber-maid, who starting off the moment she saw me, with a heavy trot like a cart-horse, begged me to follow. I did so, pursuing her at half speed this way and that, up stairs and down, till she arrived at a door in the garret where, letting fall a courtesy as if she had trod upon something that hurt her foot, and pushing open the door, she informed my worship that I was in my bed-room. I started at the girl in amazement. A bedroom! how on earth could she manage to keep her countenance what in the name of all Cape-Elizabeth was I to do laugh or cry? There were two little beds in the room, six feet by three stuck just under the eaves, like a pair of swallows'-nests. Pray said I to the girl, who appeared rather anxious to get away, as if she knew by bitter experience what was to be expected from the wrath of a lodger who had been decoyed into that particular room she stood as if she had entrapped a wild beast, ready to jump over the railings if I spoke or moved Pray said I, am I to *sleep* here?

If you please, Sir.

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If I please! why, my good girl, I cannot get my breath here; the roof is too low, and as for that little window there, why hang the window! little as it is, it was never made to open, I see; I can't move it a peg neither up nor down, nor sideways. What am I to do? occupy that little bed there, not more than two or three feet wide, and stuck under the hot smoking thatched roof, upon which the summer-sun has been blazing all day. Am I to sleep there, I say?

Yes, Sir if you please

Why if I should happen to lift my head in the night, I shall certainly knock my brains out

If you please, continued she in the same tone, half frightened to death, and letting fall another courtesy as ugly as herself.

You may go my dear said I, in that most persuasive way so peculiar to our family; being satisfied that if she staid another minute I should be strongly tempted to open the obnoxious window, by pitching her through it head-foremost.

Hardly was she gone when it occurred to me to look at the bed more narrowly. I went up to it threw down the coverlid and gasped for breath heavy cotton sheets, that clung to whatever they touched! and a feather-bed, precisely such as I would employ to suffocate a man, if there were no hope for him in a case of hydrophobia! And this in the middle of September, between a floor which was warm to the tread, and a roof that was warm to the touch, with no way to introduce a breath of air into the room though you were dying for it. Such were my prospects.

I walked up to the bell-rope once more, threw off my coat, and after ringing two or three times gently, to prepare the folks in the kitchen, whose uproar continued long and long after I was in bed, I drew up my chair and set to for an their half-day's work. By and by, the steps of somebody were heard, and a smothered laugh, and a couple of persons, followed by a third, who I dare say was the chamber-maid, passed by my door and took shelter in the room opposite, which I hoped was like that in which I was *doing* (or being done). I'll teach them to titter, said I to myself as they tripped by the door.

When these people were disposed of I would have given a trifle to see who they were, but there was no chance for a peep, the glass of my door being covered with a green stuff when they were disposed of I say, the chamber-maid was obliging enough to see what I wanted. She must have been used to like behaviour in those who occupied my room, or she must have thought by the noise, for I kept pulling away, that her lodger was in a fit, with his hands tied to the bell-rope.

I cannot possibly go to bed in this way said I, the moment I saw her face at the door. I cannot sleep in cotton-sheets my good girl, at this season of the year.

She dropped another courtesy, without looking up or saying a word in reply.

Have you no linen sheets? Why don't you speak? Nothing but heavy cotton sheets with the fur on, for such weather as where the devil are you going? what is the matter with you? why don't you answer me? Stop, I say!

Another awkward courtesy, and away she drove to inquire if I might be indulged with a pair of linen sheets, leaving me half undressed and sore with perplexity, to prepare for the issue. After awhile she came back to say, that she's very sawry, and Missis very sawry, she's no linen sheets haired.

Very well, if that be the case; but I should like to know if I can have a pair of cotton sheets with the wool off

Sir!

If they are not haired, so much the better.

Very well, Sir.

Stop send for my boots, or take them with you now, and let me be called fire and fury, you don't hear a word I say.

Yes I do, Sir.

Well, what have I said?

Why Sir, you said you, you you you asked me where the devil I was goin'?

Pshaw! send for my boots, or take them with you now, and let me be called at seven to-morrow morning at seven precisely, d'ye hear.

Another courtesy and a sort of whimper, which sounded to me like a smothered giggle.

Have my boots ready for me outside the door when I get up, so that I may not have to disturb the whole house for them do you hear? and tell the boy to be ready with the gig at seven, will you? zounds, are you deaf?

Yes Sir no Sir.

Yes Sir no Sir; what am I to understand by that?

Yes Sir

Yes Sir!

No Sir!

Pho pho, leave me.

I now prepared to go to bed, not knowing whether to laugh or be angry, though I knew that if I did *not* sleep, I should wish the Sand-Rock Hotel at the bottom of the Red-Sea; and that if I did sleep, I should stand a pretty fair chance of being smothered, or of knocking my brains out whenever I lifted my head. But sleep was out of the question I had little to be afraid of on that score; the noise below would have kept me awake, if I had been ever so sleepy, or in ever so delightful a bed to say nothing of the fever I was in for having suffered myself to be so packed away; nor of the bitter self-examination that I subjected myself to, touching the inconceivable folly of my behaviour toward not a woman, but the shape of a woman, who though I had never seen her face, nor heard her speech, had haunted me night and day for three whole years; nor any thing of the peculiar structure of the window and the bed, one of which, though it would not suffer a breath of air to get to me, kept rattling to the breeze all night long, while the other shrieked so as to be heard all over the house, whenever I stirred hand or foot, and was so narrow, that move which way I would, I was sure to roll the clothes off. I lived through the night how I escaped the catastrophe I spoke of, He *only* knows who watches over the ship-boy on the giddy mast, and the lodgers of the Sand-Rock Hotel. But *I* know that I had a narrow escape and that I never can be sufficiently thankful. I was very sleepy toward morning (after the house had got still) and yet I could not sleep I durst not sleep I was afraid, for whenever I shut my eyes, a tomb like a city was before me, and a beautiful apparition that I knew, swept by me with a slow majestic tread that I knew, and disappeared in the far shadow of the grave; or she stood still before me in the attire of a bride, and when I strove to look at her, my heart was heavy with unspeakable sorrow, for I knew that she was not of our earth, and yet I loved her. No no, I could not sleep and

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yet, after I was up and out in the fresh morning air, so happy was I, that I could hardly speak for joy. I recollected having seen her shadow pass by my chamber door, arm in arm with a shadow that I knew to be her husband pass by to the bridal-couch, even as *they* did in the story told by Rousseau, and that I started up with a feeling that no language can describe; it was like that which I suppose the lover of Julia had, when as he lay awake after he had parted from her, he heard her step and the rustling of her dress poor wretch as she and her husband passed by to their marriage-bed. But such thoughts are evil. They may do mischief where I would only do good; they may be a trouble to her, who if I could have my way, should never know what trouble is. And therefore, casting off the recollection of what I suffered in my sleep, for I must have been asleep, though I had no other proof than the memory of this cruel dream, I shall proceed with my story.

I should have got up early, as early as I could see, if I had not been afraid of disturbing the house; but having had some experience of what is called the breakfast-hour in hotels, I chose to lie and wait to be waked. But I could not wait for ever, and so after looking at my watch, and finding that as usual the hour had gone by at which I was to have been called, I jumped out of bed, and consumed as much time as I possibly could in the hope of hearing a knock, before I laid hold of the bell-rope, or opened the door to look for my boots. It was all in vain however ring I must, and ring I did, five or six times before a soul came near me.

At last the girl appeared. How soon can you give me breakfast?

As soon as you like Sir; what would you please to have, Sir?

Nothing but a little tea and toast, with a fresh egg, if you have one

Yes Sir.

I shall be back in about an hour, and I must be away as soon as possible after I get back.

Yes Sir

Stay, stay don't forget the egg; do you hear me?

Yes Sir No Sir, I mean we 'll not forget the egg.

After a full hour's walk over what is said to be the highest part of the island, I came back, and without stopping to inquire the way, went up to the little room I had occupied the evening before. I found it now occupied with luggage, and as if that were not enough to provoke me, with the luggage of women, who judging by their shawls and bonnets and umbrellas, and grey-cloaks lined with silk, and the huge bag that I saw stuffed out like a feather-bed, must have been ladies of a certain age unmarried. Being rather surprised at what I saw, I had begun to prepare for another tug at the bell-rope the more, as the cloth was not laid and there was no sign of breakfast when the red-haired girl came up, and gave me to understand that I had no business in that room the room that I had engaged and occupied and was paying for, and that I was to have my breakfast below.

Below where

In the coffee-room

In the coffee-room; I was told you had no coffee-room.

No more we have Sir; but there's a room below that you can have now, as the gentleman has just gone out.

Indeed I am very lucky

Footnotes

Yes Sir.

And so I am to be turned out of my own room whether I will or no, that I may have a chance of being turned out of another man's room when the proprietor gets back?

If you please Sir; the ladies are expected every minute, and if they should find you here

If they should find *me* here. Why, what the deuse! upon my word young woman, I have a great mind to stay here till they do come; and if they were not females I would throw the baggage out of the window this minute, and leave your master to settle the affair with them as he could. Where is he why did he not ask my leave?

Law Sir! how could we ask your leave; wa'nt you gone out to take a walk?

What could I say to that? Nothing. And so I did as I was bid walked down to the room below, where I repeated the order for tea, toast, and a fresh egg. Still there was no other sign of breakfast than a tea-pot and a canister, a table, a chair, and a bell-rope, three things which I made immediate use of, but with little or no effect you may suppose; for the waiter did not appear till I had rung repeatedly, and when he did there was neither egg nor toast. After a while however the toast came, and I inquired for the egg; but no egg appeared till I had actually finished my breakfast and begun to ring for my bill. By this time I was in the mood for horsewhipping any body that might happen to fall in my way. I do not know that I was ever so angry before even with a trifle, though trifles by the way are the very things to try the temper of a man. I could always bear sorrow without flinching if it were heavy; trial, if it were enough to crush me, without a word or a look to show that I suffered; any thing I might say, if it were both unavoidable and severe. But I never could behave like a man where to behave like a man would appear to be the easiest thing in the world. The wreck of a great hope I could bear I *could* bear it, for I have borne it; the loss of much that I most loved on earth, I could suffer, without a murmur and perhaps without a tear; without losing either my self-command or my equanimity for above a day. And yet, if my shoe-maker should bring me a pair of shoes that pinched my feet after I had given him fair notice and full warning or a pair of boots that were only to be pulled on by half pulling my fingers off, I should behave like a mad man, as every body knows. And so it is with many, whose behaviour would be insupportable to a bystander, if they were assailed by a petty every-day vexation. But wreck them as it were, body and spirit, fortune health and character; heap sorrow upon them; pile up grief upon grief, and you see nothing but a little more gravity in their look, and a little more serious manhood in their speech. They may be paler for a time, they may look more thoughtful for a season, but their foreheads will be high, their voices clear, and their tread firm, till the shadow of death has gone by, or till *they* have gone by for ever, on their way to the only city of refuge for a proud man, who has outlived a majestic hope the grave.

CHAPTER VI.

HUMAN LOVE PUT ASIDE BY THE HELP OF A FRESH EGG... BLACKGANG CHINE... TOURISTS...
THE LAND-SLIP... CAVE AT FRESHWATER.

No, I do not believe that I was ever so angry before even with a trifle, such as those mentioned in the last chapter. Had the affair been got up for the very purpose of trying my temper (which I take to be rather techy) it could not have been carried through with more zeal, nor contrived with a more perverse ingenuity. Say what I would do what I would, it was all in vain. Civility was quite misunderstood politeness thrown away. The more obliging I was, the more disobliging they were. One would have supposed from the behaviour of all parties when I offered to give up my room the night before, that they knew me to be a Yankee, and saw clearly that I should overreach them, however they might receive my proposal; for I got no answer, till I was weary of waiting. And yet, the moment my back is turned without saying by your leave, they take possession of my room and occupy the table and chair with all sorts of trumpery. And then to think of the trouble I took to get a fresh egg providing for it a

Authorship: A Tale

full hour before hand; of the appetite I had, when I had finished my walk in a high wind along the very top of the cliff, and through the ploughed earth to the watch-house, and of the manner in which, after I had given two or three several orders for the egg, my inquiry for it was received. Oh! did you order one, said the girl with red hair, when the breakfast I had was nearly devoured. Order one! yes, a full hour ago, and over and over again afterwards of you and of every body else that came.

Very well Sir

Very well Sir! no, it is not very well Sir. Stop stop hear what I have to say; if I cannot have an egg immediately, I don't want it at all; but I desire to know whether I am to finish my breakfast with or without one; either way will do, but I do not much like to wait half an hour.

The beggagge made no reply, but after standing as if she had a prompter at her elbow for a minute or so, she left me in a prodigious hurry, and I saw no more of her till she came to receive her reward.

Now `every body knows or ought to know, and a man must be extremely ignorant not to know,' as Judge Blackstone would say, that a dinner is a thing which few of women born are philosophers enough to disregard altogether I do not say give up altogether; and the ladies know or ought to know, and most of them do know, that when your heart is fixed upon a thing, though it be of no more value than a fresh egg, or a live eel, or a dish of strawberries-and-cream, it is neither very safe nor very wise to disappoint you. A longing is a longing whatever it may be for, and by whomsoever it may be felt; and however absurd it may appear for one to make such a fuss about an egg in the middle of a pathetic story which is to end, whatever may be thought of it now, with a real catastrophe, I am willing to be judged by every man who knows the value of a dinner at home or abroad, when I say that an egg was of more value to me at the time I speak of than a costly dinner would be after a sea-voyage at another time; and by every woman who knows how dreadful a thing it is to be kept in suspense for a whole hour and be disappointed after all, when I say that the trouble I had about the egg did more toward making me forget my love, though the woman that I loved was actually under the same roof with me, as I found out afterwards, than every thing that had occurred in the course of the whole preceding day and night. Such is human love as Wordsworth would say.

However to proceed with my story. There was but one way to behave in my case; and so, after waiting a reasonable time for a message in lieu of the egg, if the egg was not endowed with the faculty of forthcomingness to borrow a word from Q. S. P.), I gulped down my cold tea, choked myself with the cold toast, kicked away my chair, and without throwing off my coat, though I knew well what I had undertaken, laid hold of the bell-rope and begun to ring for the bill, in the hope of getting away before night, when the egg was brought in and put upon the table without a word of excuse or apology.

Bring me the bill said I, without turning my head.

It was brought in the course of the morning, and a very pretty bill it was, to be sure; but I had already made up my mind how to behave. So, taking up the change for a sovereign, which if the girl who acted neither as chambermaid nor as waiter, though she appeared to have undertaken both parts, had shown me the least attention, I should have begged her to keep in her two-fold capacity, I dropped it into my pocket, saying as I did so, that I should have treated her otherwise, if she had behaved otherwise; but that never having been so waited upon before in all my life, I should do with her what I had resolved to do about a week before (at the Pavilion-Hotel, Brighton) with every waiter who kept aloof, and with every chamber-maid who neglected me

Sir! said the girl, interrupting me with a look of terror in the very middle of my speech, as if some how or other, she did not exactly understand what I had resolved to do with chamber-maids who failed in their duty. So afraid lest I should laugh in her face, if I continued my fatherly expostulation, I cut the matter short by telling her in my mild way that I should give her nothing.

Authorship: A Tale

I thought so! said she, coloring to the eyes and holding by the door as she spoke (another head was visible behind hers), I thought so! that's always the way with them that gives so much trouble.

Don't be saucy said I, beginning to feel a desire to see the landlord, which I overcame by a quick effort N. B. I was very glad of this after I had got away don't be saucy, my girl. What you say is very true those who give you most trouble are those who pay the least, I dare say. But why do they give you so much trouble? Because you do not serve them properly. You give them first a knife and then a fork, and you call it giving *you* trouble if they ring for either; and the more they ring the more trouble they give, you say. The more trouble *they* give! why it is you that give the trouble. And after they have been kept waiting (for they are the *waiters*, not you) or tugging at the bell-rope for the hour together, would you have them treat you as well as if you had anticipated every want, stood by their sides, or answered the bell and served them with cheerfulness and activity? No no, my girl the maxim, though true enough, is a very bad one for your purpose. When you are not paid by the guest on his going away, it is a proof not that he is illiberal, but that you have neglected him; a proof that *you* are to blame, not he. I hope what I say now will be of use to you; and I hope others may have the courage to do as I have done by you, and such as you it would soon be worth your while to behave better; and it would soon be worth the while of your ten-day traveller to husband his pocket-money, and behave less like a spendthrift school-boy, out on a holiday-trip to see the world; a sort of men who make travelling what it is now a series of petty vexations, whenever it is within the reach of their pockets merely, because they have not the courage to give a waiter no more than he deserves, and are afraid of being thought shabby if they do not behave like fools to the chamber-maid

Very fair but I would not have you suppose, reader my dear fellow that I said to the girl in question all that I have said here. By no means for long and long before I had come to the words, No no, my girl, the maxim though true enough is a very bad one for you and such as you, I had pitched myself head-foremost into my gig, without observing that another, a very superb one, was at the door, and that somebody was standing at the large window who if I had caught a glimpse of her before I was fairly off, would have put a stop to my speech for ever if not to me. How long I should have persisted in what I had to say to the red-haired baggage, after I had left the house, if I had not been disturbed by a remark of the boy who drove me, I do not know. The whole morning was like another dream to me after he spoke; and to this hour, if I did not know from other circumstances that I saw several things which I could not have seen without leaving the gig, before we had come to the broad high-way, I should be unwilling to swear that I did leave it. I remember pretty well however that I had a little child for my guide, that I walked on the sea shore, that I descended a steep hill by a very crooked path, and that I drank a glass of mineral water, the brightest and clearest I ever saw. I remember too that I labored up the steepest part of the gap which is called the Black-gang Chine;¹ that I waded through the sand to the relief of a middle-sized woman who appeared to have stuck fast about half way up the precipice for she was on her hands and feet, and there were no less than four others at work, trying to pull her out of the mud; I remember too that I ran up all out of breath and offered my arm with a bow to her that she refused it, in the style of an amateur lady, and that I was very glad when I saw her face that she had refused it, and very thankful for my escape, having no doubt from her stiff carriage and from all that I saw while she was floundering in the mud, I hope I am not over bitter that she was one of the two ladies of no particular age who took their tea in a bed-room the night before, without so much as a word of thanks to me for the civil offer I made to turn myself out of the house for their sake; and who the very next morning were bold enough to occupy *my* room, without a word of excuse or apology. I remember too that all day long I was in the track of a party whom I could not escape, though I tried in every possible way if I stopped, they stopped if I turned out of my path, no matter why, they were sure to turn out of their path no matter how; and that every half hour, during a large part of the day I was meeting with somebody or other whom I had left I did hope for ever sticking in the mud, or half buried in a niche of the cliff, or wallowing through the sand or the pebble-drifts on the beach, or knee-deep through the rough heather on the top of the precipice, where every path was a goat-path; or floundering about in the shadow of the Land-Slip half a day's journey behind me. Odds bobs! thought I, every time I crossed their path or they mine, what are such people made for! what on earth brings them here! They are just like every body else and whatever they do is done with such an air of insupportable propriety I do wish they would keep out of the way. There is nothing to laugh at in their garb or their walk; nor is

Authorship: A Tale

there any thing to admire in either. Why will they and such as they presume to appear in such a romantic beautiful spot as this I do wonder at their courage. They do not help the scenery; they do not enjoy it I can see that by their very step along the beach they are too careful of their feet, and their clothes are too well made by half. They cannot be grouped they would not endure such a liberty they are out of place in a sea-view, and would be frightful in a free, brave-spirited fresh landscape what on earth is to be done with such cattle! They are neither picturesque nor absurd and yet they are eternally in your way. There they are again! there they are! turn you to the sky or turn you to the sea, they are always before you three pair of short thick legs, a very upright motion of the body, a very long waist or two, and a heap of broad serious-looking ribbons, intermixed with artificial flowers, and a bust like the figure-head of a ship, with a silk habit pasted over the neck and shoulders. All this I remember, and much more. But I remember it as I do things that occurred to me years and years ago not as if I had seen it in my sleep, for the imagery of sleep is doubtful in a way of its own it is never so clear; nor yet as if I had seen it while I was broad awake, or when I was unoccupied; but more as if while I was where I might have seen what I have described, my thoughts were away; or my soul engaged with some hope which hindered me from seeing what was before me; and somewhat as if while occupied with a view of the sea and the sea-beach, I had fallen asleep, or met with some accident which made all that I saw participate in the vagueness that we are troubled with in our sleep. I know not how to describe the feeling so as to give another even a tolerable idea of what I mean the real and the unreal were so mixed up together, when I came to recall the occurrences of the day. I remember that I saw the Land-Slip the green earth and the huge rocks heaped up together as if the very foundations of the island had given way, either to the pressure of the deep or to the weight of the cloud-capped, stupendous wall. I remember too, that I felt much disappointed when I saw the celebrated Black-Gang Chine, the place where if you are to believe what people say now, a gang of sea-rovers were concealed ages and ages ago, and that I was quite angry when I saw the cave at Freshwater it was any thing but a cave, though I did not lack faith in the story that I heard of its magnitude, till I had gone to it once in a boat which lay rocking at the mouth, while I peeped in with a disposition to laugh in the face of the boatmen who kept chattering about the cave the cave! a loose hollow in a heap of loose earth, washed away by the sea, to the depth of a few yards, till I had gone to it once in a boat I say, and once more dry-shod after the sea had withdrawn, with a desire to see how far it was possible for a guide-book to err I do not like to say fib. And I remember too that I could not believe the precipice to be more than eighty or a hundred feet high, though I was assured by a fisherman, who offered to ascend it and let fall a line to prove his words, that it was either two hundred and twenty or two hundred and seventy feet high, I forget which, directly over the said cave; that I was lucky enough to meet with a very good dinner which I ate mechanically, and without knowing what it consisted of, in consequence of what had occurred just before at the Needles (Of which more by and by) that I looked for shells and sea-weed, bean-stones and smooth pebbles, with a pretty woman who had never had a peep at the sea before, though she had been sea-sick, she said, on the passage from Southampton to Cowes! and that in a word, I was completely bewildered through the course of the day: for the truth is, that the first thing I recollect with positive certainty is the shock I received from a remark of the boy, while I was occupied with my speech to the chamber-maid, who was then I dare say, full three leagues in my rear. I wish I knew the time when this occurred for while I know from other circumstances that it must have been after I had grown weary of looking at what I have described, if I were to judge by my own recollection of the matter, I should say that it must have been about half an hour after I had left the Sand-Rock Hotel for I was occupied with my speech to the girl, when the boy at my side who never spoke but to say, That is Mr. A. B.'s cottage, or that is the C. D. place dropped a remark, which led to a conversation that drove every thing else out of my head. It occurred pretty much in this way.

Fine gig that, Sir

Fine gig where?

I don't see it now Sir (looking around), but shall afore long, and when I do, I'll speak.

Was that the landlord I saw?

Don't know indeed, Sir

Don't you know whether I saw him or not, all the time I was there?

No Sir.

What is his name?

Kemp Sir.

How old a man is he? Here I am able to give the very words of the boy; they amused me so much that I made a memorandum of this part of the dialogue on the way. How old a man is he?

Sir?

What is his age how old is he?

I am sure I can't tell.

Is he fifty, or forty?

Can't say.

Is he a young man?

I don't know.

Is he an old man?

Not very old, nor yet very young.

Here I gave up in despair. The boy was eighteen or nineteen; he was familiar with the road and the house, and yet I could not discover whether I had seen the landlord or not, nor whether he was an old or a young man.

There's the gig, Sir! there it is now, goin' over the top of the hill

What gig do you mean?

Why, that gig you saw at the door

I saw no gig at the door Oh, I remember now; a gig drew up just as we were setting off.

Yes Sir and that 'ere lady at the window was waitin' for it; and there they go now! dashin' over the hill go by every thing on the road, Sir fine horse that Sir, should like to drive that horse.

You spoke of a lady I saw no lady.

O yes Sir, I beg your pardon must have seen her; she was at the window Sir, close by you, when you jumped into the gig

Authorship: A Tale

Stay stay I think I do remember something of the sort. A woman you say at the window; surely I did see somebody there, but I was in such a fever with what had just occurred, and you started off in such a hurry, that upon my word I. I.. Pray what sort of a woman was she?

Oh *sech* a beautiful woman Sir!

Beautiful?

Oh yes Sir, and so grand Sir, and so lady-like, and as proud as a duchess

Proud as a duchess! proud proud what a strange comparison for you boy as proud as a duchess!... Why, if that comparison be a natural one I stopped, for I felt as if I had got under a shower-bath, such as that wherein the Ettrick Shepherd bless him for the story underwent a trial of courage nay worse, much worse, for I felt as if I had got hold of the string, not of a shower-bath, like that underneath which he stood quaking and shivering, but of such a water-fall as Niagara. I was afraid to speak or move. I could hardly get my breath, as he proceeded to show that the comparison was a very natural one, for every body at the house had said the same of her, that she was very handsome, quite the lady, and as proud as a duchess.

Drive on boy, drive on

Oh Sir, that 'll do no good; we can't overtake that 'ere horse; we get along very well in our way, but as for that 'ere man with that 'ere horse an' gig Sir, get up, will you! why Sir, he'd make nothin' o' twelve mile an hour, and we are most knocked up now Sir.

Get on, I say get on.

Why Sir, I thought you seed her and was a-goin' to speak to her.

Speak to whom?

Why, that 'ere lady Sir, what stood lookin' at you while you was a-gettin' ready.

Looking at me?

Oh yes Sir, and by what she said to the gem'man there, I thought she know'd you.

Why, what did she say?

Didn't hear rightly; something about Lunnun Sir, an' Wessminster-Habbey

What!

Beg pardon Sir they were both laughin' at you, Sir.

Laughing at me! what do you mean?

Why Sir, when you was at the bell-rope Sir, you know I was at the door with the gig, a-waitin' for you Sir; and I could see 'em both Sir; they were a-standin' up in the middle o' the room Sir, and every time you pulled Sir, why that 'ere gem'man there Sir, in the red shawl, he seemed to enjoy it Sir, like any thing.

The rascal

Authorship: A Tale

I thought you were old acquaintances, may be

How dare you!

Beg pardon Sir; but he cum up to the window as if he thought you'd speak to him; and there they stood Sir, laughn' both together Sir

Laughing together laughing at me, boy?

I thought so, Sir.

And why didn't you tell me?

Lord Sir! I thought you seed 'em Sir, at first; and then, I thought may be you know'd one another, and I didn't like to spile a joke for you Sir.

Did the lady laugh too?

Not much Sir; but the gem'man did, all she could do to hender him. I thought he 'd never stop agin, arter the pull you made jest afore you jumped in the gig.

He be hanged.

Sir

You be hanged, I say

Yes Sir.

And if you open your mouth to me *Sir*, about that gem'man, as you call him *Sir* before I have had a chance to speak to him I'll I'll give me the whip, it's of no use to you, give me the whip, I say

With all my heart Sir

Before I have had a chance to speak with him do you hear what I say?

Yes Sir

I'll break your neck, you dog you.

What for Sir; what have I done?

Stupid! If you open your mouth about the gem'man, before I have had a word with him, I'll beat you to death, that's what I will!

Yes Sir

Drive on, drive on; we shall never get near the gig, if you don't exert yourself.

We can't overtake it, Sir; but they 'll stop at the LightHouse, and you can see the lady there.

Drive on; they may take another road.

No Sir, there an't no other road for 'em to take. We shall find 'em there, you may depend, or meet 'em afore we git there.

Drive on, my good fellow, drive on. If you 'll bring me along side o' that gig, I'll give you a crown.

Will you? here goes! and away we went spinning over the smooth top of the hill, without noise or smoke, at a speed with which at any other time, I should have been satisfied, for it was like that of a ball discharged over the green turf, by a strong easy player.

There they be Sir; there 's the gig at the door yer see I told you so! and there 's the footman's horse that I saw, gallopin' arter the gig; and now Sir, when I drive up to the gate Sir, if you jump out and walk down to the Needles there, or may be you'd like to see Allum Bay, nice place that Sir, every body goes there; prettiest sand ever you saw in your life grows there, and all sorts o' colors, whoa whoa whoa there Sir, now if you 'll jump out Sir; you'll find me here Sir, when you come back jest along side o' the gig Sir, if you please whoa there, whoa!

I took the hint; and throwing his fee to the boy, set off toward a place where I saw a lot of people, and among others a man that I knew immediately for the drawing-master, with a tall woman, that I knew or thought I knew even at that distance, leaning on his arm. They walked upon the very verge of the precipice; and kept aloof now, as they had three years before, from all that were treading the same course.

Footnotes

1 In England it is a matter of course for the traveller to pay the chamber-maid so much a night, the head-waiter so much a meal, the boots, &c. so much a day. It is their only wages. They hire their places instead of being hired, and their perquisites are their wages. In general therefore they are attentive and careful.

1 Believed by the neighbourhood, by authors of guide-books, and by every orthodox tourist, to have been the refuge of a terrible band of pirates. Chine is the word there used for cleft, gap, or fissure.

CHAPTER VIII.

ADVENTURE AT THE NEEDLES... THE CLIFF... THE SEA... PERPLEXITY... THE DRAWING-MASTER TURNS OUT TO BE WHAT? MAD? PERHAPS A PLAYER?

It was a long while after I saw this man the merry gentleman with a red shawl round his neck, who I began to fear might have been the cause of all that I endured at the Sand-Rock Hotel before I could make up my mind how to proceed with him. It would be very foolish in me, though characteristic enough, to pursue a stranger on the report of a boy, and pick a quarrel with him for having had the audacity to laugh when I pulled the bell-rope at a tavern, as if the house were afire. It would be too ridiculous to pursue him with a charge of this nature, on authority of this nature. I saw this, and I felt it with a continually augmenting force, every step I took in the path which he had taken before me; and yet, as if I was never to be any other than what I had been all my life long a boy a mere boy, a testy techy froward quarrelsome boy, eager to take offence, though not eager to give it, I pursued the man for a whole hour, determined whatever should come of it, and however strange it might appear to the lady whose carriage and step and stature by the by, I did not think half so well of now that I heard she had been laughing at me to encounter him face to face where he could not escape, and then to be governed by circumstances in my behaviour not only to him, but to her her, for whom I would have risked my life the evening before, and would yet, if I could be assured that she had never laughed at me, or that she never laughed at all.

Authorship: A Tale

But some how or other although I tried for an hour to meet him face to face I never could get near enough; partly, if I must acknowledge the truth, because I did not dare to walk upright so nigh the edge of the tremendous cliff as they did, and partly because they appeared to suspect my design for they avoided me with especial care. The path ran along within a few feet of the precipice; but instead of keeping the path as did one or two of the boldest who had gone a little before them, they actually trod between the path and the crumbling verge. I bore it till I could bear it no longer if they walked there to avoid me, as they probably did, I felt as if I should be answerable for every step they took; and every step was on the very threshold of eternity. Those who have been to see the Needles, which form so attractive a point for the voyager to the Isle-of-Wight will remember the path I speak of, it runs along the very brink of a precipice more than eleven hundred feet high, and so steep that a line with a lead may be dropped into the sea by one who has no more courage than I had but just enough to lie along flat upon the grass and look over, as I did. Years and years ago, when this path ran a good way from the edge, it was probably a safe one; but as every year a portion of the soil has been carried away, the path has been brought nearer and nearer, till now it is dangerous enough to make me shudder when I think of it; for in some cases, the chalky soil shoots over the perpendicular side, as if to invite you to certain death; and in others, instead of being a square wall of white earth from the beach half way up to the sky, it is cut away into a sort of arched cavity two thirds of the way down. Those who have been there too after a heavy rain, will remember that the soil is very weak, that huge masses are easily detached, that what are called the Needles are nothing more than such masses detached, several within the memory of those who are yet alive, and one with a power like that of the earthquake, for it was felt on the other side of the sea when its overthrow took place; and that near the verge of the cliff, at this extremity of the island, where it requires a deal of courage for a body to peep over, though lying flat upon his face at the time, stretched out his whole length upon the slippery turf, and clinging to it, as if he had been carried thither a moment before by the winds or waves, and expected to be swept away by the next wind or the next wave, there are two or three deep cracks in the soil, dividing the whole mass for aught we know from the top to the very bottom, the whole body of earth which composes that part of the island cracks which it would be tempting Providence for a live creature to stray over unless provided with wings. For my part I would not have permitted a dog to pass over one I saw, at the time I speak of, while the wind was high, the turf wet and slippery and sloping to the very rim of the precipice, and the sea roaring a thousand feet below me about the base of the very cliff on which I stood, and swallowing up as it were before my face the huge piles that had been detached, one after another, ages and ages ago, from the very part on which the people were now gathered together, and walking about unconcernedly.

They who remember all this and who that has been there does *not* remember it? may be able to understand what my feelings were, when I saw a woman walking with a bold free step and a thoughtful air, *between* the narrow path I spoke of and the verge of the precipice, while I trod with caution, though I was a great way off; and what I felt when I saw her approach a deep wide fissure, and step over it, and go to a part of the cliff, which owing to the heavy rains that had fallen every day for a week or two before, I do almost believe I could have loosened with my foot.

I was afraid to pursue her another inch afraid even to look at her ready to call out and pray and beseech her to go no farther; for I observed that when I stopped, she stopped as if she had gone thither only to avoid me. Judge of my feelings when I saw this, and when it occurred to me that perhaps when I took the path, she took the outside of the path next the verge to avoid me. I stopped I shuddered I felt as if in some way or other, I had been pursuing a fellow creature into the very jaws of death, and I hurried away with a feeling of bitter bitter self-reproach.

I speak of the woman as if she were alone of the proud, beautiful woman that I saw standing up on the wet sloping turf, within a foot of the precipice on the very brink and threshold of the grave: while the winds blew and the seas roared for their prey. I speak of her and of her only, for I saw nobody but her at the time nothing but her while she was in danger. But as I withdrew, I perceived that she was not alone, that a man was with her whose intrepid carriage would have interested me a good deal at another time; for he did not appear to know, as he trod along the crumbling edge of the cliff, with a slow firm step, that he was walking upright where others were afraid to creep. After I came away, it occurred to me that there was something a little odd in his behaviour a something

Authorship: A Tale

which made me uneasy in spite of myself when I considered the nature of my quarrel with him for quarrel it was, whatever might be the issue; and I stopped as I drew near the Light-House and walked a little aside from the path, meaning to have another peep at him before we parted. But when I looked up a minute or two afterwards, believing him to be still a good way off, I was thunderstruck at perceiving him just behind me pressing forward as if with a view to overtake me before I could reach my gig, while the woman appeared to be holding back and expostulating with him, as if it was her wish to avoid me. To avoid *me* and why? wherefore, thought I. Who is she? do I know her? does she know me? What have I done, that she should try to avoid me? How have I offended her. By heaven, I *will* know who she is! I *will* have the matter expounded! I *will* see her face.

Will you? said somebody at my elbow; and before I could recollect where I was, or what I had been saying aloud or how I should behave the man was before me the very man, the very look that I had seen three years before, as I darted through the porch of Westminster-Abbey a pale serious man, with a look which it was not for me to describe, though I could see grief in it, and care, and what I took to be the ravages of a mortal anxiety. We stood face to face with each other, and our feet were fixed on the turf as though we had come out upon the great hill for sacrifice; but we did not speak, and the woman who dropped her veil when she saw me look up, so that I could not see her face, the very veil that overshadowed her beauty when she appeared to me among the graves and the sepulchres of the proud and the mighty, she stood before me now in the attitude of supplication her breathing was audible her head was bowed with an air of unspeakable sorrow, and her hands were clasped, and her arms were wreathed about his arm as if she foresaw a terrible issue to the meeting.

Edward Edward I beseech you; do not speak now, said the woman, with a low sweet whisper.

But why such alarm? What was there to be afraid of so much afraid of? Was it altogether on his account, or was it partly for me that she was in fear? If only for him, why that peculiar manner toward me that slow motion of the head as if to assure me that however *he* might regard my behaviour, she was willing to put her whole trust in me? But why cling to him so? why struggle with him at every step? Why urge me away? We had not come together for strife; we had not found each other out by the instinct of hereditary foes. And what if we did stand still for a few minutes by the way-side, or fix our feet in the turf and look at each other for a while without speaking a word what was there so very terrible in that?

No no, for Heaven's sake! she added, on seeing him about to address me. No no, dear! what are you going to say? what are you going to do?

He smiled but in such a way that upon my word I knew not whether to knock him down, or to run off.

No no, dear; recollect yourself, you are deceived he is not what you suppose, I am sure he is not; are you Sir?

Really madam, I I may I beg to know what I am *supposed* to be?

There Edward, there! will not that satisfy you?

He made no reply, but his countenance changed and his hand shook as it lay upon her shoulder, and he drew her up to his heart close up; and it instantly occurred to me for the first time that the poor fellow was a very unhappy man, a little disordered by grief, and that I had nothing to do but appease him and get away as fast as I could.

I pray you to believe Sir, said I, that in crossing your path, I have not intended either to grieve or disturb you, I was going to say; but recollecting how sensitive such people are, and how poor an apology it would be, whether the man was mad, or was not mad, I stopped short in my speech, made a very low bow, and was getting away as well as I could, when he arrested me by a remark which I did not hear distinctly, but which referred to my behaviour on the cliff.

Authorship: A Tale

You have sworn to see her face; you shall be gratified Sir. You have sworn to discover pho pho, Mary, what are you afraid of? The gentleman appears to have a

Are you mad? continued she, in a whisper.

To have a quick eye for female beauty, and I hope, after an oath such as we heard him swear, you will not refuse to throw up your veil. As he spoke, he was about to lift the veil; but she caught his arm with a cry that went to my heart a quick low cry, which made me feel as if in some way or other, I had been the cause of outrage to her.

That was enough! Though I would have gone barefooted over Europe to see the face of that woman, before she betrayed her terror by that cry, I would not have permitted a man to lift her veil before me, after I did hear it no, not for the wealth of a kingdom. But after all, why so afraid of me? Did she know me? Did I know her? Had I seen her? was I ever likely to see her again perhaps I knew, or might know her family; these thoughts hurried swiftly through my mind, as I repeated my bow and walked away with a determination to avoid her much as I desired to know the truth, and to have the mystery cleared up until it should seem to her good to let me see her face, which I now began to fear was not altogether such as I had hoped for considering that she had never suffered the veil to be blown aside for a single moment while she stood before me. But I had not gone far when a new idea struck me, and I felt my gorge rise, and my cheek burn: for had she not asked him if he was mad, while striving to subdue his wrath a question that nobody would ask of one who really was mad. I stopped my view of his behaviour was changed anew. What if it should prove that he was really a wag, that he had been the author of my sufferings the night before, and that he had purposely gone out of his way to jeer me, in the presence of a woman of that woman too of her whole sex, about whose good opinion I cared most? How should I bear to hear the story told as a joke perpetrated upon a thorough-bred Yankee? How should I bear to think of the matter after I had gone back to the land of the Yankees? Who would believe me, though I swore that my forbearance had proceeded from a belief that the man was mad, for who could be worse off in that way than I myself was thought to be by a few of the people there, and by not a few of the people here? And if I should say that my compassion for a female had caused me to overlook the behaviour of such a man, who would not shrug up his shoulders or thrust his tongue into his cheek when he knew that I cared as little for the presence of a woman as I should for that of a baby in such a case.

Before I could subdue the feeling that shook me, when I thought of these things, though my mind was already made up to know more of my gentleman before we parted, and to deal with him accordingly, I heard some one cry out, Whoa! whoa! as if a horse had broken away.

Let your horse go, you can't hold both, said my persecutor, in a very mild voice, adding as he saw me, The foolish boy has tied him with the long reins pho pho, what are you afraid of child pho pho hold on, Philip! hold on I will be with you in a moment. Please to look to my wife, Sir, that boy 'll be carried over the precipice if I don't give him a pull pho pho, dear, what are you afraid of there Sir, there keep her out of harm's way for a minute or two, will you!

His *wife!* I recoiled from her I started with dismay I would have gone to the rescue of any thing or any body at such a time, rather than approach her with my feelings, when I heard the man who cast her upon me for protection, call her his wife. His wife! the woman that I had pursued so long, thought of so much, dreamt of so much, prayed for, languished after yea, languished after for three whole years, with a vague sweet hope which I never durst acknowledge to my own heart, a hope which has ended for ever now. Could it be! was the brave creature a married woman after all? a wife to that man to that man of all mankind! As I live, I could not have touched her hand after this I could not have spoken to her with an audible voice, had it been to save her life.

Oh Sir, Sir! said she, coming a little nearer with a quick step, and with her hands locked and pressed together in such a way as to keep her veil down I could see that, though I could n't look up oh, she must be very ugly, I am sure of that now, said I to myself; and I began to be much better satisfied with what another might call a

Authorship: A Tale

dispensation ugly as death ugly as the woman I saw at the Pier As the woman I saw at the Pier! I started back a whole pace to peep at her feet they were the prettiest feet in the world they were enough by themselves to give a sculptor the heart-ache I never saw such a pair of feet such a character! such a fine spirited instep! such ease and such expression, oh they were any thing but such feet as are commonly admired the *footies* of grown babies.

Oh Sir, I shall be very safe: perhaps you had better go *do* go with him Sir; my poor Edward may require your help; do go Sir!

Ma'm?

If you would be so obliging Sir

Yes ma'm

He may have need of you

Who ma'm?

Edward Sir, my husband, my dear, *dear* husband oh, if you knew him Sir, you would feel as I do

Your husband be gulp! I was going to say a very naughty word, but I recollected myself in season to make a low bow, and assure her that she had nothing to fear, that the danger was all over, and the poor dear man was quite safe.

Sir Sir with a tone of surprise.

Whereupon I made another bow and took to my heels, intending to meet her Edward half way, and ask him in so many words whether he was or was not a madman; but she was too quick for me, and followed so close after me that I could not, and I passed on to my gig, without returning the salutation that he vouchsafed to me as I ran by him.

But the boy, who had gone to Allum-Bay after a pocketfull of the sand which is to be had there, I was not ready for me, and I turned my steps to a part of the Downs² which I had not regarded before. The wind was so light that I could not make my way in a straight course, and I observed that while the men were holding on their hats and the women their bonnets with both hands, two or three of the latter without convoy, peradventure because of their age, though all were beating up for the same harbor with the wind in their teeth A figure of speech that for many had no teeth the fine horse of the stranger was pawing the turf, and arching his neck, and stepping about with a short quick step, as if not wholly subdued, or as if terrified by the noise of the sea, or the screaming of the birds, or the rocking of the gig, which was actually lifted up two or three times by the wind.

Whoa, whoa, whoa, cried the boy that led him; whoa, Sir, whoa !

Make him head the wind Philip, or perhaps you 'd better take him out, said his master, who stopped and spoke to the boy, as if he were his own child, instead of a servant.

Yes Sir

Lead him this way; the gig is too light for him now; we must have somebody in it, or the poor fellow whoa Sir, whoa! will never be done shaking whoa there!

Yes Sir

Footnotes

Authorship: A Tale

We are going up stairs to look out of the lantern; but we shall be back in a few minutes. Have your nag ready, if you please, when I come down, so that we may be off without delay. We have no time to spare now.

Footnotes

1 It is kept for sale by the children that live near, made up in white bottles, and has a brilliant and curious effect, so vivid and so various are the colors, and so distinct are they, lying in stripes all the way up the cliff.

2 Downs, so called from the descending nature of the land where sheep are fed.

CHAPTER IX.

NEW SOLICITUDE... ESCAPE... QUARREL... PERPLEXITY...

Very well Sir, said the boy, who the moment his master had turned his back, jumped into the gig and gave the spirited animal a touch of the whip.

My good fellow, cried I, that will never do; you could not well choose a time so bad, nor or a spot so bad for breaking a horse. But the boy would not regard me, and the horse after two or three plunges, threw down his head, and fixed his fore feet and stood stock—still. I did not care much for that; I was more afraid of his running back over the precipice, or setting off at full speed for the declivity before him, where he would have met with no check nor barrier on his way into the sea.

The devil take the horse! cried the boy, he 'll break somebody's neck yet, afore he 's done.

You 'd better leave the gig, I answered. He may start before you know it, if you stay there.

Well Philip, what is the matter? cried a voice from a window that overlooked the spot.

He won't move a step, Sir, all I can do or say.

No have you tried the whip?

I gives 'im a little o' the whip now an' then Sir; but he don't care a straw for it.

No

No Sir; never seed him behave so afore in all my life.

Stay where you are; don't move, don't strike him, I 'll be with you in a moment. My good Sir! speaking to a fellow near me who had been very busy, I beg you to keep out of the way. The horse will do well enough in a moment or two if you let his ear alone, whoa there, whoa!

Before you could have counted five, the stranger was on his way toward the gig, into which he leaped immediately, without a sign of trepidation or hurry.

Get down, Philip, get down my good fellow, and keep out of the way, said he, gathering up the reins with a light free arm whoa boy, whoa; give me the whip, and whatever you see me do, don't interfere; now is the time to cool his courage. Whoa, there whoa

Authorship: A Tale

Before I could move or speak, and before a soul of us could interfere, the animal reared in the shafts, turned short round with a giddy whirl, and sprang off toward the edge of the cliff before me.

One solitary cry from the house, and though it was followed by scream after scream, she who uttered that cry was immediately still as death. But such was the power and selfpossession of the driver, that he steered away in a sort of continued circle so as to avoid the cliff, and with it every other danger, till he passed near me; when seeing that the horse had a disposition to go straight forward, although his head was brought round so as to touch his left-shoulder, and that he leaned away, so that if I took the outside edge of the circle, it would be safe and easy for me to stop him, if I could once get hold of the reins I knew my own strength I determined to get hold, and if the reins did not give way, I knew that I could pull the creature down upon his knees, if it were necessary. Hardly had I conceived the idea, when a good opportunity occurred, he passed near me, and after a short run, by the side of the gig, I succeeded in catching the loose rein without checking the peculiar action of the horse, though he bore me along with him at every leap, till I heard some one say, in a loud angry voice, Let him go Sir! what the devil do you mean! let him go, I say!

It was not in my power to let him go, till I saw the whip raised over me, and a female running toward us with her bonnet off, and her garments flying in the wind. I have no recollection now of what I said in reply, or of what I did I only know that if the man had struck me with a whip, I would have driven him over the precipice or led him over it; I only know that I flung awry, that I fell on my face, that I heard a tremendous outcry, and that when I leaped upon my feet, I saw the gig running on one wheel in a narrow circle; the horse leaning quite as much over on one side as they do in the riding-school, the driver bending forward with his arm over the creature's back, one of the reins dragging on the turf, and a female before me with her lips apart and her black hair flying loose Great God! I never did see any thing so beautiful or so grand!

Oh save him! save him! cried she, with a voice that made me willing to risk my life on the spot.

I *will* save him! said I. And I did save him. But I had more trouble than I expected; for though the man was willing enough to be saved now, and the horse giddy with his career, both were obstinate as death, and I had a narrow escape after all. But I did save him I did and I believe the woman would have kissed me, if I had not checked her as she ran up to me with tears in her eyes, and caught my hands, and held them to her heart.

Very fair, upon my word! You have a deal of courage Sir, and you a deal of gratitude Mary whoa, whoa, whoa! said the stranger, with a look which I knew not how to understand, so much was there in it of what I should have called sheer pleasantry at another time, with so much of that grave inflexible manner which appeared habitual to him. He stood brushing his coat sleeve as he spoke, and holding the horse by the head-gear.

Oh, I am *so* happy! she added, going up to him and throwing her arms about his neck so happy dear, that I could kiss the whole world for joy you, and him, and every body else in it.

Well then, if that be the case child, the sooner we are off the better, said he pushing away her thick hair with a smile as he spoke, and whispering a word in her ear, at which I saw her start and color to the eyes, saying

Edward I cannot bear such levity.

Pho pho; then if you won't, another will: Sir, we must be better acquainted. Will you go with my wife to the house where she can get her veil, and say what she desires to say to you, for your manly behaviour to me, after my strange mistake

What mistake Sir?

No matter now will you be so kind as to go with her?

Authorship: A Tale

I hesitated

Or will you stay here and hold my horse?

I would rather stay here and hold your horse but I see little need of that now, said I, piqued at the familiarity of his manner. It was just as if we had been brought up together as if we had known each other at school. Your servant is coming this way.

Is he I am glad of it; he 'll do better.

Sir!

Mary dear; run forward I 'll be with you directly; I must have a word or two with this man he is determined to pick a quarrel with me, any body may see that.

A quarrel! O Sir! I entreat you

Pho pho, Mary, don't be afraid you have nothing to fear. I know the temper of my man; make yourself easy.

What the devil do you mean, Sir?

Pshaw, let her escape first, if you are what I take you to be a gentleman.

I could bear this no longer. Sir, said I, with a very dignified air, I will thank you for your card here is mine. Your behaviour to me is of a nature

To require explanation very true very true; there's my card I know what you mean to say, and there 's what you require an explanation.

I felt rather odd in this part of our dialogue; I began to wish I had been a little more wary; I had even some idea of backing out, and was putting on a superior look for the purpose, when happening to glance at the card which I held in my hand, I forgot myself so far as to read the name aloud

Piper, said I Piper what Piper?

Peter Piper, said he.

I bowed

Peter Piper, he repeated, with a look, which now that I know his true character, appears to me to have been the beaudeal of high comedy. Peter Piper you have heard of him perhaps?

Not that I know of Sir good morning Sir.

No Have you not heard the verses about him?

You are trifling with me Sir!

By no means. Peter Piper picked a peck o' pickled pep

Damnation, Sir

Footnotes

Authorship: A Tale

What 's the matter now?

Are you laughing at me?

I laughing at you Lord bless you, no!

Good morning Sir; you shall hear from me

Pho, pho, don't make a fool of yourself

Sir Sir I will not bear this; I am going away, and if you stop me again, I 'll knock you down.

Will you indeed?

I will indeed

Then I shall not stop you again, though I confess I do not see how you can knock me down, if I do *stop* you.

I say Mr. Peter Piper

Colonel Peter Piper, if you please, Brother Jonathan.

What! I was thuderstruck Who are you!

Who am I who there 's my hand, Sir. I respect you I admire you. Go with me, and while I am teaching you to respect me and admire me to say nothing of my wife I shall do my best, Mr. C H (calling me by my fictitious name) to cure you of some of your follies. Pho pho take my hand, will you?

No.

You 'll wish you had.

Colonel Piper

Faugh! don't behave like a baby.

Colonel Piper, I say

My name is not Piper with a bow.

Not Piper!

No Sir.

Your card says Piper.

Very true

What am I to suppose?

Whatever you please another bow.

Footnotes

Authorship: A Tale

I will bear this no longer. What *is* your name, Sir?

Why a a that depends very much upon circumstances.

Upon circumstances! How so circumstances what do you mean Sir?

Lord Lord! How inquisitive you are considering our short acquaintance.

Fire and fury! what do you mean Sir? I will not be trifled with.

No!

No Sir *no!*

Very well thrusting his hand into his bosom with an air that provoked me beyond expression, though I recoiled a step or two and prepared for the sight of a pistol or a knife. You see that I am provided for whatever may occur lugging out as he spoke, not a knife nor a pistol, but a heap of cards, no two of which appeared to be alike.

Sir, continued I, if you suppose

Pho, pho, keep cool I have a score or two of these about me.

Keep cool?

You do not understand me, I perceive.

Understand you no indeed, who on earth could understand you?

Let me clear up the matter. My name as I have told you before depends pretty much upon circumstances. I have your card in my pocket now, along with forty more that I have picked up much in the same way.

Well

Well if I should happen to meet with anybody else in the humor that I found you in, I shall make use of your card

Make use of my card! How Sir in what way?

Oh, in several ways, but on such an occasion, I should bow as much like you as I could, heave up my chest, and pop your card into his hand.

The devil you would!

Oh yes with a bow that's my way.

I laughed in spite of my wrath. Who are you? said I, what are you? I must know more about you.

Go with me to the house and you shall know more about me.

To that house there?

Authorship: A Tale

No, to my house to the cottage; you are out on a trip to see the country I suppose?

I am

I thought so. Rather a queer kind o' chap

Sir!

And as we have nothing better to do, if you have a day or a week to spare, and will put up with such a dinner, and with such a bed as my wife can give you

Your wife

By the way, what do you think of her?

Oh, by Jupiter, but the man is mad! thought I, when I heard this I am satisfied now.

Pho pho, what are you afraid of? Will you go, or will you not? We have no time to lose; the wind is up you see, and it will be dark before we get home. What say you to the offer, yes or no?

I hesitated. Give me your real name first.

What say you to the name of Molton?

Molton?

Ay, Edward Molton.

Gracious God who are you!

Or if you do not like that, I have two or three more at your service.

Two or three more?

Six or eight more to be made use of according to the part I have to play.

Oh, ho! thought I. Have I trapped you, my gentleman, caught you at last, hey; nothing but a stage-hero. No wonder he is able to carry a joke through, page after page, as if it were a scene out of a play.

For example now, said he, as I drew up what say you to the name of Echo?

Of Echo zounds!

Or of Randolph, or Copely, or Peters, or Harwood?

Who on earth are you?

Don't swear *on earth* I am what you would never guess.

Do you know me?

Authorship: A Tale

Yes.

Have you been over sea?

Yes.

In America, I mean?

Yes.

You stagger me. Perhaps you have been in New-England?

I have.

Bless my heart, when?

About a year ago.

Ah, perhaps you are an American yourself? a native?

Perhaps I am not.

Very well, whatever you are, you have bothered me more than I was ever bothered before, in all my life.

What say you now to my proposal Yes or no?

Yes yes whatever may come of it, yes!

Very well. So much for knowing how to deal with you. You authors are all alike.

Authors

You are to be tickled as we tickle a trout.

And you players are all alike, you are to be dealt with as we deal with a gudgeon.

Players!

Players! you are of the stage, aren't you?

No indeed not of the stage where men *play*.

What are you then?

That's none of your business, my dear Yankee.

What could I do? There was no knocking a man down for a word, which while it was very bitter and very true, might pass for a joke, by the manner in which it was delivered. The question I put was that which a thorough-bred Yankee would have put in the woods of New-England; but then, with him it would have been either the first or the second question after he fell in the way of a stranger, while with me, it was the fiftieth or the hundredth.

CHAPTER X.

THE COTTAGE... MYSTERIES...

Well Mr. C. H., how do you like your room?

Like it Sir

Don't call me Sir, I beg o' you.

What on earth am I to call you? Give me a name to address you by, and I will answer your question.

You will? five to one o' that.

Five to one of what, pray?

Five to one that after I give you a but no matter now; we shall see. What if you call me Piper?

Piper! Would you have me say Piper to any body that I cared for, after the conversation we had yesterday?

Ten to one, if you dare What say you to Copely?

Why do you choose that name; would you keep me in one everlasting fidget while I am with you?

Fifty to one, by Jove. How do you like Edwards?

Fifty to one! what do you mean by that, pray?

You shall know before I have done with you; Edwards may do, for Edward is part of my true name. But softly, softly, you have not said how you like your room it is rather dark to be sure, but I hope you may like it, for Mary has been at work all day fitting it up for you.

Mary what Mary?

My wife it is your room now.

My room now your wife?

Ay to be sure, though you seem to think I have made a mistake perhaps in the phraseology. What's the matter with you don't you like it; rather small I confess, but very snug, put in order for you by Mary herself poor Mary!

Poor Mary I beg your pardon. How do I like it this dear little snug bed-room it *is* a bed-room, hey?

Yes.

Her bed-room?

Our bed-room, if you please.

Oh, your bed-room How do I like it? with that fine old tree there overshadowing the thatched-roof, and the

Authorship: A Tale

grapevines clinging to the little diamond-cut window like a transparent green curtain; how do I like it! Pray did you ever read one of Miss Owenson's books, the *Wild Irish-Girl*, or the *Wild Irish-Boy*, or some such name

Yes.

And don't you remember a passage where somebody says to somebody else (I've a wretched memory for names) that somebody said to her, *How do you like dancing?* whereupon, says the *Wild Irish-Girl*, I could not help thinking of somebody who once asked me how I liked poetry how I *liked* poetry! oh my God. Now poetry is only a sort of a of a of a, I forget how she explains poetry now, but dancing she calls the poetry of motion, adding thereto, Oh what a beautiful idea!

Well

Well!

You have not answered my question yet, my good Sir.

What question?

I asked you five minutes ago how you liked your room.

And I have answered you with a speech of Lady Morgan, while she was overflowing with enthusiasm about the word *like*, and what more would you have?

What more! a direct answer if it were possible to get one out of a real Yankee.

Don't be so absurd as to imagine, I beg of you, that the real Yankee *cannot* answer a question as well as

Will not, you mean that is the charge.

A question as well as another, Mr. Edwards

Ha ha ha! Mr. C. H. But will you be pleased to answer mine?

By the by though, that reminds me of asking you how you came to know my *fictitious* name of C. H.

Just as I know your *real* name as I know that of most people who are in the trade of authorship.

Of authorship! oh ho! thought I of authorship, hey? Cat's out o' the bag now! neither a drawing-master, nor a player. Nothing after all but a retired author, I dare say. God preserve me! a pretty kettle o' fish I've got into. Before the week is over, I shall see a heap of illegible manuscript laid in my way to revise, a tragedy or two, a poem or two, or a novel in three huge volumes, with a desire that I will speak of their faults in detail.

But how, said I, as soon as I could speak, how do you obtain this knowledge about authors and authorship? I had him there I thought.

Another time if you please after tea.

Why not now?

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We are expected below now. Mary is preparing the turf-seat by the door, and you shall have your tea in the open air to-night if you 'll be good. A week more and that pleasure will be done with for the season. Are you ready? I'm only waiting for you.

For me you waiting for me?

I am indeed.

Explain yourself.

After we are below I want my wife to share the joke; we are going to have *such* a laugh

Indeed about what?

About you.

Indeed.

By the by though, as you say, do you remember a joke told by somebody of somebody else, in a book the title of which I forget now (I have a bad memory for names) the latter somebody a countryman of yours, who had been domesticated here, a real native Yankee.

How do I know? What is the story?

Why, the joke is that Mr. A, the Englishman, who knew a good deal of the Yankees, and B, the Yankee, who ought to have known a good deal more of them, had a dispute together touching the habit which I observe in you, of not answering a question except by another question.

In me!

Yes, in you strange as it may appear. Well, Mr. A and Mr. B made a bet. And while they were talking, a native Yankee hove in sight. Now is the time to decide the bet, said A, if you are agreed. With all my heart, said B, and you shall put the question. Agreed. I say, Doctor C, (addressing the other native) what is the reason that the Yankees always answer a question by asking another question? Why *do* they? said Doctor C.

And you put faith in such a story said I, *you* that have been among the native Yankees?

Very fair, just what I said Mr. C. H. You deny the truth of it, I see.

I do it is very improbable, even for a joke; and what is more, though the question was a very adroit one, and calculated to produce any thing but a *yes* or a *no*, I maintain that the people of my country are no worse than the shrewder people of your country, in this matter.

Ah, you have said all that before.

I when where

About a year ago, in Blackwood

Zounds! who are you? It is from Blackwood then that you learned my fictitious name!

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No indeed whatever I may think of Blackwood on other accounts, I would not scruple to trust him with my true name as a contributor, if my life depended on it I will say that for him He is faithful in such matters.

Oh, he 's an author one of the Blackwood school, I'm sure of that now, said I to myself. But he proceeded

So you deny the charge, do you?

Yes, I do.

Beautiful! Do you know that we have been together now for about half an hour; and that during all that time you, *you* yourself, Mr. C. H. have not answered a single question of mine, otherwise than by a question of yours?

Pho pho as you say.

I do not wish to mortify you, but such is the fact.

Mortify!

Yet more; you know the question I put you some minutes ago, about this room; you know I have repeated it over and over again

You are going too far now.

And yet as I live, up to this moment I have had no other answer to that simple query.

Pshaw!

What say you, Mr. C. H., guilty or not guilty?

Pho pho.

Mary!

The door opened and his wife appeared, with her foot just over the threshold.

Why Mary how you blush! What is the matter with you?

I could not see her blush; I could see nothing but the little foot.

Come in you simpleton; why what ails you why do you hesitate?

I looked up and saw her standing just outside of the door, with her head a little advanced.

What are you afraid of come in, will you?

It is not our room now Edward.

No more it is, faith! I beg your pardon, Mr. C. H.; and I beg yours, child. But you hey what you've been crying?

No, Edward.

No! why the tears are in your eyes now.

From laughing then I assure you, not from crying.

So so! laughing at what, dear?

Excuse me.

Pho pho, out with it: you overheard us, did you not?

Yes.

The whole of our dialogue?

Yes but I pray you to explain how and why; do, my dear Edward for I cannot bear to be regarded by Mr. H as a conspirator.

Fiddle de dee! Mr. H will enjoy the joke as much as you do, when you have told him how the matter is. He then proceeded to say that he had entrapped me merely to satisfy his wife that a genuine Yankee could not answer a question or would not. Having been a good while among the Yankees, continued he, I thought proper to tell her the other day that the story you have just heard was no caricature. She regarded it as only a story a mere joke; but I have convinced her now, I hope, that contrive a question as you may, and bait it as you may, you will never catch a bite from a real native.

But surely Madam said I, surely you are not satisfied; you are not going to put faith in such absurdity; you do not mean to give up the point, I hope?

She shook her head.

You do!

I am afraid I must; for to tell you the truth, I a a

Out with it, there 's a dear 't will do him good.

Yes Madam, said I, out with it, I beg of you.

If you will promise to enjoy the joke

I will, Madam, I will! I do.

She looked rather serious; but before we had finished our tea, I was able to keep my word, able to enjoy the joke, for she repeated substantially the very conversation that I have now detailed, and I was so struck with it, and with what she said of my dexterity in avoiding every question, that I took minutes of the dialogue from her own mouth.

But how shall I describe the evening that followed, the days, the week for it was a whole week before I got away, and such a week too! the happiest I had ever spent in my life. And yet, strange as it may appear, when I left them, I knew as little of what I desired to know, as I did the first hour we met on the hill-top. Their very name was a mystery to me their mode of life they saw no company, they appeared to live only for each other. Day after day went by, and though we were apparently at our ease, cordial and free as if we had been brought up together from our very childhood, yet was there a a something about both which troubled me, a sort of acknowledged mystery

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that gave me pain. I felt as if we were not associating on equal terms. They knew me they were even acquainted with my family, he by having met them in America, and she at second-hand, by hearing what he said of them. Of course therefore, as I did not know them as they told me over and over again with what was intended for a smile, though it was any thing but a smile, that I never should know them as they knew me, I felt in their company very much as a man would feel, if he were thrown with his face uncovered, among a party of masked people; who whatever he might say, would not be persuaded to unmask, and who while they journeyed with him side by side over the familiar paths and among the every-day scenery of life, with not only their faces but their hearts in shadow, were always contriving to lead him toward the light, where they could try experiments upon him in every possible way, and watch the changes of his countenance the while, without fear and without risk.

You are not well, said the woman to me I wish I might call her Mary I cannot bear the name of Edwards now. Mrs. Edwards! no faith, I would as lief call a creature that I loved a lady, as we do every thing that wears a cap or is intended to wear a cap in America. How 's your *lady* to-day? I have heard one retail shopkeeper say to another in the republican parts of my country, and a bit of a haberdasher's boy talk by the hour together of the *ladies* whom he saw at such or such a singing-school or dancing-school, and both it may be, while they were laughing at the free negroes, for making a similar inquiry of each other. You are not well I am sure, said she, laying her dear little hand upon my arm as she spoke (N. B. her husband was there) and throwing aside a little cap that she had been at work upon by stealth, every day and almost every hour since I had been at the cottage.

Where 's your guitar child what say you to a little music, Mr. H?

You are very kind Sir, but and here I made a full stop.

Sir, again!

Well well

I am very kind, but what

I know she plays well and I never enjoyed any music half so much in my life, as I do that strange little serenade of hers; but some how or other, I do not feel to-night, as if as if as if I in short, I beg your pardon I don't know what I was going to say

That 's your fault Mary

My fault! how so

Do you see where your hand is? It was on my arm.

Ah

Pho pho, why do you snatch it away?

Really, I do not know

And you did not know I dare say, that your hand was there?

No indeed, I forgot myself some how Mr. H. has been with us so long now

So *long!* said I.

Very civil to be sure added her husband.

You know what I mean, Edward you distress me; you know that with some people we get acquainted in a few hours and you know that since we have had Mr. H. with us, we have been as much together as we should have been perhaps in a whole year of common acquaintance of such acquaintance Edward, as we look for at Ba

Mary!

So that in a word, continued the wife with a look of embarrassment, I feel toward Mr. H. as if I had known him a great while, and just now, on seeing him look so serious, to tell you the truth Edward, I forgot myself

Very fair

I mistook him for you, I mean

Better still.

No no, I beseech you Edward; no no, it is unkind of you to tease me in this way. *You* do not feel, nor do I nor do you wish me to feel as if I had known him only a week.

Nor have we known him for only a week, child. We had a pretty thorough knowledge of his character before we saw him.

Before you saw me, said I in astonishment. How in what way?

By two or three of your mad novels. Mary, do you remember asking me if Mr. H. really was a

Edward Edward you are going too far.

Pho pho, I 'll tell you how that was, Mr. H. About a year after I saw you in the Abbey, I discovered who you were, and having already met with some of your mad rigmorole stories don't bow in America, two of which I had brought away, I went home to my wife and told her that I had seen you; that I had found out *who you were*, and that you were the veritable author of , the only book of the whole that I was ever able to get through with.

How *can* you say so, Edward!

It is very true upon my soul, dear; but I say though, Mr. H. I never shall forget her look when I told her that I had found out who you were. Well now *is* he crazy? said she.

For shame, Edward

For shame! why so can you deny it?

She made no reply; but endeavoured to change the conversation, so that I could perceive how the matter was.

And so, you really thought me crazy? said I.

She hesitated, and struck the guitar and made up her mouth for a song.

I know you did; but still I should like to know what led you to form that opinion.

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She smiled. If you are quite serious and will take what I say, in the humor which appears natural to you for to-night you are so altered by your gravity, one hardly knows how to speak before you I will confess the truth.

Do, Madam, do you will gratify me very much.

Perhaps not. She then proceeded to inform me that when they first saw me in the Abbey they both agreed in believing me to be crazy my step the look of my eyes, the manner in which I darted by them at the door, with my hat off and my hair tumbled up in a very odd sort of a way, with the wind blowing through it; oh, it was quite impossible to mistake such symptoms, and they even went so far as to ask the verger why he had let me in; but he excused himself, it appeared, by saying that I passed him in a great hurry, when it was rather dark and before he observed my face. He agreed with them however in supposing me a little touched or so, and promised to keep a better look out for the future.

And so, said I, the fear that I observed in you, instead of being the fear of a of a a a but proceed, I beg of you.

Well, when I heard that you were the author of and of which my husband had brought with him from your country, and which we saw clearly were the works of a madman, there was no more to be said we had no hope left.

And pray, said I, what is your opinion of me now now that you have known me a whole week do you think me crazy or not?

She laughed, and was going to lay her hand on my arm again I do believe, but she stopped and smiled as I repeated the question What say you, crazy or not?

A le-ee-eetle, as you say in America a leetle, I do believe.

Faith, but you have a pretty way of entertaining our guest, Mary, said her husband. You have touched him, Is ee. You have made him more serious than ever.

Very true said I, very true as I ran over the history of my own thoughts concerning the people before me. Very true, as you say; what blockheads we are! And so the beautiful theory I spun the fair hypothesis I wove, while I stood in the niche of the Abbey as they swept by me of what value is it now? a theory that I prided myself so much upon, for never theory was half so clear; an hypothesis which oh, never was any hypothesis half so satisfactory. Of about as much value as the cobwebs that were spun there at the same time.

The niche of the Abbey what niche?

Why, a little dark niche, where I stood when you two passed me before I saw you at the door; you were lingering behind all the rest of the company, and you must have thought yourselves quite alone, I am sure

Why so pray? proceed Mary!

Neither of you spoke and your why, bless me! but I begin to believe my dear Madam, that you *are* a conspirator.

A conspirator! she repeated in a fluttering voice, and with a change of look that surprised me.

Yes you are so pale now

CHAPTER XI.

INVESTIGATIONS... DOMESTIC SCENES... AUTHORSHIP IN ENGLAND... EDITORSHIP EVERYWHERE.

She did not *speak* you say? continued her husband, rather eagerly.

No.

Nor I? more eagerly but with affected carelessness.

No.

Very well proceed. What was your theory; and why is it of no value now?

Oh, it is only one of a multitude of errors into which I have been led by you and her. Every time you open your mouths, I have a new theory to explain the why and the wherefore.

Indeed

You are both a puzzle and a mystery as as

As somebody says somewhere hey?

Precisely.

But we are curious to know what you thought of us when you saw us in the Abbey.

Oh, I drew your character on the spot Sir, and yours too, Madam; how you *will* enjoy the joke, when you come to know what it was! I attributed the trepidation that I saw in your looks, and the deep anxiety that I saw in yours, my dear Sir, to a to a I beg your pardon, but I I

Pho pho, continue to speak out as you have been speaking hitherto *freely*.

With all my heart, if you will continue to look as you have been looking hitherto *cheerful*. But you are getting serious, very serious, and your wife too. She is no longer the same woman.

You attributed our behaviour, my anxiety, and her trepidation to what?

Why, to a fear of your being discovered together, ha, ha, ha

Ha, ha ha! very droll to be sure. Mary!

Edward

Very droll, to be sure ha ha .

Very

It never entered my head believe me, added I, that you mistook me for a madman

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We do believe you

Or else I might have been able to account for your behaviour when you saw me, in some other way.

Undoubtedly said he, with a very inquisitive look, which I thought he appeared rather anxious to turn off with a smile.

What blockheads we are though! continued I, and then I proceeded to describe the whole of my conjectures in the Abbey; but I observed that when I spoke of the suspicion I had of their not being man and wife, she appeared very uneasy. And they interchanged a look together which troubled me.

In a word, you see what I have come hither for

Well Sir and what *have* you come hither for? said the man, starting up as if I had avowed some treachery.

Edward Har for God's sake dear recollect yourself!

I do I do

I have come hither said I, with a determination to know who and what you are.

The woman looked at me, and grew very pale; and he appeared to gather himself up for something serious.

I wish you *would* tell me who you are, continued I.

He looked me full in the face for half a minute or so, before he spoke, and then offering me one hand with a free courteous air, and laying the other on his wife's shoulder he replied No no, you 'll put us in a book if we do.

In a book zounds! I 'll put you in a book if you don't!

Very well that you may do and welcome.

No no, dear no no, said his wife.

Fiddle de dee, sixpence! What have we to fear in a cottage like this not a mile from the sea, and a bridge over it when we desire to escape

Edward!

To *escape*? said I.

To escape notoriety, I mean

Of course, what other escape *could* you mean! I added, with a growing desire to know the truth, a desire which at last became quite insupportable to me.

I will bear this no longer said I I must know more of you; or I must leave you, much as I like you both.

Very fair. Did you not undertake to be satisfied with what you already knew of us if you could not know more, when you were first invited over my threshold.

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Yes but

And did I not tell you that we saw no company that we had no neighbours that our cottage was in a nook of the hills that our very name was not a real name and that our only servant could not speak a word of English

Very true but

And did I not say, that in begging you to stop at our cottage for a week, I was doing that which, if you knew the whole truth, would prove to you that we set a high value on your good opinion? Did I not say moreover that I urged you to come, altogether on account of my wife, who having heard so much of America, was curious to see a tame natyve? and did I not say, over and over again, that if you could not be satisfied with such fare, and with knowing little more of us at the end of the week, than you knew at the beginning, you had better not go aside from your way?

You did you did but I took it for granted that you did so, only to irritate my curiosity. You know a good deal of authors enough to know that nothing stimulates one of the trade like mystery mystery about any thing.

Very true.

Perhaps you know more of authors and of authorship than you are willing to acknowledge?

Perhaps I do.

Perhaps you are a bit of an author yourself?

Perhaps I am.

Well if I did n't think so!

I a bit of an author! Well done Yankee; ha, ha, ha!

I beg your pardon; I took you for one.

You took me for a player only a week ago.

Very true.

I a bit of an author! And here he broke out into a hearty though rather strange laugh.

The woman herself appeared to enjoy the joke; and after a short pause I ventured to repeat the query in a more available shape. You *are* an author and after a pause are you not? said I. Come come, what are you afraid of? between friends, you know. It 's a lawful trade enough, though a beggarly one.

How a beggarly one?

I pray you to observe Madam the conspirator that he does not answer *my* questions now.

I do observe it, she replied, the water sparkling in her eyes now that our feud was over.

I wish you would answer *me*, are you not an author?

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No, I am not.

You have been, perhaps?

No but I will own that I had a wish to be an author, and that I began to scribble with a hope which I clung to He grew very serious here, and the color flashed over his fine forehead with a hope which I clung to as a mother would cling to her first-born. It was the man-child of my youth. My heart was heaving with ambition Sir, and God knows what I might have done, if I had met with a little aid in the outset of my headlong career. But I met with none Sir no aid, no help, no courtesy, no sympathy. I was put aside for blockheads who were better known I had to deal as I could with booksellers, and to negotiate as I could with booksellers' clerks. I had to endure the judgment of editors, who cared for nobody whose hand-writing and whose name were not familiar to them. In short Sir I could not bear the trials of authorship, I could not endure the mortifications that authors are made to endure so long as they are not popular; and I threw up the pen for a for a for a prouder and a sharper weapon

Oh the sword I thought so.

He took no notice of the remark, but proceeded. I agree with you. Authorship *is* a beggarly trade, and beggarly, not so much on account of the pay, though no author can possibly earn so much in a year, as any one of a multitude of shopkeepers, mechanics, and professional men may do, while the majority of authors are kept in a condition more pitiable than that of a clerk not so much on account of the pay, as on account of the mode of dealing to which they are subjected. They live from hand to mouth all men of genius do and of course they are eternally in debt. And authors having a sensibility in proportion to their genius, are prodigal of their money when they have it never hoarding it up, and of course are for ever at the mercy of literary by-bidders. They are always working for a dead horse they feel keenly they never endure a slight, unless it be to escape dishonor, and therefore too, they are always at the mercy of a scoundrel tradesman, who when he wishes to defraud an author, is quite sure to succeed if he can either put him in a passion, or provoke him to a display of magnanimity. God! how I suffered, before I had the courage to do what I see now that I ought to have done years and years before!

And what was that, pray? He got up as he finished, and paced the room with a look of sorrow combined with irresistible determination.

Dear Edward! whispered his beautiful wife, staying him as he strode by, with a look of dismay and perplexity, and leaning with her whole weight upon his arm, and as he stooped over, putting her mouth to his forehead, with an expression of something more than love it was piety.

Sir, continued he, after struggling with her a moment or two, Sir, I have waited whole weeks for a few pounds that were due me from an editor who had solicited me to work for him whole weeks, I assure you, when he was wasting the money that belonged to his betrayed contributors and that woman there was languishing on a sick-bed a deathbed, we believed then. We were in want of the necessaries of life, Sir my health had given way under the toil which he had imposed upon me I could neither eat nor sleep, such was the state of anxiety into which writing for him had thrown me. If I heard a knock at the door, it sounded through my heart I had lost all confidence in myself; I grew nervous I doubted whether I was writing English I could not write so much in a whole week as I had written with ease in half a day, before I took to writing for a trade.

Upon my soul, I replied, the picture you draw is enough to give any body the heart-ache; you are unjust in your general remarks, but there is so much truth in what you say of your own feelings, that you force my mind back to a period of like suffering, which well nigh drove me mad.

Ah, but how little you know of the misery, the abject *heavy* misery of authorship. You are a lucky author

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I a lucky author! God forgive you.

Yes, yes your books are read.

Query

And you are paid for what you write.

Am I? I 'll tell you what it is; I have written more than any man of my age that ever lived, I dare say; and altogether, I have not received so much money, as I have known to be made by the compiler of a story–book for grown people or of a school–book for children.

Indeed

Ay, and what is more. The publishers have made out no better than I.

You are merry.

Not at all. I defy an author to be merry on such a theme.

Well Sir, continued he, to proceed with my catalogue; I have written paper after paper for the magazines, which I could never get returned when they were rejected, till I had written for them, or called for them, or sent for them over and over again; nor paid for when accepted, till I had quarrelled the money out of the editors or the publishers

Upon my word, you have been very unlucky. For my part, I have always been paid, and well paid, for magazinework, though to be sure I have had some delay and some trouble in two or three cases, where I had expected a promptitude, a delicacy, and a punctuality, such as I had been accustomed to on the part of you know whom.

Blackwood, I suppose. You have done with him now I hear.

Yes, and he with me just now; but I have a crow to pick with him one of these days. I like his journal it is quite a prodigy in its way, full brimful to riot and uproar of young and vigorous life a paper that has no equal for one kind of writing the bold and familiar. He has a plenty of courage too he has published for me what no other magazine–proprietor in the three kingdoms would have dared to publish. It was with him that I began my career in this country he always paid me fairly and promptly, and sometimes liberally and I would have died to serve either him or his paper; I did nearly die once for I dropped out of my chair while I was re–writing an article for him which he had accepted, and which, as on account of its great length he could not immediately publish it, he had sent to me to look at again before it appeared, if I thought proper; and I grew so nervous at one time, that I did not sleep for a week nay, not for three weeks as an honest man should sleep and yet, notwithstanding all this, I have done with what he calls *The Maga*.

Ah, but you have had no wife to glancing at *Mary* to trouble you, or you could not speak in this way of magazine–writing.

Very true no wife to trouble me.

Delay is death Sir, at such a time.

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I believe it, and worse than death, if you know that while she is dying, the money that you have earned by her sick-bed, has been lavished by a profligate upon the pleasures of a profligate.

Pho pho, as you say. You are speaking too bitterly; and you have been too easily discouraged. Let me tell you what I have had to endure I, whom you regard, as a fortunate author; and see if you do not feel more charitably disposed toward that class of slave-drivers, who in this country are called editors. You do not consider what they have to endure. You overlook their suffering. Their character is in issue twelve times a year, if they superintend a magazine; four times a year if it be a quarterly. Think too of the loads of paper they have to ransack, of the caprice and selflove and obstinacy of their chief contributors; of the *lengthiness* and talkativeness and repetition of new contributors who are paid by the acre; of the consistency which they are bound to keep up in some degree throughout a number at least, if not a volume; and of the irreconcilable views that men are pretty sure to have upon a subject, when they have each a reputation at stake; and how unwilling such men are to be trimmed away and fitted and jointed and dove-tailed by other people. Think too of the multitude of friends and acquaintances who are always waiting to be served first, and who are only to be served by a sacrifice of principle or character, nine times out of ten. Think too of the friends' friends, who are eternally in the way of an editor introduced by nobody knows whom, as people worthy of patronage for charity-sake.

Ah Sir, I begin to perceive that an editor has no such easy life.

Easy life! no indeed were I an editor I would have nothing to do with a paper, if it came in the hand-writing of any body that I personally knew; for why pay such a price for literary ware, if it will not secure you a choice of the market?

Very true.

Think too of the multitude more, who on the strength of a half-hour's acquaintance over a dinner-table, expect to be received as the familiar friends of an editor, if they choose to trouble him with one of their insupportable visits. Oh, my dear Sir talk of the miseries of authorship! they are nothing to the miseries of editorship! An author may go where he likes, and write where he likes, but an editor is for ever at work in the same spot, like a squirrel in a cage or an author in a tread-mill.

A very pretty comparison.

Very, and then to have to deal with men of the same trade is of itself a misery; to have to judge their work is yet worse, to say nothing of reading it but if you are an author, and are to judge the work of authors the most irritable creatures on earth, your misery is complete.

Upon my word, Mr. C. H., you appear to feel every word you say.

I *do* feel every word I say. An author has no bowels for an editor. If the editor is an author, like Mr. Campbell for example, he is thought to be guided by jealousy whatever he may do, when it is fifty to one, that being aware of what may be said of him by a brother chip, he would go out of his way to speak *more* favorably of him than he deserved. And if he is not an author like Mr. Jeffry for example they regard him as not qualified to judge. Write a book yourself Sir, they say, before you pretend to judge of our books.

You are making out a good case for the people that I have hitherto regarded as the very drones of literature.

And then, my dear Sir to have to be answerable for the vices and errors, not only of yourself but of every body who may happen to write for you

Authorship: A Tale

And with a perfect knowledge, that if a blunder be made by the author he will never speak of it, while made by you, he will be sure to proclaim it wherever he goes; and that if by one of your allowed emendations a very ticklish thing for you to make by the way, if your man be much in favor with the public, or if you are disposed to do more than cross a *t*, or dot an *i* for him you have got him out of a scrape, or have made him say a very brilliant, a very wise, or a very beautiful thing which had never entered his head but for you, he will be sure to have the credit of it, and equally sure to drop never a word about your agency; while if you should happen to mistake a favorite word of his, or spoil a joke, or mismate a bad antithesis or two, whether in reading the proof or in spelling the manuscript, you know that if you should live a century you would never hear the last of it.

Preserve me from all editorship!

How devoutly you say that, my dear Edward, whispered Mary, with an arch look that appeared to have a deal of meaning in it, for he shook his finger at her and bade her be quiet, and she put up her lip, so like a child, that I could have kissed her for it upon my word I could. So! thought I so so! he may know more about editorships after all than I do who knows? That woman was a very odd creature by the by. She told me herself one day when we were together among the trees with a sky overhead and about us bluer than I ever saw before, and the sea before us like eternity, that she knew not which predominated in her character, the child, the woman, or the man. But I could have told her She had the courage and thought of a man, the heart and the look of a beautiful, high-spirited superior woman, the tricks of a child I do not mean of your every-day child, but of a dear, simple-hearted, pure and loving child with a brow all of wisdom a lip all of love, and the carriage of a something made of all three, so that each preponderated at times, and neither for a long time. But to my story

Preserve me from all editorship, said he.

How devoulty you say that, answered she.

Very much as if you were praying to escape the governorship of another Barrataria, answered I

But go on with your plea, added Mr. Edwards N. B. I can bear to call him Edwards, though I cannot bear to call his wife so.

Very well, said I and then to have to read so much that you have read forty times before, so much that you are pleased with, you know not why—when you come to see the proof— and so much that you are weary of, you know not why, till you are called upon to pay for it. And then after all, to be pursued by disappointed authors and bored by successful ones to say nothing of the neuter people, who are accepted occasionally, just enough to keep them in a state of perpetual bad humor with you; and then to be obliged to say civil things on a bit of paper not five inches square, to every body that you refuse to trade with, lest he may call you out, or attack you in some blackguard paper of the day, or show you up in a book or throw himself into a horse-pond for your sake oh you have no idea, I tell you again, of the miseries of editorship.

I begin to believe you; but now for the miseries of authorship: you have had your full share it would seem

That I have; but hear my story and judge for yourself. When I left America, it was in the hope

Here I was interrupted by a knock at the door, and I stopped not so much on account of the knock, though it was the first I had heard for better than five days in the deep, green solitude where they had concealed the cottage, as on account of the behaviour of the man, who rose I thought with a look of more than usual anxiety, and stood as if debating with himself whether to go to the door or not.

I did not hear the dog Mary, did you?

Authorship: A Tale

No, she replied no it is very strange.

Very, dear; but we have been so occupied you know, that if she had barked, we might not have heard her. God bless me, it is very odd

Hark hark that's her growl, I am sure.

I am not so sure Mary; I do not much like this

Pho pho, said I, what are you afraid of, in such a spot of earth a little green island walled about by the sea, and guarded by mighty ships

He made no reply he did not even hear me; but stood listening at the door, with his hand upon a huge bolt.

If you do not like to open the door, I will, said I.

His wife caught her breath and gave me such a look that, if my life had been at issue, I could not have opened the door. I was actually frightened my strength and courage were gone a terrible idea passed over my heart, one which I have no power to describe, and I recoiled from her beauty as if I knew that she was what I dare not mention. But before I could resolve how to proceed with her, the knock was repeated.

Ah, we have nothing to fear now, said he, I know that knock. It is our friend Fontleroy a person whom I had met with not long before, and who had attracted my attention by his extraordinary resemblance to Napoleon Bonaparte. As he spoke, he threw open the door, and the individual that I had seen a small dark, middle-aged man, with a mild serious air, and great dignity of carriage, entered the room. Well, are you ready, or am I to wait for you now, said the stranger and then he stopped short he stopped, for he saw me, and appeared to be a good deal surprised.

Mr. C. H., a particular friend of ours from America said the man-without-a-name, at my elbow.

From America! repeated the stranger with a subdued voice, bowing very low to me, and then saying to Edwards with a sort of smile which I did not much like Are you ready? we have no time to lose. You are not in America now.

All ready I have been waiting for you was the reply; we expected you three days ago and I had nearly given up the idea.

You had!

Yes then turning to his wife he added Mary, love!

She went up to him and threw her arms about his neck, and put her mouth to his and clung to him before me and before the stranger and before two or three people that I saw outside, not as if he and she were parting for a few hours, but as if they were parting for a twelvemonth, or a long voyage, if not for ever.

How is the wind? he added in a whisper, as the new-comer made a signal to somebody outside.

Fair as it can blow, answered a rough voice at the door.

Ay ay, Sir, an' beautiful dark, dark as Egypt with a blow astarn Sir 'll sweep us over the way, like a shot from a twoan'-forty pounder.

Be still Sir

Bear up Mary, bear up I shall be back before you know it I must leave you now farewell, Mr. C. H., farewell. If I should not come back so soon as I hope, Mary will entertain you pho pho Mary, pho pho don't make a fool of me. Good by dear good by Sir.

The next moment they were gone; the cottage was still as death, and I was left who could have imagined such a thing a few days before left alone with the very woman that I would have put my life in jeopardy to see.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SMUGGLER... THE PIRATE... A SURPRISE.

It would not be easy to describe the embarrassment which followed the departure of Edwards I knew not which way to look, nor what to say. And every moment I grew more and more incapable of doing what, if I had not felt like a great lubberly boy, I should have done at once I should have entered into a free conversation with the beautiful creature at my side, just as if nothing had happened. I *should* have done this but how could I? I felt every moment that I ought to have done it at first, and that the sooner I did it, the better it would be for both of us nay, that if I had done it but a single moment before, it would have been easier to do and better to do than it ever would again while I breathed; and yet, as I live, I could not open my mouth, nor command voice enough to say a single word.

But if I suffered so much, what must have been her suffering? If I had no courage to speak, what must have been the state her mind? She saw by my altered manner she knew by my very silence, that my opinion of her was altered. She saw that the mysterious behaviour of the two men troubled me, and that I was occupied as I had never been before, while she was near me. And well she might: for never had I been so occupied before. She was on trial for a matter of life and death and I was her judge. I understood her thoughts I understood them by her look, her attitude, her very breathing. I could hear a low, half-smothered sob every minute or two, as she sat with her side toward me, and though I did not look at her, and would not speak to her, I could perceive that she was at work on the little cap at work on it before my face, though whenever she had touched it before, it had been by a sort of stealth: I could perceive too that she was in a fair way to spoil it, that she did not know what she was about, nor see what she had in her hands; that she did not look up, and that every now and then she caught her breath and changed her position to hide it. Shall I confess the truth? I took a pleasure in the idea of her spoiling that cap; let others determine why, if they are able.

What was I to do? Should I go up to her as a brother would go to a dear sister, and pray her to tell me the meaning of what I saw pray to her, not with my lips upon her forehead of snow, as I might if she were my sister but with tears in my eyes? Or should I go up to her in my true character, and say Woman of beauty! woman of power! in the name of the Most High God, clear yourself! Woman thought you are married to another, you are very dear to me. I love you I began to love you the first hour I saw you, would love you to my dying day, with all my heart and soul; and to show you that my love is not such as you ought to be offended with, lo! I am going away from you for ever! I mean to avoid you for the rest of my life. Put faith in me, I beseech you! Believe me when I say that I would not have named the name of love to you, were I not going where I shall never see you more, and did I not hope to persuade you by such proof, to the doing of that which will make not only you but your husband love and revere my memory. I beseech you to put faith in me; I beseech you to clear up the riddle that I saw; I beseech you to let me go away from you with a feeling which, whatever may become of me, will make you and him proud of having trusted me. Should I do this, or should I take my hat and walk out of the house never interchanging another word with her who had entrapped me, I now began to believe into a I must own the truth into a den of smugglers.

Authorship: A Tale

Before I had half determined which of the three courses to pursue, my hat was on my head I never knew how it got there and I was moving toward the door.

You are not going to leave me? said the woman. I stopped. I turned toward her. I saw her face the work had dropped out of her hands, her lips were apart, and she sat as if she had no hope left on earth.

Leave you! said I I saw that I could not leave her in such a mood, without saying farewell to her. No no I could not; her voice, though to another it would have been almost inaudible, I dare say, sounded to me like low sweet music and thrilled through and through me appearing to issue not from her lips, but from her heart, and affecting me like the prayer of one who had a right to say to me with a look of reproach, You are *not* going to leave me?

Leave you, said I I must leave you.

True true I know that, I acknowledge it I

Farewell, Madam

No no not now! we have need of you now; we cannot do without you now

Need of me! cannot do without me! said I all at once recollecting the fate of Weare, a poor fellow who had been decoyed a little time before, into the house of men who for the little that he had, put him to death; was I to be betrayed by a woman? was I to find another Thurthill in the wretch who had a my thoughts were checked by her answer

No Sir, no I am sorry that he ever saw you: I would give any thing in the world Sir, if you had not become what you are what you are likely to be to us now

And what is that? I asked, with a feeling of considerable anxiety.

Our hope, our stay, our only refuge on earth.

Why, really Madam, it would appear that I have been decoyed hither to serve a

Decoyed!

Yes Madam *decoyed*

Perhaps it may be so; perhaps at another time, I might be ready to acknowledge the truth of what you say; but just now you will excuse me, I hope; and you will forgive me if I say that I would rather be left alone here to abide the issue she said this with a look of dismay quite alone, Sir rising, and standing before me with an air of unspeakable dignity altogether alone Sir, than have such things uttered before me in the absence of my husband.

Of your husband.

Of my husband Sir. A long pause followed, which I contrived to break at last by saying

Are you really married to that man?

Good God Sir what can possess you!

Authorship: A Tale

Will you forgive me, if I repeat the question? Oh, you know not how much you have at stake your agitation your paleness your ah no! you need not answer me; I see how it is. Farewell.

Stop Sir. Hear what I have to say, after which you will do as you think proper. You have already mistaken my dear husband for a player an author a drawing-master and a

And a smuggler, added I between my shut teeth adding thereto what I meant for a look of astonishing sagacity.

And a what!

A smuggler, said I, planting my foot and breathing as I never breathed before, in the presence of a lovely woman.

A smuggler! she repeated, standing up face to face with me, her haughty lip curling with a bitter smile, and her dark eyes flashing fire A smuggler! Why, what on earth do you take us for?

A smuggler Madam, or a a

She turned as pale as death, and I stopped.

Or a what Sir God forgive you!

I mustered all my strength in reply.

Or a pirate Madam.

A pirate Sir! A pirate within the four seas of England! Oh there is no help for you! she added, with a look such as I hope never to see again while I have breath in my body. I would rather die than deserve such a look. It was made up of sorrow, of pity, and of surprise. No help for you no hope for you! You are all alike. I never knew an author who was not for ever on the watch for conspiracies or catastrophes. People dare not move nor speak before you, lest they should be worked up into some frightful story. I wonder you are not afraid to go to sleep no matter how sleepy you may be with your habit of authorship. I wonder you have the courage to eat I wonder you are a

Farewell Madam.

Farewell Sir; but before you go, I beg you to hear what I have to say, although it should happen to disagree with your plot for a book. *We are* married.

Are married, Madam! very well Madam; but were you married for that 's the true question after all were you married when I saw you in Westminster-Abbey?

We were.

The devil you were! not a rag of my theory left!

Sir!

Not a rag! Away goes the very foundation of a tale that I have been at work upon for three years.

Foundation tale are you mad?

All but finished a story worth five hundred pounds, if not more.

Authorship: A Tale

She drew back with a proud step. She measured me from head to foot with a slow motion of her eyes her large beautiful eyes and for a minute or two she appeared to be choking. But by and by she recovered her composure, and they grew steady of themselves I thought, and rested upon mine, so that I so that I felt as if as if in short, I could not look up. I knew they were upon me I knew they were very bright and clear prouder than ever, and lighted up from their depth as it were, with an expression of severe and awful integrity.

Your behaviour is very strange you do not deserve a reply another in my case another alone with you as I am, apart and away from succor, might be afraid of you. But I am not I know you better than you suppose.

Alone! You speak as if you were indeed alone.

I speak as I feel Sir.

Your servants are they not enough to guard you?

We have no servants. The boy is away and the poor girl that I had, has gone back to her mother. She was afraid to remain here. She could not sleep for the noise of the sea.

What am I to do? Would you have me stay with you till your husband gets back?

Yes for my only hope is in you.

Your only hope!

The only hope I have on earth.

Explain yourself. What can I do for you? When do you expect him?

Before midnight. Have you the courage to stay with me till pointing to a clock in the passage, with a playful air the *courage* to stay with me till the hand that you see there points at twelve?

Perhaps I may; but how am I to justify myself to you for what I have said? How happens it I pray, that you are already appeased? Why do you not reproach me for what I have done?

Because I know you.

Me you you know me?

Perhaps you had better take off your hat, and hear what I have to say with less of a tragedy–air.

Upon my soul Madam every word you speak reminds me of somebody that I have seen before you smile but when or where I do not know. Ah bless me have I *not* seen you before?

You have.

But when where

Three years ago in Westminster–Abbey

Nay nay how can you trifle with me at such a time; you that know so little of me

Authorship: A Tale

So little of you! why Sir, I know more of you than any body alive except your sister your twin-sister.

Gracious God! who are you?

Nay nay you a novel-writer, and a-tiptoe to anticipate a catastrophe!

I had seen you surely surely I had, before I saw you in the Abbey; had I not?

And if you had, Mr , not Mr. C. H. but Mr. , lowering her voice to a whisper and uttering another name! I was thunderstruck. She had called me by my true name by the only name that I was *not* known by there, of the multitude which at one time or another I had made use of in Europe. If you had, how poor a compliment you pay me now by not being able to say where.

I beseech you, said I do not drive me crazy who are you? what are you? If it is true that I had seen you before I saw you in the Abbey, how wonderful that I should not remember where. And if I never did see you before that day, how wonderful that I should feel toward you as I do that I should feel as if I had known you years and years ago, in some other part of the world.

You were in this country about seven years ago ah you are beginning to perceive the truth, I see

To perceive the truth! no madam far from it, further from it than ever.

Were you not here?

I was I was; but nobody knew it. I came hither in a shape and with a name that I threw off on the passage back. I did not know I did not believe that a creature upon the face of our earth was able to say what you have now said to me to name that name which I have kept hitherto, as a proud man would keep the secret of his overthrow, or as a proud woman the secret of her dishonor.

I believe you

But how came you possessed of the knowledge?

Are you very sure that when you threw off the shape you speak of, there was nobody alive to betray you?

Quite sure my own people did not know whither I had gone. They hardly missed me, before I had come back to their fire-sides.

Nobody not so much as *one* that you trusted your secret with?

Nobody and yet yet as I live gracious God! it cannot be! Are you the woman that I saw in the coach, on my way from Litchfield to Birmingham? You smile you appear to know to what I allude

Stop a moment. You shall see.

Here she got up, and going to a desk that lay open before us, brought forth a paper which I recognised immediately for a leaf that I had torn out of a book, full eight years before, to give to a female I saw in the coach on my way from Litchfield cathedral to Birmingham. The whole affair ran over my memory like a stream of light. It was on the Sabbath day late in the afternoon. I did not see her face till it was too dark for me to distinguish her features, and she was so muffled up that I could not see whether she was well made or not; but that she was young I knew by the very sound of her voice, and by the smooth motion of her neck that she was very beautiful; and that

Authorship: A Tale

she was dying of untold sorrow, perhaps of a broken heart, I judged by the low sweet music of that voice which had haunted me till now.

And you are you indeed the poor creature that I saw there? said I. How happy I am to meet with you alive once more! You have no idea how you interested me I would have risked my life to serve you, without asking to see your face, or to know your name.

I believe you I am sure of it she replied with fervor. God bless you for it! and her eyes filled with tears, and she sat looking at me, as if it made her happy to show that she did believe me.

So so the mystery begins to be cleared up. I begin to perceive now, why it was that I never could recollect where I had known you, while your voice kept sounding in my ear with a familiar sound. I perceive too why it is that the slow graceful motion of your head I beg your pardon

Oh Sir! you know not how I have reproached myself since that day for not having followed your advice. But how could I? You were a stranger to me; yet worse you were a man I a mere child, with no more knowledge of man's nature than I had been able to pick up out of a religious novel or two, the only works of fiction I was ever permitted to see, though I languished for an opportunity to know why it was that every thing in the shape of a novel was so much to be feared by a young woman

Proceed, I entreat you

I will I will with great emotion I will; for I wish you to know that if I be not altogether what you believe me to be I beg your pardon I I it may be owing perhaps a a in part, in some degree perhaps, to the ill-judged severity of my poor mother who a a excuse me

There there, don't speak another word now; wait a moment you will be more composed in a minute or two.

Forgive me, I beseech you I I really I do not know what I was going to say.

CHAPTER XIII.

RELIGIOUS NOVELS... AUTHORSHIP... EXTRAVAGANCE.

You were going to say that all you knew of man's nature had been gathered from the religious novels you spoke of

True true. Well, they taught me that men are never to be trusted never by any body, and least of all by a woman; that they are to be avoided by her in every case, but especially in sorrow and above all, if she be inexperienced, with no father, no brother, nobody on earth to advise her in short whenever she has most need of their sympathy and finds most comfort in their society.

Fools! Do they not know that women dare not speak freely to women, where from the very nature of woman she is obliged to speak freely or die? Do they not know that in her deepest grief, in her heaviest calamity, it *may* be safer and better for a woman to put faith in a stranger by the wayside, than it would be to put faith in her bosom-friend, if that friend were a female safer than it would be to trust her own daughter yea, her own sister yea, her own mother!

Oh Sir. You know not how true your words are how terribly true; they are enough to break my heart.

Authorship: A Tale

Fools, fools! Do they not know will they never know that while every thing tends to make man betray man, woman, woman jealousy rivalry the hatred of competitorship, every thing to make woman a severe judge of woman, man of man, do they not know, will they never see that every thing tends to make woman faithful to man, every thing to make man faithful to woman

Every thing!

Yes every thing, save that childish vanity of his, which if it be not swallowed up in joy that he has been found worthy of being trusted by her, may do her faith as much wrong as that other vanity of the female ever could

Oh no, there is no trusting to man's love.

Love madam! who spoke of love? When I say faith, I mean faith I do not mean love. I am not talking poetry. We are treacherous to you in our love, and so are you to us, in your love; but few women would ever betray a man, fewer men a woman, who put faith in their probity or their courage as a friend.

I believe you

Madam, you may believe me. What I say to you, I say seriously. I know much of man, more of woman for women have been my peculiar study for years, my delight ever since I had the courage to believe them good by nature and capable of being whatever we would have them be; and I declare to God, that I would not scruple to trust my life, or a secret that concerned my life, to the keeping of almost any woman that I ever saw even as I did with you. I have known a score, who like you even if they distrusted me, would never betray me.

God bless you for that!

You never betrayed me though you distrusted me I believe?

How could I help it! You were a man I, a woman half dead with grief. You were so plausible too, and the books I mentioned were the first I saw after you had left me. Was I not in sorrow was there a creature upon the face of this earth, to whom I could apply at such a time

Fools fools do they not know that *in* sorrow and *with* sorrow, impurity hath no power! Do they not know that in deep sorrow the heart is a sealed book!

Ah Sir!

Sealed I mean to the approach of a bad love in sorrow no woman was ever yet betrayed?

But Sir, in sorrow the heart of a woman may be betrayed, though she herself be not. In sorrow too, the heart may conceive what in sorrow it must bring forth, if the comforter be away when the hour of travail is nigh. And where is the value of a woman, if her heart be no more if it be another's if it be gone astray or if it be full with a joy it dare not acknowledge? How are we to live without sympathy, after we have once known what the sympathy of a good man is; and if we cannot obtain the sympathy of good men, how naturally do we seek that which is most like it the sympathy of bad men. Believe me Sir the heart of woman may be overmastered in sorrow, may be betrayed, irretrievably betrayed by sorrow sooner than by joy, or in joy. In grief she is ready to give herself up to the sympathy of the first man that looks like a good man, whatever may be taught her in the books. And of what value is the woman, if her heart be alienated? You may have other ideas for you are a man. You smile where we should weep. But to me it appears a greater evil to forego to *have* to forego the possession of a heart we love, than to give up the possession of a a of a of aught else underneath the sky.

Authorship: A Tale

Our pride will not suffer us to feel as you do. We can bear the loss of a woman's heart, however much we may love her, better than we could the loss of a woman herself, to another man though we hated her. We know that in most cases the fault is our own if we lose her heart; and we believe, such is our stupid infatuation, that in every case to recover it, we have only to try. We can bear to see a young beautiful wife so much at our mercy, that her very health may depend upon a word or a look from us. We love power and to show the world what power we have, and how little we are afraid, not because of *her* virtue, but because of *our* merit, we drive her away from our side, where if we did not drive her away she would nestle for ever. We drive her abroad for sympathy we are cruel to her and treacherous to her in a way that she dare not speak of. We can bear to chill the warm sweet gushing of her heart, even at the risk of chilling it for ever and yet, if she go astray, there is no death too bad for her. You are weeping

No no, I am not weeping no no, what have I to make me weep?

How should I know? Please to proceed with your story

Well Sir I have not much more to say. While you were with me, it was impossible to doubt you; but the moment you were gone, my heart misgave me, and I felt as if I had betrayed myself as never woman had betrayed herself before to a stranger.

I thought so I told you so. I was afraid your courage would forsake you, and I put you upon your guard. It was for that very reason that I gave you the paper I see there. It was for that very reason that I entrusted you with what was a matter of life and death to me my real name, a name that was never yet associated with an equivocal deed, nor used for a light or a vulgar purpose. It was to prove to you that I had no evil hope in my heart, no bad wish regarding you, that after giving you my true name, by which you might be able to trace me whithersoever I went, if you ever had occasion for my help, and by which I put myself in your power as you knew before a month was over

I did, I did! I saw your true name in the papers; and I saw it on one and the same page with your fictitious name. Ah! how little they knew of the truth, when they spoke of you here by one name as a friend of the Greeks, and there by another name, as a novel-writer of the day

It was to prove to you that I had no evil in my heart, that after giving you my real name by which I put myself in your power as much as you could possibly be in mine and both of my fictitious names that I might never be able to escape—It was to give you such proof as would satisfy you, when I was away and you had begun to feel the very misgiving you speak of, that after doing all this to assure you, I forbore to profit by the invitation of your brother, who seeing how you treated me, took me for an old acquaintance you know and would have had me go with you to your house.

My brother-in-law you mean. Oh I shall never forget your behaviour so delicate and so generous and so collected were you. But for your presence of mind, I should not have been so civil as to second his invitation, so that he must have seen that there was something out of the usual way in our acquaintance; and but for your exceeding generosity, you would have taken advantage of it, and I should have seen you at the fire-side of my proud sister without being able to say a word, whatever appearance you might have thought proper to put on.

And yet after all no sooner had I turned my back, than you altered your opinion of me.

Her eyes fell at this remark; but after a little hesitation, she added, Very true for in sorrow the heart is treacherous and wayward. We hope and we fear, we know not why, under the pressure of great grief. Common occurrences appear to be strange and terrible. We have no wish to live we are without courage, without hope, and without confidence. For a great while I could not bear to think of the escape I had with you.

Authorship: A Tale

How madam what escape?

Forgive me. I speak of what my feelings were at the time, before I knew a fortieth part as much of man's nature as I knew within a year from that very day.

Stop. I know what followed let me prove it to you. For a time you were afraid to look at the paper I gave you though you hadn't the heart to destroy it; and you regarded me as one of the multitude who go about seeking whom they may devour

Yes, I did

But after a while, it occurred to you, that perhaps I had spoken the truth

Yes, yes eagerly and the more I thought of your behaviour, the more sorry I was that I did not keep your letter

You saw the letter then

I did, and after considering the affair a whole day, I concluded to return it, as if it was not intended for me

And so leave it to be read by the clerks in the post-office

No no you terrify me.

But you did, I say. I have the letter now, with the postmark upon it, 'Refused,' or 'No such person to be found,' I forget which. Of course it had been opened, or they would not have known how to return it to me.

Dreadful I did not foresee this

No no, your idea was that on receiving the letter back I should imagine your story or your name to be fictitious.

Very true it never occurred to me that before you could receive the letter, it must be opened, and might be read by somebody in the post-office. It cannot be helped now but I beg your pardon for the trick; I am very sorry

And will never do so again, I dare say

Never nay nay, you are angry with me now.

Very true. But allow me to proceed with your story; after a while you began to take another view of the matter.

I did; for happening to meet with a girl one day who had been four or five years in America perhaps you may have heard of her Miss Harvey.

Not Emma Harvey

The same, perhaps you have heard of her?

Perhaps I have. We were to have been married

No!

Authorship: A Tale

Yes, and but for a circumstance which but go on with your story. I see how it was now it was from her that you heard so much as to justify you in saying that that you knew more of me than any woman alive, except my own sister.

Yes, partly from her and partly from another

From another?

Yes, but let me tell you how it happened.

Poor girl! I never knew how much I loved her till I heard of her death; you know I suppose that she followed me here without my knowledge.

No she did not speak of you as if she had ever loved you, nor as if you had ever loved her.

How did she speak of me then

Better than you deserve, I dare say but I wish you would allow me to tell you how I came to regard you as I now do your behaviour I mean. About a year after I saw you, I received a note from a lady who knew that some how or other I had a deal of curiosity about America, and that I was dying to see a natyve I need not tell you why saying that if I would stop at her house for a week I should be gratified. I longed to go I confess but as it never entered my head that the natyve she wanted me to see was a female, I kept away. So you are pleased, I see.

I bowed.

At last however, as good luck would have it, I happened to hear the truth. I saw the natyve, as they called her. She was a very superior girl, and though not altogether an American, she was the child of an American by an English woman that we knew, and had been educated at Philadelphia

Near Philadelphia at Germantown.

Well, it occurred to me one day, that I would ask her about you by one of the fictitious names that you gave me. She had never heard of you; by any other she knew no such individual, and was quite sure that America had produced no author of that name You smile, but perhaps you remember that you told me you had scribbled a book or two

Did I?

To be sure you did.

And after that, you never could persuade yourself that I was in your power

She laughed and continued. Very well, said I, when I heard this. Very well indeed; so much for this American. I have heard of their tricks before; and so and so will you forgive me? I was just going to pull out the paper you gave me, and show it to her

You had it with you then?

Yes

A whole year after you saw me

Authorship: A Tale

Yes, a whole year after you but don't flatter yourself: I had my reasons for carrying it about with me.

What were they?

Well *if* ever! and so, and so, just when I was going to show the paper, I happened to recollect myself, and as I stood looking over it, she saw the hand-writing, and made some remark or other about its resemblance to the writing of of would you believe it she named the very name that you told me you were known by in America. I need say no more we grew intimate; I was with her till within a week of her death

Poor Emma!

And she told me so much about you.

Well and she died

Yes, died died of a broken heart, I believe now; for the sorrow that I saw was like no sorrow that I had ever seen before, though *I* had felt, as I could see that she felt, weary of the very light of heaven

Well

Well have you nothing more to say?

Nothing. What more would you have me say? I loved her she loved me. We were to have been married. A few weeks more and we might have been happy, but she chose to believe another instead of me. We parted and she is in her grave.

Good God! how you speak of her.

Go on with your story if you please.

How unforgiving?

Will you proceed with your story?

I will; for I see that you are not so bad as you appear I can see that your eyes are wet; and your mouth paler than it was

Pho.

Well. Soon after this, I saw your name in a paper your true name, that by which I was to know you, and I felt proud of you. My confidence revived I reproached myself, night and day for not having trusted you further; and having discovered that you, though a man, were not of such men as I read about in the book they made me pore over I began to believe that book untrue and *all* men trust-worthy.

Just what I should have expected. Fools! idiots! Do they not know that by educating their daughters as you were educated, they are preparing them for the Destroyer! Do they not know that by prohibiting with such absurd severity, a thing which it is not in their power wholly to prevent, they create a desire for what otherwise might never be thought of, encourage the growth of insincerity, and teach their daughters to confound what *may be* improper with what *is* criminal?

Very true.

Authorship: A Tale

Religious novels forsooth! Why, what do they teach but this *this!* the very end and aim of all novels; namely, that after a certain portion of suffering, trial and sorrow, marriage comes about, marriage with the desired accompanied by beauty, wealth, rank, &c. &c., *as the greatest of earthly good!* If they taught self-denial in protracted adversity, or fortitude for life resignation for ever if they went to make people wiser and happier and more contented, though they failed to come together resigned, though a beloved—one were united to another active, useful and good, though they were poor, feeble, despised and without character, influence, or rank, then would they be what they are *not* now *religious novels*. As they are now managed, they are among the most pernicious of all the books that appear. And why? Because under the name of religious truth, we are taught only this, that the most perishable of earthly things are what the evangelical should hope to be rewarded with, if they persevere through all the temptations that beset their path. Religious novels, indeed! And yet these are the novels we are obliged to read all others were prohibited to me. Why do they not portray the young and lovely separated, and *for ever*, from what they love; and supported nevertheless by their piety, their earnest and faithful religion; or coupled for life with the wicked and perverse, and yet bearing their lot in marriage, as none but those who really deserve the name of the religious of the earth could bear it!

A woman who has been brought up in the way you were, would feel, after having read a prohibited book, as a woman should never feel never though she had gone utterly astray. She would feel as if she could not be forgiven as if she had done that, of which it would be unlawful to speak even to her own dear mother.

Yes, and she would feel as if as if as I felt when I discovered that a *man* could be both delicate and faithful; and that a religious novel could not be depended upon for truth of character.

You felt I dare say, as if your heart or your understanding had been outraged for whole years and by your own mother; and you were ready I dare say, to believe those books true which were forbidden, because you found those untrue which were not forbidden.

I was.

And all mankind trust-worthy and high-hearted, because you had been so lucky as to meet with me.

Are you serious?

I am.

Would you provoke me to laugh in your face!

If you dare

You are the strangest man

Pho pho.

Pho pho how like Edward that is!

Edward who?

My husband he frequently reminds me of you; he is very like you in some things.

I was completely bewildered for a moment your husband! I am sorry for it where is he why is he not here?

You terrify me. What have I said?

CHAPTER XIII.

Authorship: A Tale

Woman Woman I perceive the whole truth now. Look me in the face! Did you ever tell your husband that you knew me? Did you ever tell him that he was like me? No no I can see by your eyes and by the light shining through your pale forehead as it were nay nay, that look will never convince me I could swear that you never did.

Sir!

Deny it if you can.

Will you hear me?

A single word is enough yes or no?

Well then, if that is enough *no*.

I rose from the chair; but she stood in my way with a composure that awed me. I could not pass her; and she spoke to me as I had never been spoken to before.

Though I did not acknowledge to him Sir, that I knew you it was not by *my* advice, nor to gratify *me*, but contrary to my advice that you were brought hither. If I did not acknowledge to him, that the inquiries I made about you while he was in America, and after his return, were made by me with a feeling of regard for you, it was because I hoped never to see you again. If I forebore to acknowledge to him that he was like you it was partly because in America he had been told of the resemblance to you, and partly I hope you will forgive me partly because he had been told much that was unfavorable to you.

Unfavorable to me?

Unfavorable to your temper; if not unfavorable to your integrity and your steadiness. Are you satisfied?

I am of one thing. But before I go, will you answer me two or three questions?

I will if in my power. What are they?

Was your husband the cause of the trouble I had, when he and you and I were at the Sand–Rock Hotel?

The cause no indeed what do you mean?

Did he not bribe that devil of a chamber–maid–waiter?

Bribe her how?

To let me ring myself to death.

Oh, I know what you mean. What could possess you to behave so like a I beg your pardon but neither he nor I had any thing to do with your annoyance.

Very well I am satisfied there; one question more. Did you invite me to your house to make a fool of me?

Oh! you are mad as a March hare!

What did you mean pray, when you told me with tears in your eyes, that your only hope was in me?

Authorship: A Tale

My only hope *on earth*, I said.

Well well; but what did you mean by that?

Mean I meant will you take a chair

No! Zounds, if you laugh, I 'll kick a hole through the side of the house, or escape through the roof

That would be hardly worth your while; the door is open, you see.

So it is, faith; but you are in my way.

Am I there there going aside why don't you go?

Would you turn me out of your house neck and heels?

No, but you may turn yourself out if you like.

Oh you may laugh but I am going.

I see you are.

Why do you leave it open though? it 's very cold very

That I may look upon the trees and the sky, and hear the noise of the wind over the hill, and the roar of the sea

Indeed is that all

No Sir I leave it open that I may hear the footstep of my husband. You smile how dare you!

No matter; I 'm going you see I 'm going for good and all but before I go, I wish you would contrive to tell me in what way it was you thought I could be of use to you.

I will now that you are in a chair

In a chair! I am not

No, but you were in it when I spoke

Very well, and what if I was

Nothing nothing at all, you know; you were on the way out.

By Jove

Nay nay, be quiet if you please, and hear what I have to say. You *can* be of use to me

How in what way?

I 'll tell you. My poor Edward has got into bad company I fear what is that look for I do not mean you

Authorship: A Tale

Into bad company, has he? I thought so

And I do believe that if you were to speak to him, as you did to me, eight years ago, when you saw me on the very verge of destruction, you might save him, as you did me

Did I save you

You did

Enough. I am happy throwing off my hat, before I knew what I was about I am very happy now.

He has a great regard for you, I am sure, and you might recall him perhaps to a calmer and a safer path.

What sort of company do you speak of

I do not know I am not sure but I am afraid it is the company of gamblers.

Oh is that all!

All! Is not that enough? What is there so terrible to a fond wife?

Bad enough to be sure, very bad but I am glad it 's no worse, for to tell you the truth, I had begun to fear

To fear what Gracious God, how you frighten me!

Look you. I see how the matter is I *will* speak with him as I spoke with you, and if it be possible to save him, I I but stop why do you live in this way? Tell me as much as you can of the why and the wherefore, that I may know how to proceed. Ah what a load you have taken off my heart!

I will. He married me contrary to the advice of every friend he had on earth, I do believe; and for a reason which I am not now at liberty to speak of, he persuaded me to live in a style of expense which we could not afford, and which if I had known the truth, I never would have consented to. O that men could bear to acknowledge the truth to their wives when they are poor! They would find that poverty would not be half so terrible to a woman, as the over-thoughtful brow or the averted eye of a dear husband, for ever occupied in the pursuit of wealth.

Very true

He was brimful of ambition he had a high hope, which kept him idle. He was fond of literature, and if he had not thrown by the pen, as he told you, in a rage at the rascality of editors, he would have made a figure in a little time. But he was proud quick and irritable, and finding that he did not succeed, or that others did succeed better than himself, he threw aside every thought of authorship and embarked all his property in a speculation, which after a whole year of such vicissitude as I would not endure again for the wealth of an empire left him literally without the means of buying a mouthful of bread. Nor was that all I could have borne that, for I had still of my own property enough to be happy with, if *he* could be happy in a cottage like this; or any where out of the crowded highway of ambition; but he was in debt, and owing to the style in which he had lived it was now said with other people's money, though God knows he never thought so the creditors were inflexible. He was too proud to avail himself of the law I gave up my property and for two whole years we worked together under every disadvantage, for the profit of those whom we owed. This could not last I fell sick, and he fell sick in watching over me. O Sir if you could know what we suffered; such misery, such intolerable misery, month after month, and all to no purpose! Do you wonder that we lay and talked together at last about death, until we persuaded ourselves that it was our duty to die? We did so; and but for the arrival of a stranger that very man you saw this

Authorship: A Tale

evening, we should most assuredly have gone to sleep for ever, on the morning of the day that followed the night I speak of.

God bless him!

But he could not save us for money would not save us. My poor Edward! he was no longer the same creature. And as he would not suffer his new friend to pay his debts, for a long while it appeared as if he had been dragged away from the pressure of one misery only to be exposed to that of another. Oh Sir Sir I cannot go on he is cheerful now, but cheerful in such a way that I cannot bear to look at him he has no appetite he never appears to sleep soundly, and he is often away for a whole week together he, who one year ago, would not have left my side a single night for the wealth of a kingdom, he who for the first five years of our marriage was hardly ever out of my sight! Oh Sir it is very hard to bear!

What can I do for you? tell me; speak to me as you would speak to your own brother.

I will I will, said she, and I felt the pressure of a hand upon my arm I was afraid to stir, afraid to breathe indeed, lest I should scare it away I will I will if you could but manage to speak of the possibility of success in authorship for to tell you the truth, it is there he has been struck to the heart, although he would never acknowledge it Oh Sir! if you would, I am sure it would save him

I will I will

Ah Sir, he would be *so* happy and I should be so happy and you would be so happy!

Very fair! cried some one at her elbow

I started and she screamed for joy.

It was her Edward. I never looked so much like a fool in all my life. Her hand was resting on my arm that I knew; but I did not know till she snatched it away and jumped about the neck of her husband, like a mad creature, that my hand was on the top of hers God forgive me.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOVE... SKETCHES FROM LIFE... AUTHORS.

The horse-and-gig were at the door, it was a beautiful day such a day as women talk of in their youth, when the great woods are all in flower, very much as if their hearts were in flower too; and I was getting ready to say farewell to the man without a name.

I say though, said he, as he sat with his back toward me and his arm around the waist of Mary, who stood leaning over him with her eyes upon a book, in which he appeared to be writing. I say though parting the rich hair upon her forehead as he spoke, pulling her up to him, setting a kiss there; not as if she were a wife his wife, I should say but more as if she were a child of his

Did you speak to me? said I.

Yes how do you like my wife? Showing me a sketch of her he had just made in the book.

Your wife! how do I like your wife?

Authorship: A Tale

Oh my God! as lady Morgan would say, oh my God! that ever you should live to hear any body ask you such a question about such a bit of pure poetry!

Edward Edward for pity sake!

I 'll tell you what 't is though young man, she 's a noble creature, and you 'll find her so.

I have found her so.

You have! umph!

Yes I have.

I 'll bequeath her to you, if you like

Sir!

Edward!

What say you to that?

Sir!

What say *you* to it, Mary! pho pho, if any thing should happen to me dear, it would be a pleasure for me to know that you would be provided for. Why, what a fool you are we can't both die together you know!

True true not now; but the time was when we could have died together *both*

Mary Pe

Hush hush putting her hand over his mouth.

Narrow escape for you, sixpence with a laugh.

Don't pray call me sixpence.

Very well narrow escape for you nevertheless you you you monkey, you.

No no Edward, no no!

Well well, we can't both die together you see. That's impossible; and what's impossible can't be, and never, never comes to pass. One or the other you or I must precede.

Very true, and therefore I pray that I may go first.

Why dear, 't is the survivor dies, you know

I know it, I know it

And so you wish me to be the survivor, do you?

Authorship: A Tale

Oh Edward! Edward! how *can* you talk so!

Yes. I 'll bequeath her to you Holmes, if you 'll swear to be to her all that I should have been.

You 'll break my heart or drive me crazy Edward, if you

If I what? pho pho, what are you crying for? is n't he like me?

Like you, Edward!

Did'nt I hear you say so?

When where?

Last night.

Last night!

In your sleep

Oh, in my sleep

Oh! in your sleep; you are easy now are you? you have said as much when you were not asleep, I guess what say you, Mr. Yankee?

Ask her

Have you my dear tell me.

Yes I have.

There 's a dear kissing her devoutly I am satisfied now. The wretch!

Farewell! said I farewell I could 'nt bear it any longer I hope to see both of you again, but if I never should, I pray you and that will be enough to make you both happy, I pray you to treat each other as you now do farewell!

No no

Yes farewell.

Remember your promise.

I do I will; there 's my card, Sir

And there is mine, said he offering a handful take your choice

I laughed in spite of the solemnity of my feelings No no, said I I 'll have nothing more to do with your cards, but I hope to see you again, I have much to say to you.

And I to you. You *shall* see me again after a pause should you not like to see my wife again?

Authorship: A Tale

I should

Very well; what say you Mary? should you like to see the na–tyve again?

Yes

It shall be so. Na–tyve this way. Mary dear this way.

Give us your hand Sir and you too Mary, give me yours. Now Sir, I have an idea that you are wonderfully like me

I bowed.

Pho pho, it can't be helped you know, and we must bear it as well as we can. Observe what I say if any thing should happen to me, I bequeath her to you what are you staring at, both of you? I am quite serious

You are mad, I believe

There there, you may go now; I shall see you in town before a week is over, I dare say. Mary!

Well

What if you give him a kiss

Oh for shame, for shame Edward; your levity is insupportable.

Fudge don't you like him?

Yes, I do like him.

Very much?

Why a a yes.

Love him a little too, I dare say?

Love him!

As a brother you know

Yes

Very well. As a brother you *would* kiss him prove to me that you do feel toward him as toward a brother.

Prove it I will I will

Enough. She kissed me, but how, or whether on my forehead or my lips or my cheek, I never knew I only know that I trembled all over when I felt her breath in my neck, that whenever I think of her now, I have a thrill at my heart which it is not in my power to describe, and that I did not come fully to myself, till I had got within half a mile of the shore on my way to Southampton, and was drifting along at the rate of about a mile an hour, with Nettley–Abbey two or three arches and a bit of wall overgrown with the heaped up foliage that you never see any

where but in the live English landscape just under the bows of our boat, and a view before me half clouded with the sea—smoke, so like the view of Baltimore as you approach it by water, that for a few minutes I could hardly escape from the idea that I was still in America. At last however, as we drew near, and I discovered that what I had mistaken for a detached part of the town like Fell's Point at Baltimore was in reality the town of Southampton itself, and that what I had mistaken for the body of the town afar off, was in reality but a few scattered villas gleaming through the river mist, I woke all at once from the deep reverie in which I had been for nobody knows how long, very much like the poor fellow, of whom we hear in the Arabian Nights, who contrived to escape from a world of misery, by taking his head out of a tub of water, into which he had been persuaded to dip it, for the joke of the thing, about half a century before as he thought.

Strange but so it was. At any other time I should have dropped asleep, as we floated along by the green graceful unsteady shore with its overhanging woods and quivering atmosphere, through which the pomp and beauty of the landscape were like the pomp and beauty that we see in our sleep; with a little sunshine playing loosely over the tree—tops and among the waters; with a peep here and there at a sweet blue sky on the other side of the larger trees, and with just wind enough to stir a leaf or two whenever we were getting drowsy or beginning to regard the whole as a mere picture; but now, instead of dropping asleep, I started broad awake, wondering to find that I was neither at the cottage with a beautiful woman before me ready to throw herself upon my neck, nor wandering about in the covered paths and huge dim shadows of Carrisbrook—Castle,¹ where I had spent a good half the day before I knew it was peopled, or that in clambering over the topmost wall and up the chief tower, I had been scaling a fortress without leave, and was liable to prosecution, as I saw by a board that faced me when the feat was over.

Surely, said I, as we drew near the town surely the site for Baltimore must have been pitched upon by somebody who had reason to love Southampton, just as Portsmouth, Portland, Yarmouth, Falmouth, and forty other places in America were probably so named by people who had left the Portsmouth, Portland, Yarmouth, Falmouth, and forty other places of their beloved Old—England to perpetuate the recollection of their boyhood, to create a home like the home they had left, and to keep alive in their posterity a feeling of regard for the birth—places, after which *their* birth—places were named. Surely the brave ship that I see there is on her way up from Philadelphia! That steamer too she is on her way to Norfolk; and the fleet afar off and the signal—guns that I hear, what are they but signs from the high—sea, that Baltimore is about to be invaded again! As I live there is North Point and there the very place where they shot poor Ross for which blessed be God, by the by, for nothing else saved poor Baltimore.

At last but how or when, I declare I do not know to this day I arrived at my own door in the metropolis of the British empire, hurried up to the old room, which with its heavy chairs, and heavy couch, and heavy table, and every thing to match, I hope never to forget; pulled forth my hoard of paper, kicked off my boots with a flourish, and prepared to be happy and altogether at home once more. But no no I was neither at home nor happy. My books were no longer what they had been to me the spell was no more the thread was broken a story which I had been occupied with till my heart ran over with pride and joy, had no longer the power of fixing my attention. The very work which a month or two before was enough to occupy me all the day long, day after day, and more than half the night week after week was no longer a pleasure to me. The dream was over. It was a thrice—told tale, without wisdom, without power, and without beauty. I could not bear even to read over what, when it came fresh from my heart, like live water from a newly—found spring, had been to my hope a a I really *would* finish the period if I knew how. But I do not and I have only to say that I was unable to read, unable to write, unable to draw for a very good reason by the by, over and above that which appears and quite unable to stay at home or to sit still, the days were so long after the week I had passed at the cottage; the furniture of my room so heavy when I thought of the furniture I saw at the cottage; and the air of London so dreadful, when I thought of the sea—breeze, and heaved up my head in the fog of Pall—Mall under a notion that it smacked of the fog that used to come rolling in before a tide at the Isle—of—Wight I say nothing of the London sky just now, having lived in London but a very few years, though I am told that people are to be found who do not scruple to speak of it, as a thing to be seen every month of the year.

I began to go abroad more than I had for an age, to hunt up old acquaintances people for whom I never cared, and never should have cared but for the dread I now had of being alone; to go every where, to all the exhibitions parades reviews and theatres; to lounge about the windows of the print-shops, to ride to fence to box, to walk for a wager, to busy myself in a thousand ways which a month or two before I should have thought beneath me; to go to bed earlier and earlier, and to get up later and later every day; glad when the night came, though I knew that I should not sleep; and glad when the morrow came, though I had not closed my eyes for another day was gone, or another night, and I was so much nearer the time which I knew must arrive either in this world or the next, of seeing her, who, although she was another man's wife, and although I had no wish that I would have concealed if I could from the Searcher of Hearts, began to be loved by me as no sister I do believe, was ever yet loved by a brother. In a word for the first time in all my life, I knew not how to pass the day, nor what to do with myself when the day was over; I had no heart for work no heart for pleasure. I would go to the theatre and drop asleep I would go to a masquerade and forget myself so far as to unmask before all the company; I would go to church and stay and stay till I was told that I could stay no longer. If I went into a coffee-house and took a seat by the table, I forgot what I had come for and if I began to read a paper, it would drop out of my hands, and flutter toward the chimney, before I recollected where I was or I would keep it until somebody asked for it; and if I ordered a dinner it was by fits and starts, piecemeal, as I happened to be importuned by the waiter, who had to remind me every five minutes that something I had called for was getting cold. Nay, what is yet more strange, I was happy in the idea that perhaps perhaps I might live to occupy a *second* place in the heart of a proud beautiful woman. Lord! that I should ever be satisfied with a second place anywhere! a second place in the heart of one that I loved. Yea loved! and though such love may be regarded with grief or dismay by the multitude who never know what such love is and who do not scruple to forgive more under the name of friendship than I would beg for under the name of love; and though it be the fashion to cry out such is the power of a word such the power of untruth if the married speak of loving where they are not bound by law to love; yet I say, and I appeal to my Maker for the truth of what I say, that if I were married to such a woman as I would marry if I had the power, I should glory in having her so loved by other men, were they good or were they bad men as the woman I speak of was now loved by me. If they were good men, it would make them happier and if they were bad men it might make them better and such love as mine would never could never injure the object of its love; it would but make her more dear to me and give to virtue a tenfold power. I might call this friendship another would I dare say; I might allege that my feeling toward her was that of a brother toward a sister another would I am sure; and I know well that he would have forgiven, or pitied, or praised, where I for speaking the truth should be spoken of with horror. But as I happen to know what friendship for a female is, and as I happen to have a dear good sister whom I love I hope, as much as a brother need love a sister I dare not say I will not say what another would in such a case, that my love here was nothing but friendship or a brotherly regard. I know better it was a warmer deeper holier than either yea holier! as I mean to show before I have done.

Well well a month had passed over in the state of trial which I have attempted to describe, and I had begun to give up the idea of seeing Edwards again. Yet more. I had begun to feel quieter and happier and more at home with my books. I could bear my own society again the days did not appear so long, nor the nights. And really really I had begun to say to myself, that if I should have an opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with the people of the cottage, it would not be very advisable to do so. What should we gain by it either of us? No no said I to myself, no no, it cannot and it will not come to good; I'll keep away I'll avoid them I'll go to work, and leave not an hour of the day to be wasted in revery. It may be irksome at first it will be so I foresee that I cannot give up the pleasure I have indulged in so long, that of throwing aside my book or my pen just before dinner, or just before bed-time, or between day-light and dark, and shutting my eyes and thinking over all that occurred to me while I was with I will not say whom at the cottage. I began to be afraid of myself and afraid of her. But just then just as I had begun to slide back into my old habits, and to *say*, if not to think that I ought never to see that woman again while I breathed, and that now was the time now now! to come to a resolution worthy of a hero; a superb equipage rolled by me one day, as I was hurrying through Regent-Street, and as I drew back to avoid the whirl of the mud, some one called out to me in a voice that I knew. It was too late for me to escape the carriage had drawn up, the steps were down my heart was in my throat, and Edwards himself before me but so unlike what he had been a few weeks before, so altered, so free in his bearing, so cheerful, that if he had not

spoken to me as he did, I should have passed him, I believe without knowing him.

Footnotes

1 A celebrated castle on the Isle-of-Wight where Charles I. the martyr! was confined.

CHAPTER XV.

LONDON SOCIETY... HIGH-LIFE.

Ah my dear fellow, said he, how happy I am to see you! Where the devil do you hide yourself now come come, in with you; no time to be lost now; you are the very man I'm in search of. Why didn't you stop when I called you?

When?

Just now; we have been rattling after you this half hour.

Upon my word, I am very glad to see you but but I'm engaged.

Nonsense fiddle-de-dee; in with you. Mary is dying to see you.

Mary I beg your pardon; I really *am* engaged I cannot go with you to-day.

Pho pho, come along; I 've so much to tell you and she has so much to tell you and we 'll send an excuse for you, and and in short, you must go; if I do not secure you now, you may slip through my fingers. There there, in with you. I want you to see two or three of the finest fellows in the world they are to be with me to-day, and if you miss each other now, you may never have another opportunity while you live.

Ah why so?

For several reasons. They may be ordered off; they are only abroad for a week now, and are liable to a very short notice.

Oh military men hey?

No not exactly. But never mind who they are; they are men of the world just now and I am anxious to have them see you, before their holiday is over.

In the navy perhaps?

No no but you shall see them, and judge for yourself; they are such men as you never met with before, and either of them would make a capital hero for Lord Byron or Sir Walter Scott.

Indeed are they lawyers?

They know something of the law to be sure; about as much as they have occasion for, being well-bred men.

But you know that some knowledge of the law is absolutely required to finish the education of a well-bred man.

Authorship: A Tale

Very true very true my friends are pretty much of that opinion; they regard a knowledge of the law as you do, and as Blackstone did, as the true *finish* for a gentleman's education. But as for a so so! here we are.

Of what profession are they do tell me.

Of no profession at all zounds, what a knock to the footman are you afraid of being heard by the neighbours, you great booby? Go it again Sir! rattle away as if you had some life in you! What are you afraid of! There, there! that 'll do!

Oh I understand you now, said I, as the huge door swung open, and another powdered footman stood ready to receive us. They are men of fortune?

Men of fortune a a Precisely.

If so, my dear Sir if so, I assure you I would rather keep out of their way; I am too poor for such company

Too poor! poh poh follow me. Too poor! the very thing for you follow me, my boy; and I'll make your fortune for you.

I followed him without another word, into a large handsomely-furnished room, where I met his wife who having heard our voices, had jumped up from a sofa to receive me.

Oh I am so glad to see you! said she; and as she spoke, her voice faltered and the tears came into her eyes.

From that moment I saw that I had no business there. And she saw it too for I could not speak to her without betraying a depth of emotion a fear a bashfulness that I could not for my life get over. I saw my course and I determined to pursue it. I could not help seeing her now, but I determined while we were talking together each without hearing a syllable the other said, never to see her again. But before I could speak to her, and say that which would appear plausible enough to justify me in her opinion, if I should go away at once and never see her again, to justify me and satisfy her without alarming her pride, or the secret sure instinct of the woman, so as to make her see my true motive, a servant appeared with the lamp which he put upon the work-table near the sofa, so that I could see her face though she could not see mine. How altered it was! and altered too, not from sorrow to cheerfulness, not from a look of deep inbred habitual anxiety, to one of renewed youth and hope and joy, like that of her husband, but altered so, that if I had passed her in the highway without knowing her, I should have been half ready to go up to her and say Madam dear madam, forgive me. But is there any thing on earth I can do for you! She was pale as death it is no figure of speech I never saw any body half so pale before; and yet as pale women are to those who feel as I do, she was more beautiful than ever to me so beautiful so spiritually touchingly beautiful, with her jet-black hair, and features of living marble, and with that stamp of sorrow about her awful forehead, and about her pale sweet mouth, and so dignified withal, that if she had not been the wife of another man, I would have dropped upon my knees before her a thing I never did before a mortal woman yet and asked leave to gaze upon her proud beauty as I have an idea I should gaze upon that of the mother that bore me, if her angel were to appear to me in my sleep, or stand before me in the great woods of North-America saying that she had offered herself up in her youth to preserve me, or that she died in giving me birth.

I could not speak, nor could she for a long while; and when she did, it was only to say with a voice and a look that made a child of me I am sorry to see you here

Sorry!

Very sorry for I did hope

Authorship: A Tale

True true, thought I; poor soul! she begins to perceive that she would not be safe with me.

I did hope never to see you again. I did hope that by avoiding you nay nay, do not look as if you misunderstood me; you know very well what I mean

Perhaps I do farewell.

No no now that you have come, you had better stay, for your going would only appear strange; but oh, I beseech you, let nothing on earth ever persuade you to come here again

I rose to go, with a feeling which it would be no easy matter for me to describe. I was grieved and sore and I hardly knew why. I had come to give *her* up; and yet I could not bear to see that she was able to give *me* up. I understood her well, and yet I appeared to misunderstand her, that I might have something to reproach her with, now that I saw her preparing to do in a quiet grave way, what I had come prepared to do with a show of heroic self-denial.

No no; let me persuade you to stay, now you are with us. Were you to go before dinner, it would appear strange, it would look as if you had gone away *not* as I hope to have you go away.

I began to feel happy again. I saw that she could not bear the idea of parting with me; I saw that she would be miserable after I had gone whatever she might say, and so, much as I loved her, I was all the happier for it. Strange! I would have died for that woman I would, upon my life and yet I could not bear the idea of being forgotten by her, though I knew that if she remembered me, it would make *her* life a burthen to her. Such is love such the very nature of man! Love as we may, we never love another so much as we do ourselves, even though we destroy ourselves to make that other happy it would kill us to know that one we care for could be happy without our help.

Now that you are here, stay; and behave I entreat you, just as you would if you were still at our cottage.

I will

But oh Sir! give me your word she lowered her voice here and laid both her hands before me on the table, in such an impressive way that I never shall forget a word of her speech nor a tone of her voice give me your word, I beseech you, that you will avoid us hereafter

I will, said I I will madam.

God bless you

And what is more, I will not even beg to know why it is that you desire me to avoid you; as if there were something perilous to you in my society

No no it is for your sake, for yours alone that I pray you to avoid our society

You are very good

There now you are piqued

No madam, no; not piqued, although I perceive that since we parted, a wonderful change has occurred in your circumstances. You keep a carriage now; and you have a house here worthy of all admiration a superb house with superb furniture, and who shall say that a change has not occurred in *you* like that which we see in your

circumstances?

The house that we occupy is not ours and if it were, I do not believe that you would be so unkind as to utter a syllable of what you have now said, if you knew how that wealth was obtained, which we now appear to enjoy. To *enjoy!* oh Sir Sir!

Good God, madam, what is the matter! what have I said! Surely the signs that I see here they are not signs of mere luck at the gaming-table

She shook her head.

But rather I should hope of inherited wealth, or of wealth obtained by worthier means. O that you had more faith in me

Faith in you! Sir, I have such faith in you, that I could go to sleep on that sofa, and sleep as quietly, with you sitting at my head as quietly as if I knew that my own dear father was watching over me.

Your father said I. Have I that look of old age then?

Oh no but what I mean is, that I could speak to you and deal with you as if you were one that had a title to be trusted with whatever concerned me if it did not concern others. I should be glad of an opportunity to prove what I say It is proper that you should know whether I have so much faith in you, or not, and whether stay! I shall see you a few minutes before you go?

If you desire it madam; but really

I do desire it! give me your word promise to speak with me before you go. I shall not see you again I fear I hope and hereafter the recollection of my words may be a pleasure to you, when you come to know the whole of my history. And that you will know it before long I have a sure presentiment I foresee the issue now every step of the way, even to the epitaph which it will be for you to write for me there there! give me your word; say you will see me before you go why do you hesitate?

Will your husband be with you?

No but he will know that you are with me.

Very well. I am satisfied

You are satisfied! Really Sir, you deserve a but no, no I have no time now, no heart for dealing with you as I should, at a less trying hour, if I saw you so careful of what I hope never to think lightly of appearances.

Here we were interrupted, and I was called away to another room, where I met with four individuals who, with a look of high fashion, appeared to belong to a class of society, with which I had never had any intercourse. They were bold and free of speech, and three out of the four talked well upon a variety of subjects. Among them was a man who could not have been less than seventy years of age; and yet he had all the briskness and vivacity of youth, added to that which we never see in youth, however well-bred a man may be, the cool smooth self-possession of an adroit chessplayer. He did nothing in a hurry, he said nothing in a hurry; and yet, every thing he did or said appeared to be prompted by the occasion. A brotherhood of gamblers, thought I I am not sorry now that I have come. It will give me what I have long desired to have an opportunity of studying these people off guard.

Authorship: A Tale

I have seen a good deal of your country, said the man I speak of, with a bow which it was impossible for me not to return with a feeling of pride, for with that bow, he said more in praise of America than most others would have said in a long speech.

And how were you pleased with it, Sir George? said one of the company, with a look which must have been thought very droll, for it set every body a-laughing. Delighted, I dare say?

Transported Sir.

Another laugh, in which I could not help joining with a remark which they appeared to enjoy exceedingly

Transported Sir; and so was every body else that I saw in America from this country.

Really thought I, we have a very facetious gentleman here; he does not scruple to joke with me about a story, which if true, is not more creditable to his country than to mine. What if people were transported to America; they were but few, and were able to thrive *there* without stealing.

After a good deal of other conversation about America, some parts of which he was well acquainted with, he proceeded to give us two or three negro stories, in a strain of pleasantry that I never shall forget. He was remarkably happy too in his imitation of the negro speech, and must have had at a very early age, a keen sense of the ridiculous, and a quick perception of oddity in character. His portraits were truth itself no part was overcharged; and his very caricatures were the caricatures of a gentleman. I heard him with great pleasure, till we were called away to the dinner-table, and so gratified was I with what he said of my dear native land, that I contrived to place my chair just opposite him at the table, so that I could hear every word he spoke, and watch the play of his fine expressive old-fashioned face, without being observed. He saw my object, and willing to gratify me, he addressed the chief part of his talk either to me or to those who sat near me, and gave sketch after sketch of American character, which appeared to me, after I had got half a bottle of wine aboard, quite superior to any thing of the sort I had ever met with, for happy graceful humor, for truth, and for ease of touch. It would be impossible for me to give you an idea of his look, or of his manner you should see the man, you should hear him, to enjoy the grave humor of what he said, but still I may give you an idea of one or two sketches that I happen to recollect, so far as the words go.

They had been talking of authorship I thought for a while to gratify me as if the shop were a theme to trouble a man with, whatever Lord Chesterfield may say; as if it were not a sign rather of ill-breeding, than of a knowledge of the world, for a man who meets another, to fall upon him about his trade or profession. What is it but to say I talk to you Sir about your trade because I perceive that you cannot talk about any thing else. I bore you about the shop, my dear friend, because I perceive that you are not well-bred enough to know that well-bred men are never guilty of an allusion to their peculiar trade or pursuit in company, if it can be avoided. Thus you will see a shopkeeper parading about with mustaches; a soldier prattling to a girl about ribbons and gew-gaws; a man of great science, who never knew how to make a tolerable bow, tripping up a room as if he were employed to walk a minuet, while a dancingmaster of the upper class would play the lounge by trade; here a cast-iron political economist trying to remember a line of poetry, or to introduce a bit of a metaphor a bad one too where ever so good a one would be out of place; and there a poet losing himself utterly on the subject of free-trade; here a man of wit playing the fine-gentleman, there the fine-gentleman crowding himself into a group of authors, and affecting to deal in repartee here a sketchpainter who would be a critic, there a critic who would be a painter; here a fellow with a but enough. At first, I say, I thought Sir George was talking about authorship to gratify me, and I remember that I touched a gentleman at my side who had just been giving us a good story of his own about the tricks of the trade, and asked him if Sir George had not been a little in the way of authorship for himself he appeared to know so much of what an author has to endure.

Of authorship said he why, what say you Sir George? You have dabbled in authorship a *few*, have you not?

Authorship: A Tale

Yes yes to be sure I have

Ah really, said I, perhaps you would have no objection to let me see, or to let me know what you have thought proper to oblige the world with?

Oh but I should though. I never speak of my obligations to others; and why should I speak of theirs to me! A laugh.

Ah you are of the new school I see

The new school how?

You never acknowledge your works.

Never to tell you the truth Sir, I never wrote any thing in my life that I should be willing to acknowledge now, except a few trifles that I threw off when I was a boy.

Modesty, Sir George ha ha ha!

True Edwards, true we love to blush *unseen*.

Ha ha ha!

Do good by *stealth* and *blush* to find it fame.

Capital, Sir George capital, ha ha ha!

But after all though, said I, if you are not sworn to secrecy, I should like to see something of yours. I have an idea that I should know your style

Indeed

Yes; and that after to-day I shall be able to recognise you wherever I see you, and whatever may be your disguise I thought one of the company looked disturbed at this.

Well well, if you can, you may I give you leave to catch me, if you can.

Very fair; I'll begin the search to-morrow, provided you'll answer me one question.

Well what is it?

Have you not tried your hand at genteel-comedy?

At genteel comedy!

To be sure you have Sir George! cried my left-hand neighbour with a laugh, which was followed by another from every body at the table. For my own part I could not see the joke.

Very true very true Sir, as you say; but then, as the devil would have it, when these genteel comedies of mine got abroad, they were mistaken by people for tragedies.

Authorship: A Tale

Were they ever played?

Played yes

Ha ha ha! Sir George!

But in a very serious way though, I can tell you.

Ha ha ha, said my neighbour. And you got nothing by them I believe, Sir George?

No, not a guinea

Written for pleasure? said I

Yes for pleasure.

I feel for you. To live by the pen Sir George, is a hard life.

To die by the pen is harder though; yet cases frequently occur

Indeed!

Yes, every year it falls in my way to know that some young author of our creed has literally died by the pen.

Starved to death, I suppose; or dead of a broken heart?

No, by the rope

By the rope! O, I understand you suicide?

True true, by suicide. By the by though, that reminds me of a Yankee author I once met with; a very odd fellow he was too; I never could make out whether he was laughing at me, or I at him.

You have hit the true Yankee character to the life, by that one observation, said I. If a real na-tive should happen to make a very foolish mistake or to say a very foolish thing before you, he would escape in the way you speak of; he would contrive to say something or do something yet more foolish before you, in such a manner that you would be unable to say whether he was laughing at *you* or you at him.

By the by, said our host, who appeared to enjoy the joke as much as I did. By the by addressing himself to me *you* have had no little experience here in the trade of authorship, and when you hear that we are all authors *all!* every one of us deny it if you can his eyes flashed fire as he said this, and he grew very pale disappointed authors too you will not refuse I hope, to give us a little account of what you have had to endure.

With all my heart, said I it may do you good. But before I could finish the sentence a footman appeared with a message for Edwards, who sent me a blank card on which he had written with a pencil. 'My wife wants to see you go to her without any apology. Don't be away long I wish you to see what authors are capable of.'

I followed the servant, who led me to a room where I saw no no I never will name her name again while I breathe where I saw the proud beautiful woman of sorrow for the last time.

CHAPTER XVI.

DISCLOSURE... GOOD COUNSEL... GAMING.

The moment she saw me, she started and came up to me with a sort of eagerness that terrified me it was not the eagerness of joy and putting both her hands into mine, stood looking at me as if she would read my very soul.

Who are they? said she, as soon as she could speak. You have seen the whole of them now who are they what are they?

I was terrified at her earnestness.

My dear madam, cried I, what *is* the matter with you! How you tremble how cold your hands are come come, let me lead you to the fire, I beseech you

Oh Sir, save him! save him! you did save him once; let him owe more than life to you now.

Dear madam I beseech you! I will do any thing you desire, any thing in the world for you, if you will try to compose yourself. There there what *can* I do for you?

Her head lay upon my shoulder and I could feel that she was sobbing as if her heart would break.

Leave me leave me said she at last, lifting herself up and pushing me away.

But you are very ill you are indeed permit me to call your *husband*. As I spoke, I drew her to the sofa, and stretched out my hand for the bell-rope it was too far off: I could not reach it, and she hung upon my arm so heavily that I was afraid to let her go.

Who are they! who are they! she cried again, lifting herself up from the sofa on which I had placed her, and locking her hands with desperate fervor. *Do* tell me! Oh Sir! Sir! how *can* you refuse to tell me! would you have me drop down dead before your face; would you have me go out of my senses with fear!

With fear madam fear of what of whom?

Of the people there of you of him of every body! oh do tell me who they are!

I do not know, upon my word I never saw them before; if you mean the people above. There there compose yourself I pray you, you frighten me to death

I know you never saw them before; I know that very well and oh I am so glad of it! and if my poor husband, if he had never seen them before if he would never see them again, I should be so happy! I should be willing to die then I should n't care to live another day

Don't talk of dying at your age madam, with such a husband as you have, with so much to make life dear to you

At my age oh Sir! I am very old; very old and weary of life. At *my* age! Here she wept with tenfold energy I *will* talk of dying I *will* I must! I cannot bear this life I cannot bear to live without sleep, to live in perpetual fear I cannot I will not! oh my God, my God! what will become of my poor Edward!

Here she was utterly overpowered by a burst of sorrow the sofa shook with her and I was going to call out for

Authorship: A Tale

help, when she started up with a cry that I can hear now a faint eager cry, and laying hold of me with both hands, and clinging to me as if I were the only friend she had on earth, and as if she thought I was going to leave her though I had no such idea she looked me up in the face with a quivering lip, and said to me with a sort of inward whisper that scared me, Sir Sir promise me promise me swear to me! swear that you will save him

I will, said I not knowing what else to say, for she appeared to be out of her head.

Swear to me that you will avoid them for the rest of your life swear it, Sir!

I will I do.

God for ever bless you Sir! Oh I thought you would never come away; I thought I never should see you again; I thought *you* were ensnared nay nay, look at me! look at me may I believe you? Do you speak the truth? will you keep away from their society?

If you desire it, I will; but why should I? I have nothing to lose nothing to fear; and I love to study human character in every shape, and above all, in a shape so new to me.

Nothing to fear! So he thought a few months ago!

There there, compose yourself; you are low-spirited now, worn out with fatigue and loss of sleep.

I never sleep now

The tone with which these few words were uttered, went to my heart. I knew she spoke the truth. I could see the proof in her altered visage I could see it in her neglected hair which fell about her neck in a heavy mass I could hear it in her low harmonious irregular breathing, for her speech was nothing more. And yet with all my sorrow and sympathy for her, and with all my pure love, there was a touch of secret gratification here here at my very heart which I could not wholly subdue. Such is man.

You have made me happy Sir quite happy now, I feel as if as if oh, you are very good to me Sir.

Then why do you weep so bitterly?

Do I weep! oh Sir I beg your pardon I did not mean to weep I didn't know I was weeping, I declare. You'd better go now

I rose to go, but she did not appear to observe it; for she kept on talking as if she thought me still at her side.

After my death, you will be a friend to Edward I hope you 'd better go now; they will miss you, and it may appear strange as you said if I weep now, it is for joy deep joy I am very glad you came there there, good by. God bless you. I am very happy now I shall die in peace you are not fond of play, and I leave Edward in your care; you will watch over him for my sake; you will be a brother to him a father

Upon my soul, I could hardly restrain my tears, hardly keep from sobbing with her, when she said this, laughable as the idea was of my being a father to such a man a grave, thoughtful man, five years older than myself I dare say, and that too, at the desire of his young beautiful wife, who, though she was wandering a little in her speech, appeared to me likely to outlive both of us. For after all, what was there in the grief that I saw, to break the heart of a proud woman or to seal her forehead for the grave? *She* was not shipwrecked on her way to dominion. *Her* chariot-wheels were not obstructed for ever. The world was not to her what it is to the disappointed, proud man a great prison full of bad air and bad spirits, and covered in with a gloomy impenetrable sky.

Authorship: A Tale

You are much better I perceive now; and I do hope, said I, after she had grown a little more composed I do hope allow me to speak to you as a friend as a brother as a father if you will, for I have the feelings of each toward you; I do hope that hereafter you will not give way to such vague terror; I know that much may be attributed to the state of your health now I wanted to say peculiar condition, but I was afraid but still, if you do not withstand it, you may be sure of a of a

You saw them all I suppose? they were all there young and old the whole crew the man you saw at our cottage?

No; if you mean Mr. Fontleroy. He was not of the party. Indeed!

No.

So much the worse for you. They are afraid of him they dare not betray their real characters to him. Poor fellow, he has no idea of the truth any more than you have.

But your husband; he knows who they are surely?

True true Sir I am afraid he does. But beware how you suspect him of treachery; I see by your look that you are beginning to judge him.

Oh no but he should have told me who they were.

He will; but he would have you judge for yourself. No no Sir; he would sooner die than betray you; he knows you are poor I have heard him say so; and I believe in my heart he has brought you together, only that you may see how two or three men, who after all are among the most extraordinary men of the age he says

I interrupted her, astonished at the glow and beauty of her countenance.

How much better you are, said I! do *do* be more upon your guard. You have no idea how you frightened me

Did I I am very sorry; but I had grown half-distracted with fear while I was waiting for you knowing as I did that you had been decoyed into the society of that wicked old man, by my husband.

You speak of Sir George, I suppose?

Of *Sir George*! Never shall I forget her look, never the tone with which these two words were slowly repeated by her. Why, what on earth do you take these people for?

For disappointed authors.

Are you mad! They are gamblers, notorious shameless thorough-bred gamblers.

I then repeated the conversation which had taken place at the table.

I do not understand it, said she, after musing a while. If they are all disappointed authors, I could forgive them for a part of their transgressions, but no no it is impossible, and yet my poor Edward how came he to know so much of them, or they of him, if there be not some dreadful sympathy of the sort between them? Have you told him your story?

No; but I was on the very point of doing so, at his own desire, when your message arrived.

Authorship: A Tale

It will do no good now he will never go back to the cottage; he will never be satisfied now with the slow gains of authorship. Oh Sir, I cannot express to you how dreadful the idea is to me of living on the pillage of the gaming-table

Perhaps you are mistaken how do you know that these people are what you say they are.

I do not know it by any such proof as would satisfy you, but stay, stay. You have promised never to see them again

If you desire it I have, though I really do wish to study their characters

You shall be gratified. Return to the table and watch every word they speak. When you have satisfied yourself, go away and oh, for the love of God, if they prove to be, what I believe them to be, do not go near them for the rest of your life! You may be married one day; you may be a father you may be a her emotion choked her a a the husband of a woman, who may live to wish that she had never seen you, if you be once touched by the dreadful passion that absorbs them.

I *will* promise, cried I I will! but compose yourself, I pray you. Your agitation terrifies me; you take the matter too seriously indeed you do.

Too seriously! Oh Sir if you knew all! if you knew the circumstances of our marriage! The kindest husband, the truest, and so proud of his wife! never away from my side but with sorrow, till he saw these men. Oh sir, sir! you would never say that I regard the matter too seriously, if you knew how much we have endured together, he for me and I for him, year after year, without one word of reproach or complaint how we have clung to each other in sickness and poverty in despair in a solitude where there was no hope each upheld by the other's integrity, and each willing to die for the other. So happy too! So happy in spite of the world, for I knew that he loved me with all his heart and soul, though but for me sir, he never would have known what it was to be a poor man or a disappointed man. He would have pursued the mighty, and long before this, he would have outstripped the mighty he would not have been what he is now, a shipwrecked man a cast-away. Oh God! that I were able to recover the power I once had over his heart! I was prouder of him in his poverty, than I ever shall be now, though he were to become to every body what he has been to me a something superior to the rest of mankind, a sort of standard, whereby to measure all other men.

You deserve to be happy, and you will be happy, said I, in spite of th. Be cheerful and you may recover the power you had, even if that power be lessened, which by-the-by, I do not believe. It may appear so to you madam, but perhaps I am a better judge than you in your state of health, and I have heard enough and seen enough to satisfy me, that no man ever loved woman with a more fixed or a prouder love than he bears toward you

Do you think so?

Think so I am sure of it.

Ah sir! you have no idea how happy you make me.

I do not say this to gratify nor to calm you though I feel for you and pity you, and would say much to calm you: but I say it because I believe what I say, and because I see that you are giving up to a fear, which if you do not overcome it will overcome you and destroy you and *yours*.

You make me afraid sir you fill me with awe. Who are you that have courage to speak truth to a woman? what are you that you dare to speak such truth to me!

Authorship: A Tale

I have not offended you, I hope

Offended me! No sir! But you have made me feel that you have a power which you ought not to have, though you were a good man, a power which makes me afraid of you over my understanding.

I have no such power believe me; it is the power of truth which you mistake for that of a man. If you had a brother

Oh that I had one, sir!

Or a father, he would say to you

Oh my poor father! my poor poor broken-hearted father!

He would say to you what I now say. Never doubt your husband's love death were better for you. He may not be to you all that you expected before your marriage; but are you so to him? He may not always be what he was for a time after your marriage but are you? You are altered and why should not he alter? You may love him as much as ever you may love him a great deal more than ever; but is your love now such love as you felt before the brief delirium of your hearts had subsided? No! it is another, and a holier, and a more serious love. The blood has nothing to do with it no nor the every-day nature of man. It is a love that grows up out of tried affection, tried worth, tried probity a love that never changes but with the changes of our character, of our immortal part. No no never allow either sickness or sorrow to disturb your faith in his love. Ask yourself you are married you have been married a long while can *you* ever forget under any circumstances of trial or of sorrow, the joy of your heart when you saw that you were beloved by the man you afterwards married? Or the sweet sleep that you had as he lay watching over you for the first time? Or the deep inward thrill, or the secret awe that came over you when you perceived that you were to be a mother? No and why should you fear that a father would forget such things?

She made no reply; but her tears fell fast and flashed like large rain-drops as they passed the light.

And so long as he remembers his feeling and you yours, when you dropped asleep for the first time on his shoulder; so long as you both remember the convulsion of joy that shook both of you at the first cry of your first child; so long believe me you have nothing to fear.

I do believe you I do, I do! she cried, and before I could prevent her, she caught my hands up to her mouth and kissed them, and when I plucked them away, they were wet with tears. Will you be a brother to me she added may I call you brother?

I could not speak.

My brother my dear brother how you came by this deep knowledge of the human heart of a mother's heart I do not know nor ask. But knowing so much of what you say to be true, I am willing to believe the rest I am willing to hope my dear brother.

You have no brother?

No brother no father no mother.

Poor soul I pity you.

Authorship: A Tale

If you knew my story, you *would* pity me; you would feel as if stay stay blessed be God, I have it in my power to prove my faith in you! You shall hear my story you shall know that of me, which no mortal at this hour knows not even Edward himself.

Would that be doing as you would be done by?

She hesitated.

How dare you put yourself so much in my power?

Do I not know you? Have I not tried you as never man was tried before? Why Sir, the very questions you put prove you to be trustworthy. And where is the woman who would refuse to put faith in such as you, if she were in sorrow? Do I not see that your knowledge of the human heart is employed her manner grew very impressive not for evil but for good?

At any other time, at any other place I could have wept for joy, to hear this beautiful woman speak so to a man that loved her.

Why, when I have it in my power to add to that knowledge, why refuse to add to it, especially when there is no other proof in the world for me to give, no other sign of my gratitude, of my great faith in your integrity I never mean to see you more

I was thunderstruck at this, though prepared to say the very same thing to her.

You have been to me all that a brother could have been or a father. To you I owe more than my life much more I owe *his* life, and the hope that I shall see him rescued by you and restored to me. To you I owe it sir, that now now while I speak to you, I am not altogether a reproach to womanhood. Sir sir what I say to you is perfectly true. It was you that saved me you that restored me. But for you, I should have been a self-murderess you gave me

I would have interrupted her, but she filled me with such fear, that I could not.

You gave me hope, though you were a stranger. You trusted me, though I had never seen your face before. You were faithful to your charge, and have been so up to this hour, though I betrayed mine before I slept

Forbear, I beseech you.

No sir, no! I shall not forbear. It is high time you knew the nature of the obligations I owe you. I would have you know the whole every thing; I would have you know that which I would have nobody else on earth know. Nay, nay, are you not an author? And why should I not unveil before you as I would before a statuary or a painter? You are to be trusted you appear to be a good man you draw from the heart, and why should you not draw from life? And where would be the reproach, if I were to become a study for you

For God's sake madam; do not talk to me in this way! I know not whether you are serious or not, nor whether you are mocking me or not.

I believe you, though it goes hard with me to believe that you could so misapprehend the nature of a woman, who never mocked at any body nor any thing in her life. But hear me hear my story. That shall be my answer to your remark.

I bowed

CHAPTER XVII.

THE YOUNG METHODIST... DANGER OF BEAUTY.

I shall be very brief. I am not what I appear. My name is not Mary; it is Maria Maria Pey , but no no, I dare not, I will not hazard the name of my dear father even to you. I was born in A , a village of Staffordshire. I was very happy sir, and as innocent as a dove, till my poor mother said to me with a severe look one day that my father and I were much too proud of my beauty. Of my beauty! and was I beautiful then! Was I of the few that I never heard spoken of but with praise, that I never saw approach, but they were welcomed with joy by my dear father? could it be so? I will go to him, said I, and ask him before I sleep. I did go, I went straightway to my father, I got upon his knee, I crept into his bosom, I hid my face there, and when I had courage enough to speak for I was afraid of my mother I asked him if I was indeed one of the beautiful. He kissed me and wept upon my neck, and would have escaped the question, but I persevered until he was obliged to own that I was what my mother had reproached me for being, beautiful; and that he did not love me the less for being so.

Need I say more? I could not sleep; I could not stifle the joy of my foolish heart. By and by the young men pursued me and the young women kept away, as if they were afraid of me. Two or three of my beloved companions forsook me, one after another, and all began to treat me with a reserve that made me very unhappy; and when I begged to know what I had done, they kept away, or spoke to me as if they no longer loved me; and my good mother, who grew more and more pious every day, and to make me love piety, found more and more fault with me, as she grew more and more pious, till I had no courage left I declare no heart no hope told me their behavior was owing to the beauty my father took such pride in God bless that father! he never told me a fortieth part as much; and that if I lived to grow up, I should be hated for my good looks; and that my fine shape and high stature would be a curse to me. I could not believe her. I chose to believe my father. Did he not love them that were beautiful? And did not I? And had he not acknowledged that he did not love me the less and why should they for my face, or my shape, or my stature?

Poor soul! I do pity you; I foresee the issue of your story.

Well my dear mother being a very religious woman could not bear to see me cheerful. She kept me at home with her she kept me busy she would not suffer me to go abroad nor even to wear a dress like other people. Her object was and she avowed it before my sister Judith, who belonged to the church, and spoilt her fine dark hair as the rest of the church did her object was to humble me, to break down my spirit, to mortify my pride in every possible way, to teach me that beauty was a thing to be sorry for and ashamed of. Nothing else could save me, she thought. She would preach to me by the hour, when I was tired and sleepy and anxious to be a-bed where and where only I could forget my sorrow; and always about something which I never could understand for my life, or about something which never appeared to be true, or of any use if it were true. She would go out of her way, not to shield me, but to expose me to reproof, and to the reproach and ridicule of those, who even while they ridiculed me, were serious. All day long I had some heavy unintelligible book before me, about I never knew what I never cared what. I only know that I had much to read, that I had much to learn whether I would or no, and that if I failed in my task, or dropped asleep to a fourth or fifth discourse in the same day, I had a chapter in the Bible to get by heart, or a page of Hannah More

I *do* pity you!

Or a detestable hymn or two I love good poetry over and above my task for the following day, and that I discovered what I take to be a truth of a great value.

What was it pray?

Authorship: A Tale

This that what we learn with pain we forget with pleasure.

A discovery indeed a truth which deserves to be recorded in marble over the door-way of every place on earth devoted to education

Well at fifteen she charged me with being too free before the young men of the village. Too free! said I, how so? I really did not understand her. I behaved in the same way to every body; I was not more free with the young men that I knew, than I was with the young women. But she made me perceive I know not how that young men were to be regarded with fear, that every young man was my natural foe. I wanted to ask her why, but I was afraid my courage died away within me, at her look I was by nature, timid grateful and affectionate

You timid you, with your haughty step

Yes I I with my haughty step, as timid a creature as ever breathed. But after this, if a young man spoke to me, or come near me, I could hardly keep down my heart, or withhold my tears; and after he had gone away, I could not sleep sometimes, for the trouble and sore perplexity of my thought. My mother did not love me I could see that she would neither caress me, nor let me caress her, and I could not live without being caressed by somebody. My father knew this and pitied me, and loved me too much I am afraid, because my mother loved me so little. He was a retired naval captain, a rough sensible good man, much older than my mother, on whom he doted until she took to the church, became a Methodist, and parted her beautiful hair upon her forehead, in spite of all he could say or do, and strove to mortify in Judith and me, what he called the proper spirit of an English woman. Poor Judith! she obeyed without a word or a murmur, but I could not obey, my nature was not the nature of Judith, and so I had no peace of my life. I *would* carry my head high, for it was natural to me; I would not stoop, nor drag my feet after me on my way to church; for it tired me to stoop, and it tired me more to walk as my mother would have me walk. And yet, I did not know that my carriage was haughty nor my step free.

For a long while my father used to bring with him a heap of clothes and trinkets, whenever he returned from a voyage, and a multitude of things that I never knew what to do with, after we became religious. And long after I had grown up, he always had me on his knee, rigged out in some costly garb or other of which we never knew the value, with my head upon his shoulder, my cheek to his, and my arms about his neck. I loved him with a love that no language can describe but I loved him like a child and without knowing why. It was the instinct of my nature to love and I had nobody else to love nothing else on earth to love, not so much as a bird, or a tree, or a flower.

I know not why it is it may be because my dear father was always kinder and gentler to me than my mother it may be because I never yet received much kindness from any body in the shape of a woman, but so it is, that from my childhood up, the kindness of a man has always been very powerful with me so powerful, that if he was a great or a good man, touched with sorrow or bowed with grief, and I saw the water stand in his eyes, or heard him speak with great gentleness and gravity, though we were strangers to each other, I have been ready to fall upon his neck and weep there, as I would upon the neck of my own father.

I have been told that when I was a baby, I would not suffer a woman to take me but that I would go to a man with a cry of joy, and that my father could put me to sleep at any time in a few minutes; nay, that for a frolic, it was common to deceive me by putting a hat upon the head of a woman, without which I would never go to one if I could help it. I mention this to you sir, because I have been twitted with it a hundred times in a week I dare say by my poor mother, who teased me and worried me about such things till I grew miserable, nay Sir till I was made to understand many things that I ought never to have understood.

As long ago as I can remember you will forgive my rambling I hope; I am doing now what I never did before, and you must give shape to the story I began to dislike the society of my own sex, whether married or single, and whatever might be their age. They were always lying about me, or to me, or teasing me with speeches about some young man or other, till I was ready to cry for vexation; yet I had always a dear friend or two till I grew up to the

Authorship: A Tale

stature of womanhood after which I never could find either a play-fellow or a dear friend among women.

I have attributed all this to envy, and the more, because to tell you the truth, I have always found the bitterest reproof and the most unpalatable advice to proceed from neglected women ladies of a certain age, or as *I* should say, of a very un-certain age. The men have always treated me kindly, and the very boys that I knew, were all sweet-tempered, and gentle, and obliging to me. What wonder if I disliked girls and women who were never so? The older I grew, the stronger grew my preference for the society of men. I took no pleasure in the society or the occupations of women. I despised both and I had not wit enough nor wisdom enough to conceal it. Of course they hated me and of course they slandered me. As I grew up, I discovered that most of the men were fools, or knaves

Goodness me! thought I we have no such milk-and-water to deal with here, as I have been prepared for.

But even their gossip was more tolerable than the best of what I heard from the she-people about me. I had many offers of marriage, but I refused them all I had no idea that I ever should marry, I could not imagine it possible, when I came to know what would be expected of me in marriage. Why should I give up my liberty the little I have now I used to say to myself, twenty times in the course of the day. Why become a slave? Why give up the power I possess over all the men that approach me? If it be true that I am deceived by those, who appear to be so gentle and so good, why seek to be undeceived and why by an experiment so costly as marriage? From that, if I should be deceived, there will be no escape. In a word why leave my dear, dear father, I used to say to myself; I do not want to be married I do not want a bed-fellow; or if I do, there is Judith; I never could bear to sleep with a man sir!

Madam!

Did you smile?

Smile no indeed!

What I say to you is the truth

I am sure of it. Smile no madam, it were much easier to weep.

But if you are like other men, it will appear very strange to you the simplicity I speak of, at my age perhaps incredible.

Far from it.

You are not like other men; you appear to have a truer, if not a deeper knowledge of the human heart.

Not of the *human* heart excuse me, but I have a knowled of *woman's* heart, which if it be not a deeper and a truer knowledge than is common, really deserves to be so, for it makes all you say appear very credible to me.

A proof that your knowledge of woman, whatever it may be, has been gathered from high and pure sources.

Not altogether madam, I do not say that, but while women are educated as they are, every thing is credible to me which goes to show that they have been turned over to their husbands by their foolish mothers, in a pitiable state of delusion; that up to the day of her marriage, a woman, otherwise well educated, may be nothing more than a great green girl a great baby.

Authorship: A Tale

Well sir, after a time, the lovers that I refused contrary to what I expected of them for they taught me by their *words* when the affair came to issue, that to refuse a lover was to make a friend for life, to secure a brother who would give up every pursuit in life to watch over you, a sort of guardian angel who would never, never forget you, nor cease to love you they went over to the side of my she-foes one by one, where if they did not mock me, nor lie about me, they suffered me to be called a coquette. I did not know the meaning of the word for a great while; but when I did, I was rather gratified than otherwise; for why reproach a woman with seeking to be loved?

With seeking to be loved so innocently too

Yes. By and by, my mother told me to beware that I was getting a bad name. Wife! said my father starting up out of his chair wife! Never shall I forget his look. Oh said I, a coquette I suppose, or a proud vain girl, or a flirt? No *Miss* Maria, said my mother. Wife wife repeated he, you know how much I love you; you know that I am faithful in whatever I once undertake; you know that I married you in spite of the changes I saw, when after twelve years of separation, I got back and found you, a sister-of-the-church, as you call it, a bride to your Saviour nay nay, I will not be interrupted. You know me explain the speech, I have just heard. Be quick, and observe what I say you know whether I am likely to be as good as my word; if I ever hear you call Maria, *Miss* Maria again, as you did just now, we are no longer man and wife. My mother was terrified. Speak speak wife what is the bad name they give her?

They call her the lady now *Lady* Maria.

So much the better, said he; and who cares, thought I. So much the better she *is* a lady; nay wife, she is more, she is what few ladies are, she is a gentlewoman by nature. Do what she will, say what she will, she has always the look of a gentlewoman. Here Maria here; give me a kiss. I obeyed. There wife, said he there; show me another woman able to do that! able to receive a kiss without looking as if she did not deserve it, or as if it were a thing not to be proud of. For shame Robert, for shame! said my mother, as he drew her up to him and kissed her with a quivering lip, and held her to his heart, and whispered something to her which made her smile, in spite of her determination to be serious.

From that hour I began to take pleasure in the idea of being called *Lady* Maria, and a sort of childish delight in the display of my finery, though I was never permitted to go abroad with it, even by piecemeal. To prove that I knew how to sit like a gentlewoman too, I would loll on the sofa by the hour together, when I could get by myself; or sit on my father's knee with a great India shawl about me, and half my rich wardrobe on my back, when my poor mother was away.

At last however she caught me parading a large desolate room in cold weather, with a slow step, as if I were marching to music. I do not know what possessed me; but the truth is, that she found me there quite by myself and blue with the cold, rigged out in all that I could contrive to get on, of the heaps of outlandish dresses that my father had brought from the sea, and the isles of the sea. I knew not which way to look, and she verily thought me mad, I am sure. I was the first to recover, and I tried to steal away, but she caught me, and rung the bell, and would have proceeded to strip me before all the servants I do believe, had I not recollected myself in time to say—Mother, you have called me *Miss* Maria again if you do not suffer me to go quietly away, my father shall know it, before I sleep, whatever be the consequences! I had no time to consider what I should say I was half mad with vexation, desperate with fear and shame I hardly knew what I did say, till I saw my proud mother stop, and turn pale as if I had struck her to the heart, and throw up her arms with a feeble cry, and fall with her whole length upon the floor. I was terrified to death at first; I screamed for help I knew not what I had said, nor what I had done, till I saw her move, when I gave her in charge to Judith, and escaped to my room where I tore off the finery I was loaded with, and made a vow never to wear it again; but I felt as if in some way or other I had been guilty of parricide.

Authorship: A Tale

She never forgave me I am sure, though I went down on my knees to her the next day, after watching at her chamber-door all night, and tried every way in my power to persuade her that I had no meaning in what I said. No no she never forgave me. But the spell of authority was broken for ever. I found I had within me a courage that I had never dreamed of, a brave something which had never been visible before.

By and by too I discovered the meaning of her speech I heard her call a woman of no character *Miss*. Oh what a bitter day that was to me! and what a long, long night! I almost cried my heart out, as I lay in bed hour after hour, unable to get a wink of sleep, and afraid and ashamed to show my face even to my dear father. I was truly wretched, humbled to the very dust, and so penitent sir, that with a kind word or two my mother might have made me any thing she desired even a Methodist. I would have gone to chapel, I would have dressed any how, I would have worn my hair any way to please her. But some how or other, in the midst of my grief, it occurred to me that when my mother called me *Miss Maria*, she had said something more about my innocence. Of my innocence! that led me to think of guilt. You wonder at my courage

I do indeed

But so it was. Until that hour, as I hope for mercy, I had no idea of what was intended by the speech of my cruel mother. I pray you to believe me I pray you to repeat my story it may do much good when I am no more. I remember my feeling now, as if it were but last night, my consternation eagerness and perplexity. I remember that my blood thrilled with fear as I lay and meditated on the mystery. I had heard before of reproach and of dishonor, but I had never known the true meaning of the words till now, when it came to me like a flash of light. Can you believe what I say?

Yes yes I do believe you.

I was very simple to be sure I crept under the clothes I remember, and covered my face; but when I tell you that my mother used to say, after the birth of a child, that it had been brought by the nurse, and that I believed her till I was almost old enough to be a mother myself, what I say to you may appear more credible. Yet such is the fact. I was full thirteen before I had any other idea and I was full sixteen before I knew that babies are what they are a part of their own mothers

Well

I have come to a period of my story now pray pardon me let me try to recollect myself. I I I mean to give you the truth sir, and the whole truth, but you know I am sure you do that that she covered her face with her hands, I saw the tears trickling through her fingers, and I trembled with apprehension. Oh sir! believe me, it is more easy for a proud woman to go astray than to speak of it

I could hardly get my breath

About this time Sir, I became acquainted with a middleaged man, who was a tutor in our neighborhood. He was a favorite with every body, with my father, my mother, my sister, and myself. And yet he never appeared anxious for the good opinion of either. His conversation was unlike that of any body that I had ever seen at that time. He was thought to be a man of high birth, and I believe was, though very poor. My mother was afraid of him, and my father acknowledged one day that Mr. O I need not give his name was quite familiar with every thing about a ship. Of course he became a favorite with my dear father, and of course

A favorite with you, said I.

Yes. But I did not love him I could not love him I was too much afraid of him for that.

I smiled

Hear me through, before you judge me. Though I did not love this man, I took a sort of pleasure in his company, in hearing him talk, and in watching his countenance. I would sit before him for half the day, listening to his deep rich voice, and watching the light and shadow that played in the depth of his eyes, without hearing one word in five that he spoke, or understanding what he said, any more than if he had been conversing in a language I was ignorant of.

What color were they?

I do not know.

Very well proceed.

I knew not how he got such an ascendancy over me; but I declare to you, that at one time, although I did not love him, he could have made me do any thing he pleased

I thought so

Nay nay, you are angry now; that look is unworthy of you.

Proceed I beseech you. It is time for me to go; and your husband will think it very strange if I go without returning to the company above stairs.

Very true touching the bell very true, and I beg you not to go without returning to them, nor without hearing the remainder of my story we are nigh the catastrophe now.

I thought so, I was just going to say, when a servant appeared.

Go to your master, and say to him that Mr. H. will be with him in a few minutes.

CHAPTER XVIII.

EDUCATION OF A SENSITIVE GIRL: SIMPLICITY.

Do not make up your mind sir, till you hear the rest of my story. After I knew this man, I grew tired of all other society; I could not bear the talk of other people, nor the amusements of other people. Yet if I know my own heart now, and I think I do I am old enough it was fear that worked upon me, not love. He was wretched I never knew why but I would have laid down my life at one time to make him happy

You have said as much already

Some great sorrow was eating his heart away; but he never complained, he never spoke as if he needed sympathy, although I could see that he was more cheerful when I was near him, than at other times.

Indeed

At last he began to talk with me; but for a good while I was so frightened, I did not hear one word in fifty of what he said you have no idea how stupid I was I really could not hear him, though we sat side by side on a couch like this

Umph!

And yet the moment he was gone, all that he had been saying would recur to me with such force, night after night, as to keep me awake.

You were not in love though all this time; you are sure of that?

When he saw this, he took pity on me

The devil he did!

Ah, how unreasonable you are.

Very true.

You men are all pretty much alike I am afraid

I hope not

So do I. And after a while I am quite sure of this too whatever you may think, after you have heard the whole story after a while, he began to love me.

Indeed

Yes he could sit by me as you do now, hour after hour, without opening his mouth

Madam are you laughing at me?

God forbid! You are not a man to he laughed at and he would look at me, I have heard my father say, till the tears stood in his eyes, when he thought nobody saw him

As I do, thought I I wonder she does not pop me in there.

And then perhaps, after being very agreeable, he would start up of a sudden as you did about an hour ago and leave the house, and not show himself again for a whole week. I desired to know why he behaved in this way; and he told me that I was very much like somebody that he loved, and somebody that he was in some way or other separated from.

How did you feel when he said this?

Feel I was very much gratified.

What a mystery you are! I never saw any body like you.

Well after this, he began to talk in a very odd way of sparing me; and of sparing me for the sake of another.

The scoundrel

Sir! He was no more a scoundrel than

Than I am, hey?

She bowed

Proceed, I pray you.

I did not understand him; yet I saw by his look that he had said something, which he expected me to be offended at. Well he went away

Went away! You are skipping a part of the story madam

She smiled. No no. He went away, and his last words were

Were they his *last words* madam; were they, of a truth?

You hope they were, I see plainly.

That I do!

For shame. You are happy now, said he Oh sir! never shall I forget his look, nor the tone of his deep rich mellow voice, nor the dead quiet of that evening

It occurred to me just here, I can't say why, that *my* voice had never been remarkable for depth or mellowness; but I said nothing I waited the issue.

You are happy now, Maria. We were leaning side by side, out of the window of a little rustic summer-house that overhung the river; the weather was warm

Ugh

And the stars were very thick in the smooth water. And I perceived as he spoke a ripple just underneath my feet as if a large rain-drop had fallen there. I looked up not a shadow was to be seen overhead, not a dim spot in the whole sky. And though to be sure, I have known people weep for joy as well as for sorrow, yet I never knew any body to weep without knowing it, as I must have done, if the tear was mine You are happy now, Maria

Was that all he said?

You are happy now, and I leave you that I may not make you otherwise. I go away from you that the resemblance which distracts me, may not be rendered altogether complete.

Madam

Well

Did he go? that's the point if you please *did* he go?

He did go. But after he was gone, I grew sorrowful, peevish, and weary of life. I spent half my days in walking where we had walked together, and half my nights in saying over to myself what he had been saying to me at intervals for three months before. I began to waste away; every body saw it, even my dear father, who could not bear me out of his sight; and my poor mother told me my temper was a trial to her

And yet you did not love this man.

Authorship: A Tale

No if I know what love is, I did not.

Would you have married him?

No.

Very well. Proceed, if you please.

Just one year from the day of his departure the very day as I stood leaning out of the window of the little summerhouse at the very same hour too the sky as bright and the river as clear, thinking of what he said when he left me, another big rain-drop struck the water, just underneath my feet. I was afraid to look up for the very night before, I had been visited with a terrible dream I thought I saw his spirit coming toward me with a slow step out of the shadow of the large trees at the end of our favorite walk afraid to stir and almost afraid to breathe; for though I did not see him nor hear him, I knew that he was at my side; I knew it by the feeling of the very atmosphere about me.

Of course nothing could be more natural. Who spoke first?

I do not know. He was very pale and haggard

You did look up then, hey? You did stir, you did breathe, after all?

But his proud stern eyes were prouder than ever, sterner than ever; there was a secret in them I could see it in their fiery depth.

Indeed.

I was very happy; so happy that I did not care to live another day. The moment he spoke to me, I felt as if the previous year of sorrow had never been, as if we had parted in our usual way and met in our usual way. After looking at me, as my father would have looked at me, he drew me up to his heart, with the strength of a giant

Well said I catching my breath as I spoke.

And set his lips to my forehead

Well

He had never kissed me before, and I was dreadfully frightened by his fervor

Natural enough but proceed, I pray you.

But I felt no joy in the kiss; for it appeared to me that his lips were like a live coal, and the touch of his hand as it clasped mine terrified me; I could feel every pulsation through every part of my frame. It appeared to be all alive.

I dare say it was

I do not regard what you say now; it may be my turn to laugh, by and by

I hope it may; I would give the world to see you laugh.

Authorship: A Tale

He told me where he had been it was a great way off. He told me what he had been for it was to say farewell to the woman of his heart farewell to her whom he thought me so like

Good God! how pale you are! She appeared to be suffocating. After a short struggle she added, in a voice that thrilled through and through me with its counterfeit pleasantry.

He was a married man

Had he the courage to say so?

Yes, he had been to say farewell to his wife on her deathbed. She was in America

In America what was her name?

I do not know, I never asked her name. He loved her how could I bear to ask her name? She was now dead, and some child I hardly know whose or what, for when he spoke of it, he appeared to be gasping for breath was dead also. When I left you Maria, said he, I meant to come back and marry you, and then I had such magnificent dreams of the future! I thought of recovering what I had lost, my power and my birth—right, and of passing all my life with a woman like her who had betrayed me, and with a boy like him that I had lost for ever. I could not understand his speech I would not for he had never spoken of marriage to me; but I felt a sickness of the heart, a strange wayward heavy sorrow stealing over me, as he proceeded. Such was my hope when I left you, said he; but I cannot marry you now.

Here followed another suffocating pause after a brief struggle she continued Sir! though I never saw the time when I would have married this man, yet now, when I heard him say that he could not marry me, when I saw by his look that he would not marry me, that by no possibility could we ever be so dear to each other as we might have been—perhaps perhaps but for the vow which I thought he must have made by the bed—side of a dying wife or by that of a dead child oh sir! I cannot give you an idea of the sorrow, of the heavy, insupportable sorrow that weighed me to the earth

Where was your pride?

Pride sir! where all pride is, when there is no hope. I felt as if I had no longer any business on earth; I felt as if I had been betrothed to him all my life, as if as if in a word, I forgot where I was I forgot my father I forgot myself

A figure of speech I hope! said I, quite thrown off my guard by her provoking composure.

I love you too much to destroy you, said he. I have come back, I hardly know why, dear Maria bless me! you have snapped your watch—chain

So I have; but proceed with your story.

I hardly know why, dear Maria

You have a good memory *dear* Maria, said I.

Dear Maria, unless it be to say farewell to you, and to caution you against all who appear to you like me, haughty and reserved and wretched. We are more dangerous dear, than the youthful or the rich, the happy, the handsome, the brave, or the eloquent

Authorship: A Tale

Fudge

Pity and awe are more fatal to such as you, said he, than joy, or hope, or admiration, or love

Pho

I could not sleep a wink that night

Here's a break in the narrative! said I to myself

And I was at my father's door by peep of day, determined to tell him every thing that had occurred

No!

Yes

But *did* you tell him?

I did

Well

Why! what's the matter with you! how happy you look!

God bless you, that's all! I have nothing more to say; but snapping my fingers God for ever bless you!

To tell you the truth, after my head was on the pillow, I began to have a sort of a a sort of a misgiving just here touching her heart with a smile about the behaviour of this married man, though I acquitted him of treachery

Of course; but what did your father say?

Not much. He was a man of few words; he merely took me upon his knee, and giving me a most affectionate kiss and a hearty hug, said he hoped I would oblige him so far as to drop a line to Mr. O , saying that he had better keep out of the way of my father.

Which you did?

Yes, with joy, adding for a P. S. that he had better keep out of the way of my father's daughter.

How could you! was he not still dear to you?

Very dear but not so dear as my father's approbation.

You are a good girl, by Jove I beg your pardon but what said he in reply?

Nothing not a word.

Well why do you stop? why turn away your face?

I stop that I may gain courage to tell you the rest; I would have you know the whole truth.

Authorship: A Tale

As she spoke, the smile disappeared from about her mouth, and her eyes filled.

About four months after this allow me to hurry on to the catastrophe, I pray you I had begun to be cheerful. My father was happy, and for a great while nothing had been heard of Mr. O . But one evening as I sat half asleep in the little summer-house, which I had kept away from for a great while, under a superstitious idea connected with the rain-drop I spoke of, he appeared suddenly before me looking just as usual just as if nothing had happened. I spoke to him freely I was grieved and sore, I told him, that he should have so little regard for propriety; and I begged him to withdraw, immediately and without noise, if he cared a farthing for his life. When you have heard what I have to say, said he, I shall go, and not before. I attempted to pass him; but he stood in my way with a look which at any other time would have subdued me. I tremble for you, said he. You have made me a desperate man Maria hear what I have to say, I beseech you, if not for my sake, for your own sake for the sake of your father. Of my father! said I securing the bell-rope as I spoke I have promised my father to see you no more. I shall keep my word. If you wish me to respect you if you would not smother at once all regard in my heart for you, leave me do leave me! But he would not stir a step, and as I knew that my courage would not last long, if he persevered, I put on a gay careless air, and shaking the bell-rope before his eyes, told him if he did not disappear, in some way or other up or down I cared not which, before I counted three, I would alarm the house. He defied me, and was reaching out his arm toward the bell-rope, when I saw that no time was to be lost. One two three said I and before the words were out of my mouth, I heard the alarm-bell pealing in my father's study. Then sir, then for the first time, did the terrible consequences appear to me. Oh for the love of God, sir, said I, do leave me! for your own sake leave me! for my sake! for the sake of my dear father! But no no he folded his arms, and stood facing the broad avenue, which now began to rattle with footsteps. I could forbear no longer I fell upon my knees I bowed my forehead to the dust before his feet, praying him to go away, and escape death, if it was only in mercy to me. I know not what followed I only know that I saw the faces of my father, of my mother, and of two or three of our old servants crowding up to the door with dreadful eagerness that I heard the voice of my father sounding as I never heard it before—and that while I was trying to stay his uplifted arm, a pistol went off close to my ear, and it grew suddenly dark about me.

I heard nothing more, I saw nothing more, till I woke in my own bed, as out of a long sweet sleep, and saw my dear father hanging over me, and my mother, and my sister, and a nurse all sitting about the room with their faces turned away from the light, as if they were wearied with overwatching. Father dear father, said I what ails you? what's the matter with you? what have I done? But why tell of the joy of my heart, when he kissed me and spoke to me more kindly than ever, and called me his brave dear child; why say to you that on seeing my father safe, I forgot even to ask about poor Mr O .

You amaze me

But after a while I did inquire, and I had the grief to hear that he had barely escaped with his life, that he was yet under the care of a surgeon, and that he had received a shot of which he would carry the mark to his grave. I wept for him

You weep now

Do I it is for myself then; for he, I have reason to believe now, is happy, while I O Father of Mercies! how much have I to endure still! how much have I had to endure in consequence of that dreadful interview!

Her voice died away, and she appeared to be choking; but after a short pause a pause of unspeakable terror to me she drew a long breath, as if she had recovered her self-possession by a great effort, and proceeded with her story.

CHAPTER XIX.

ADVENTURE ON THE ROAD... THE CLUB-ROOM.

The substance of that story, I shall now try to give; I cannot do more I cannot give her words I dare not; nor can I describe to you the fixedness of her look, nor the sobs, nor the sharp throes, nor the burst of passionate sorrow that shook her during the recital. She never saw Mr. O again, it appeared. About six months after the affair of the garden, her father took to his bed with a strange malady of the heart, and the very day before his death, he called his daughter up to him, and throwing his arms about her neck, and kissing her as if he knew what was to occur the following day, told her to be of good cheer and to take courage, and whatever the world might say after his death, to remember that he died glorying in his dear girl; that he had gone to his grave satisfied with her, and acquitting her before God and before his angels of that which a bad world had begun to whisper about her. And what is that? father, said she. But he would not tell her perhaps he could not; and the very next day, he died upon her neck. Well she got over the loss and had begun to appear as if she had still some business with life, when her mother being irritated one day, told her that she had broken her father's heart; and before she could reply, that she was the reproach of the family. She was a high-spirited girl; and having some property of her own, she determined to leave the house of her mother and go to Birmingham, where Judith who had cast off the church and married a man of large property, was then living at her ease. Her mother too, she had reason to believe, was about to be married to a sectarian of the village, whom her father could never bear the sight of. This determined her. She dropped a line that very mail to Judith, and the very next day, set off in a post-chaise with her maid for Birmingham, where she expected to be received with a transport of joy by Judith, who had always appeared to love her in spite of the church. But on the way, she was met by a man with a letter from the newly-made wife, saying that she could not possibly receive the runaway into the house of her beloved Charles who had a young sister with him at the time though it made her very unhappy to refuse; that some how or other he had got hold of the stories about Mr. O who was known to be still in the neighbourhood of the village, lurking about perhaps for another interview; that she could not bear to grieve her good mother, and that she would advise her dear sister Maria to go back to her home as fast as ever she could. What was to be done? The poor girl was now half way on her dreadful journey. She grew desperate. She could not go back and whither should she go, if she did not go back? Was it indeed true that stories were in circulation about her and Mr. O? Could it be that he was yet lurking about the village, in the hope of what *of another interview?* Could it be! was it not very possible that the dying speech of her father had reference to that which Judith now alluded to? some story of her, which made it improper unsafe perhaps for a female to associate with her. She considered her path how fearful and how dark it had been! Who was there on earth to defend her? Who was there to love or pity her? Whither should she go! Her father was in his grave; she had no mother no home. Her mother was on the brink of marriage with a man who could never be to her what even a step-father should be to a child. Her sister no no! she could not bear to think of Judith now; it was enough to break her heart. So young, so beautiful, so good, so happy, and yet able to refuse her own flesh and blood a brief asylum beneath her `beloved Charles's' roof; and why? why? because forsooth he had a sister with him, and had got hold of the stories about Mr. O.

Her mind was made up. She seated herself with the calmness of desperation. She wrote a farewell to her mother and a farewell to her sister; both were blotted with her tears. Then having prepared for the issue, and secured a place for herself in the coach for Birmingham, whither she determined to go, if it were only to hear out of her brother-in-law's own mouth what the stories were that Judith had spoken of, she discharged the post-boy, and calling her attendant, whose mother lived in the neighbourhood of the place where they were, told her to go to her mother's and stay there till she heard from her. The girl obeyed, and the poor outcast who had never been a mile from her father's door without a companion to cheer and guard her, was now left alone to make her way with strangers over a strange road. It was at this very time that I saw her. We were both inside of a coach with a cheerful gossiping nobody, upon whose aged animal spirits the ride appeared to operate like champagne or ether. I had been to Litchfield to see the spire of the cathedral, so praised by Sir Christopher Wren, to see the birth-place of Dr. Johnson the outside of the house in which he was born they would not suffer me to see the inside the

willow he planted ages before he appeared on earth, and the poor dear children that were left by Chantrey the sculptor, dead asleep in the dreary atmosphere of the cathedral. It was a fine clear day so fine that I did not much like to go inside of the coach even after I had reconnoitred; but there was no help for it, and so in I bundled with a view to find out whether or no something which I saw in the shape of a female, stowed away in a far corner of the coach, was dead or alive. It was muffled up to the eyes, and yet I could have sworn by the smooth graceful motion of the neck, when it stirred, that it was not only alive but young, though for the first league or two it jolted about like a dead body, at every jolt of the carriage. By and by however, one third of our cargo she who had been afoot all her life before, after making several diverting essays at conversation, got fairly a going at a rate which would have exhausted any other human creature upon any other subject under heaven, I do believe. Nothing would do but she must give `a full an' partic'lar account' of her history, and of the business which had brought her forth on this memorable day. It was to bring together a husband and wife who had married for love, and separated, nobody knew why; a husband who beat his wife the first month of his marriage, and a wife who went back to her mother while the honey-moon was at the full. I advised her to give it up, though what she said was not said either to me or to my companion, but in a sort of soliliquy such as you may hear every hour in the day, if you happen to be with people who are dying for a gossip, and yet are afraid of being snubbed if they speak to you. I have heard a deal of talk in my day; and I have talked a deal too, I flatter myself; but I confess that I never saw any body that would have been a match for this dear old woman. She was perfectly happy, and she made a noise by the hour together, like a spinning-wheel; it was not very unlike the purring of a large lazy cat after a huge dinner. Willing to see what she was made of, I began to preach to her about the folly of her undertaking. Why interfere in such a case? depend upon it, my good soul, said I, if they whose duty it is to love each other, do not love each other it is not for a stranger to make them. You are breeding mischief, you are bringing to gether two people, who, if they cannot come together without your help, had better not come together at all; a sob from the dark part of the coach if you were to reconcile them to-day, they would quarrel with each other to-morrow and with you the next day another sob I was in a fair way to know what the matter was with the bundle before me; I had struck the right chord; I saw the heart heave and the head stir as with new life; I saw the little fingers agitated wherewith it clung to the strap of the coach, and I could hear a change in its breathing; I had only to persevere, and who should say what might be the consequences? But before I could repeat the blow which vibrated so audibly, the good woman opposite me had got such head-way upon her that I found it no easy matter to grapple with the subject again. S'il crache il est perdu she must have heard the story, for having got the *parole*, she kept on on on as if she were afraid of losing it by some such catastrophe, and at a rate which would be inconceivable to those who are not aware of this great truth a truth which begins to be regarded now as the foundation of gymnasticks, the Olympian games, and the glory of the Greeks namely that if one set of muscles be favored with a holyday, some other set is very sure to run wild with excess of energy.

But I persevered until I got along aside, when after two or three desperate essays to shoot a-head, she slipped her wind, gave up the weather-gage, and dropped a-stern a metaphor worthy of Addison's bridled muse, who longed to launch into a bolder strain as quietly as a Dutch man-of-war. The rest of the story may be told in a few words. Before we arrived at Birmingham; though we had but a few miles to go, and there was a third person to overhear what we said to each other, and it was day-light all the way, I learnt enough to satisfy me that the bundle contained a woman a modest, a youthful, and of course a pretty woman who if she were not stayed by a miracle, would be sure to throw herself into the first river she came to, or into the arms of the first man she saw, if he spoke to her kindly and appeared to be a good man. But how could I be of any use to her? We were strangers and if she had eloped, as I thought she had, either from a boarding-school, a husband, or a step-mother; if she had no home, how could we be otherwise without injury to her? I considered with myself, and after much ado, persuaded her to tell me a part of her own story as if it were the story of another. She did so, and spite of her emotion, with such success, that the dear old woman at her side, though she sat with her mouth open watching her all the way, had no suspicion of the truth. After this, I contrived to tell her how to proceed charging her to go straightway to the house of her married sister, the moment she arrived; to bear up with courage for the darkest time of night was just before day; but above all to give up the scheme she had in view, to abandon all thought of hiding herself, or of changing her name, though it were but for a single day, or a single hour. It would be worse than death to her. She understood me, and burst into tears, but they were tears of joy and hope. To prove that I was playing no trick

with her, I told her who I was, and where I should be found for the next half year; I gave her my card, upon which I wrote my address, with my real name, a name that nobody in Europe and few in America were entrusted with, and I showed her my seal engraved with correspondent initials. I did more I gave her two out of my three fictitious names. How could she be otherwise than gratified by the trust I put in her? Confidence begets confidence faith, faith. How could she do otherwise than put faith in me, after I had acknowledged, and after she had so much reason to believe, that I was in *her* power? Evil or good I must be; if evil she had a check upon me; if good, what had she to fear? How could I harm her? I was going to leave her, not to stay with her; and at the worst, I could only betray her name; while she had it in her power to betray me, for aught she knew, to death.

In a word after much entreaty I prevailed with her. She had the courage to trust me with her name, so that if I chose I might say to her in a letter, on the following, or on some future day, what I could not well say at the time. We arrived while she was promising to go straightway to her married sister's, to give up all idea of eluding the search of her friends, to pursue the path I had pointed out; and if any thing happened of a serious nature, to consult with me. I shook hands with her, alighted, called a coach, and was helping her out, when her brother-in-law appeared and spoke to her so cordially and so affectionately, that she sprang from the step into his arms with a loud cry, and left me to help the good-for-nothing dear old-woman out of the coach as I could. I was rather provoked, and the more as I saw the brother-in-law eyeing me as if he didn't much like the cut of my jib; and I was turning to go away, when she saw me, and extending both hands toward me as if we had known each other all the days of our life, she asked me how I could have the heart to leave her in the street as if as if her sobs choked her as if without saying so much as good-by'e to her. I was delighted by her altered manner; and seeing that she was not very likely to remember which of my three names was the true one, I introduced myself to her brother-in-law, who instantly invited me to his house. The poor girl! She knew not which way to look; but as I had not lost my self-command I never do, by the by in such a case, though she had hers, I gave her a sign which luckily for her she had the courage to obey. She seconded the invitation immediately and I, of course, immediately declined it. We parted and I saw her no more to my knowledge, till we met in the way I described, at the Isle-of-Wight. Judge of my feelings when she told me that I had *saved her*, and of the deep serene joy I felt now, when I heard her confess that my behaviour had given her a better, and she believed a truer idea of the disposition of our sex toward her sex, than she ever had before; and that, but for me, although she went with her brother-in-law, as I advised her to do, she would not have remained a single day beneath his roof so altered was the look, and so unsisterly the conduct of his wife, who, it appeared now, had written the letter which nearly drove her mad, merely that she might subdue her courage and force her back to the dominion of her proud mother.

I was happy, for she still had such faith in me, that she felt safe, she said, in trusting me with that which nothing could have induced her to trust with any other man she ever saw, except her own father. She had given me proof already she was willing to give more. She had received the letter which I sent her the very day after we parted, inclosing a brief appeal to her mother, so written as not to expose the sufferer to reproach if it were not well received! And it had been refused by her, when laid upon her table, in the hope that no inquiry would be made by her brother-in-law, with whom she was more of a favorite in the course of a single day than her sister had thought it possible she would ever be, and in the hope that I, on receiving it back through the post-office, might be led to believe that the name she wrote on the card was not her true name, and that she was not so imprudent a girl as she appeared to be. It was a pity she did so, for a long, long while afterwards, my letter came back to me open read by every clerk in the office, for all I knew.

She did not stay long at her brother-in-law's; for the newly-married wife grew jealous of her, and before a month was over, took the liberty to say, that really, considering the stories that were abroad, it was the duty of her beloved sister to be very circumspect. Her beloved sister could not bear this, and having no other home to go to, set off to see a relation who lived at Bath. At Bath she met her present husband, who, after a courtship of three years, during a part of which time he was in America, married her.

Did he know of your intimacy with Mr. O , said I, when she had come to this part of her story.

Authorship: A Tale

He knew every thing that you know, and more, except so much as related to my poor mother; I could not bear to tell him that if I was not worthy of him, nor of any other man, it was her fault

You never spoke of me

Yes I did; but by another name. I never acknowledged that I knew you, nor when I heard him speak of you, that you were the very individual, who rode with me from Litchfield to Birmingham, though I made no secret of your generous behaviour.

And why did you not speak of me? I wish you had.

And so do I but I have told you the reason before, I believe. I did not even hope to see you again; I did not feel justified in betraying you after I knew that you had told me the truth; and what is more, I did not much like to pay him she did not smile when she said this to pay him so poor a compliment as to say, after a courtship of three years, that he reminded me of you forty times in the course of a day.

Are we so much alike?

No, not much; and I may add now, that before he went to America he had a sort of antipathy toward the Yankees I beg your pardon toward the Americans.

Pho If you mean Yankees, why not say so? We are proud of the title. I am a native Yankee, a thorough-bred Yankee, and I always take off my hat when I am called either a Yankee, a na-tyve, or a Brother-Jonathan.

Is it possible!

So he married you after his voyage, did he?

Yes. He would have married me before; but I would not allow him to do so, till he had gone to the bottom of the dreadful stories Ah! that we should be so at the mercy of man! He pursued Mr. O to America; but he was never so happy as to meet him, though it appears now that for a long while, they were in the neighbourhood of each other.

So happy do you say!

I do, for such is the exalted opinion I have now even now of that man's probity and good faith and love, that if Edward's life was at stake, I would apply to him, almost as soon as I would to you, and I should be willing to have Edward, or you, or any body receive for truth whatever he might choose to say of me. I would sign whatever he chose to say of me, without asking to read it.

I could not bear this. You are infatuated, said I.

So he would say were I to tell him what my opinion is of you, so would my husband say were I to speak of either, as I feel. Ah, my dear sir! say what you will of the poor women, you are worse than we are. I never saw a man who did not laugh when he heard another man praised for great virtue.

Bravo! I responded, willing to change the subject. How much better you look; I should hardly know you, now that I come to observe the

Men may know each other well; and that may be the reason why they have so bad an opinion of each other.

Authorship: A Tale

You are severe

No but some how or other, my spirits are up; and I have a joy here a hope which is quite new to me. Are you superstitious

No indeed

I am. I love to suppose that when I am happy there is a good reason for it somewhere. The truth is, I believe, that you are to be the author of much good to us. You are to save my dear husband as you saved me.

By the by, what will your husband think of my civility; I have been with you a very long while now.

Pretty much as I begin to think of it stay stay I *must* give you an idea of his real character, before we go a step further. He married me in spite of the cruel stories that were in every body's mouth about me, and contrary to the advice of every friend on earth. He had begun to be regarded as one of the first young men of the age. But for me sir she grew pale as death, in a moment he *would be* now, if not the very first, one of the first men of the age. For brilliant power, and for variety of power, I never met with his equal. *But for me*, I say for his friends deserted him after his marriage; not one of the whole would suffer a wife or a child to associate with me. I cared little for this, but he could not brook it; and growing desperate, he launched away into a style of living, with a view to mortify a few foolish women who lived near us, which ended in our complete overthrow. It was then that he took to authorship it was then that I saw the full worth of what I possessed we were happy; and if he had been treated as he deserved, we might have been happy now. Stay I will give you an idea of what he is. You do not know him; you never will know him; for he is much too proud I fear, and you much too happy for companionship. You will never be on such terms with each other now, as you might be if both were proud or both happy and I out of the way

I understood her; I saw that after so much concealment on her part respecting me, it would never do for me to be intimate with her husband; it would be a source of perpetual inquietude for the wife, and of perpetual embarrassment for me.

Here she took something out of a port-folio. You see this paper it was the reception this very paper met with which provoked him to throw up his birth-right, his heritage, his hope in the great commonwealth of literature. Take it home with you and read it at your leisure. You know the sensibility of a young author you can feel poetry, you know what poetry is and what it should be; you know that such poetry, however worthless it may appear to the multitude, and however worthless it may be in fact, is the very breath of life to the poet himself; you know that men who are able to talk the language you see there, cannot brook the sway of ordinary people the crowned and sceptred nothings of our age, and that if they are not heard with favor in the high place of song, they are sure to die of a broken heart.

Good God! why, you are a poet yourself. You are talking pure poetry now!

To tell you the truth sir, I have made some poetry in my day ah, how serious you are! but I am sorry for it now, and hope with the blessing of God, never to do so any more.

I laughed. Her manner was irresistibly comic no, not comic playful. Ah how happy *you* are! said I.

As happy as a bird.

I really do not know what to make of you; you appear to change your character every day almost every hour. Now I am ready to laugh with you; a moment ago, I was ready to cry with you. Strange! though I have known you so long and seen so much of you, it never entered my head before that you were capable of a of of

Authorship: A Tale

Of poetry you mean; I dare say not. We never consider it safe to acknowledge before a man that we are neither fools nor babies. We know that a woman who is *able* to take care of herself is pretty sure to be *left to take care* of herself by you pretty sure to be regarded by you with aversion or fear

No no

Look me in the face. Would you marry a woman that made poetry?

Why, to confess the truth, I should be a little shy of her; but you cannot say as much of the world; see how two or three female poets of our day are puffed and cheered by the critics. You cannot open a Review

Oh for a female-critic on she-poets! oh for a Review conducted altogether by women! Their impartiality when they spoke of your doings would be a fair offset for the niggardly praise and weak boyish puffing that we receive at your hands, though we do that which you are unable to do

We madam, *We!*

Oh lud, what have I done!

What I am sorry for you have made poetry.

And so have you

Well well, it cannot be helped now.

I might have made a better use of my time to be sure which is a good deal for a woman to say, educated as women are now. I might have made a prose book, which if it were tolerable in its way, would have done more good than all the poetry that ever was made or ever will be made. I might have abridged the labor of children over their a, b, abs, or contrived a new method of teaching the alphabet. Ah! you do not like me half so much I see, now that for aught you know, I may be of some little use in the world

You an authoress you a blue-stocking you a woman of poetry!

Shame, shame! what would you have us do? We are not allowed to appear with you, nor to strive with you. There is no trade nor profession but the stage for us, and you know how that is regarded. What are we to do? Would you leave us no hope, no refuge, no resource? nothing to cheer us, nothing to excite us through life but the desire of being thought well of by man

To be sure

But well of by him, for what purpose? How are we to escape when we know the truth? How are we to behave when we see that if we desire to be thought well of by him, we must prepare to be to him what children are to us? We are bred in a jail; you keep us there, and you reproach us with our unhealthy condition, with our credulity, with our simplicity, and with our narrow-mindedness. You would have us happy and full of courage, and yet you would not suffer us to breathe the very air that you breathe, if you knew it would make us independent of you, or able to strive with you to strive with you, not as the young women of Sparta strove with the young men of Sparta, in trials of rude strength, but as women should strive with men, side by side in the chariot-race of literature and virtue. Would not! you do not. You forbid us now to breathe the air of heaven as you breathe it, freely and by ourselves. You do not suffer us to breathe such poetry as you breathe even though it be to us the breath of life; nor to read the books that you read. We have but one path-way to glory; you the whole surface of the earth; and yet, if you could, you would make us forego the use of that one little path-way a green lane with hardly a

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foot-step in it by persuasion or by ridicule by trick or by

She was interrupted by a servant with a note for her, which after reading, she handed to me; it was from her husband, begging her to say that the gentlemen above were about to adjourn to the club-room, and that they were waiting for me. What am I to do? said I, seeing her turn pale. It is for you to direct me. I am ready to do whatever you desire.

She called the servant and dismissed him with a message to her husband; it was to say that I should be detained but a few minutes longer.

Yes yes, I have no other hope. I would have you go by all means; I would have you find out who they are; but remember your promise. Oh remember your promise! You are never to go near them again if they should prove to be what I suppose them to be, a crew of gamesters. Here here take this, my friend my dear friend my brother! I may call you so now and this and this giving me two or three folded papers and read them before you sleep or now if you like; one is the paper I told you of just now read it, read it and say if it be not of a truth, a tremendous revelation of character

I began to read.

The other is what I hope you will not be offended with me for having written. You are an author; you have done a deal of mischief you may do more. You have done much I dare say, because you had nobody near with courage enough to tell you the truth no, no, do not open that here; take it home with you. It was written just now while you were up stairs, under an idea that as we are likely never to meet again for I shall avoid you and I wish you to avoid me it may make an impression upon you. You are at liberty to tell my story in your own way, but I beg of you to read that paper before you do so and to conceal the names if you publish it before you know that I am in my grave

I know not what I said in reply; I was looking at the paper in my hand.

There there, you had better go now, said she, when she saw that I had finished reading the paper go go, you had better go now; I do not ask you how you *like* such poetry I see it in your eyes, I hear it in your breathing farewell.

Stay. You mean to avoid me hereafter?

Yes

And you desire me to avoid you?

Yes

But how am I to proceed in this matter; I do not like to leave you, before I know in what way I can be of use to you.

You *must* leave me. Should they prove to be authors, write me I shall not reply, unless it be to thank you for what is dearer to me than life.

And if they are not authors

Write me nevertheless; I dare not proceed in such a case, without proof.

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One word more. Do you wish me to speak freely with your husband, as freely as I would with you, if on full inquiry it should appear to me to be proper

Yes provided you speak not of me, and provided also, that however he may take your advice, you neither quarrel with him, nor allow him to persuade you into a friendship with him; for that I tell you now would be sure to result in misery; I should be driven to speak the truth and the whole truth of you; and if I did, I know that he would never be satisfied with me nor with himself again. He would be sure to believe I had married him, that I might have at least an image of you I stared and all that I have done he would interpret to the disadvantage not of me, not of you, but of himself. I could not bear that sir it would kill me there there! I beseech you to go

Farewell, said I, farewell! going up to her in a state of excessive trepidation. Farewell I would have kissed her forehead, but she turned away with a look of alarm and reproach, and the tears started to her eyes I could have thrown myself out of the window Farewell! said I, once more. *Do* say farewell to me!

She did not speak, but I saw her catch at the bell-rope.

Say that you forgive me, said I, growing desperate with fear. Say that you forgive me I forgot we were alone; I forgot your husband was not near to sanction what he led me to or I should never have had the courage, the the *Do* say that you forgive me!

I do I do

Farewell

Farewell my brother farewell, said she in a voice that no third person could have heard I am sure; and as she spoke, she caught my hand up to her lips

What could I say? what could I do? I left her; and before I was able to speak, I found myself in the dining-room above, surrounded by the company I had left, and by two or three more, one of whom I recollected immediately as Fontleroy, the man who had called upon Edwards while I was at the cottage. I was very much struck by his gravity and by the appearance of a stranger, who sat watching Edwards from the time that I entered the room, until we moved away in a body for the club-house, with an eye, the severe steadiness of which I never saw equalled.

Footnotes

1 Two Frenchman, great talkers, were brought together: one got the start, and kept on, while the other stood watching for an opportunity. *S'il crache, il est perdu*, cried a spectator: *If he spits, he is lost*.

CHAPTER XX.

THE GAMBLERS.

We were hardly seated on our arrival at a magnificently-furnished, though retired room, in a large building which I mistook at the time for the celebrated Crockford club-house, when preparations were made for play, and I was invited by Sir George, to join a party; but before I could reply, Edwards interfered with a look which prevented a repetition of the request, and assured him that I was invited there as a friend. I was very grateful, for I did not much like to refuse before I knew the stake; and I had an idea that as they were pretended authors, they would not play high, and that by appearing to have no suspicion of their true character, I should have a better opportunity of studying it, an idea which but for his interference might have led me into play, before I knew where I was.

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While they were getting ready, he left the room and I took that opportunity of reading the paper, which his wife had put into my hands with a remark which prepared me shall I own the truth? shall I own the besetting sin of authorship? shall I own that I was prepared, not for censure but for high praise, much higher praise than I got, even by the fear she expressed of offending me? No I will not. An author should never so betray himself. But, as I never had the truth spoken so plainly to me before, although it was mixed up with what would have made even truth palatable to any body on earth, and as I do believe that I shall profit more by it, one day or other, than by all the praise and all the censure I ever received, I mean to do what I told her husband I should do with it I mean to publish it; and what is more, I mean to publish it as a part of her own story. Here it is.

My dear Friend,

I am not good for much I give her own words but I lay awake a few nights ago thinking of novel-writing and of your W A . Shall I tell you what I thought? You are writing another; now hear me you once told me I could write one. I could not; I know myself best. If I had any talent that way, I would gladly throw my little into your stock. But I have none you have more than enough.'

A very sensible remark thought I.

You have more than enough. First then, husband your resources better. Remember that every thing ceases to astonish to excite to move by repetition. Suffering torture death any thing may become familiar and tamed of its horrors by repetition. Don't launch your thunder at butterflies and gnats. Don't make your heroes go raving mad for a cause, an offence, which five rational words would remove or explain. One ceases to sympathize in such gratuitous and self-inflicted misery. Don't let a scene, which might appropriately end in tears bitter tears and agonized silence, end in fire and fury, whirlwind, tempest, lightning, and the . Are you mad, my dear friend? No, you will not be angry with me. I could not write this if I had not a deep interest in all you write. Again your characters all talk too much the same language have the same intense and exaggerated and distorted imagination and sensibility. H and W A , the only men deserving the name of characters, talk so that sometimes you could not tell which is speaking. One *very* extraordinary man is enough. Remember, more than one principal light spoils a picture. If there be two extraordinary men, they should be utterly unlike.'

The jade! She was determined not to leave me a chance of escape. That observation tore up the ground-work of all I had ever written.

They should be utterly unlike. So of woman. *Any* very marked character is still more rare among them. We complain of Scott's heroines as insipid. What are most real women? A man of great sense and knowledge of the world once said to my mother It is not their faults it is their insipidity. They have neither sense to be right nor passion to be wrong. This, like all *mots*, is an exaggeration. They *have* sense enough to avoid gross errors generally, and to keep to traditional maxims of conduct, and they have passion enough to 'fall in love,' as they call it, with any decent man who pays them attention and can maintain them in the style they are accustomed to. But enough of this. They are right and wise in their generation wiser than the children of light i. e. of warmth and flame.'

Ah! thought I, when I had come to this paragraph ah! but I am to see her no more. Well, well, it may be the better for both of us.

You addressing me by my *true* name you should not add your power and eloquence to increase the wretchedness of this wretched world. Set your hot brand upon nothing that does not deserve it. Think of that my friend, when I am thousands of miles off perhaps dead. We are beset enough between the dangers and difficulties which are the work of nature and those inherent in social institutions. I am not a *Utilitarian* in every thing; but I am enough so, to say, pause for God's sake, for mercy's sake, before you add your strong voice to the cries of remorse, or of infamy, unless you see clearly that the act is mischievous, *miser*-*creating*. But you will think of

this'

That I will! said I to myself. I begin to perceive the truth now.

'We are bound with the iron chains of selfish hypocrisy and prejudice; but think of our posterity I object to the moral of R. What is it?'

I wish I could tell you, thought I.

'What is it? That a man may by a series of mere imprudences make himself and every body connected with him supremely wretched, and yet *call* himself innocent. He has no right to think himself so. He is to be dreaded as much or more than a villain, for the latter will not injure you unless to serve himself. Or do you mean that it was a fatality that he *must* be a destroyer in spite of himself? This I should rather object to also; though then it would be out of the province of novel-writing, and would be a romance, dealing in the ideal. There is a class of novels that are the mirrors of common society *as it is*. Insipid enough you 'll say: Yes, certainly, for so is the original, but accurate copies. Miss Austin's are perhaps the best. *You* cannot write so. No, I know it *you must* write poetry. But subdue, my dear friend, the coloring of your under characters and under incidents. You have images of exquisite unspeakable beauty'

I began to be in good humor with my critic here.

'Treasure them and deal them out like a miser. They will then sparkle like diamonds, as they ought as they do indeed but too often'

Very true I am willing to acknowledge the truth of that remark, said I to myself, as I read on.

'One thing more. You put yourself into every man or woman. Do *I* not know you through all the disguises? Byron did so. Yes, but Byron did wrong. Shakspeare did not. That is the way to make your readers know *you*, but not mankind'

Equivocal, but severe enough either way.

'Take care of that delicate line which divides the terrible from the disgusting, the sublime from the inflated, the familiar from the vulgar, the I know-not-what that is lovely, touching, and sincere in what you say about women, from what makes their cheeks tingle and their eyes quail, and what would make prudes throw down the book. Yes, women who could not appreciate the moral beauty and *purity* of the sentiments would scream and shudder or act it at being stripped and detected. Take care. You can do much good, but do it delicately. I have thought and felt almost all that you have said about *my* sex. But what wonder? *Your* sex choose to have factitious creatures, puppets, hereditary dissemblers denying their own nature. What wonder that we are made false false and superficial? I am one of them. Am I? Yes, at this moment, I feel the iron in my soul. No, it is impossible for a woman to be frank and natural. It is destruction and infamy. I could write a volume now, for my blood rushes to my fingers but it would do no good. So down and go to sleep, rebel. You'll think *I* am mad, as mad as W A. As you please

God bless you .' 'P. S. I wonder, tremble almost, at my boldness. If I offend you, how unhappy I shall be but no, I *hope* not.'

Well Sir no bad news, I hope?

I looked up. Edwards was standing directly before me and eyeing me with a look which I thought proper to put an end to at once. Read it, said I, handing him the paper.

Authorship: A Tale

No.

Yes, take it, take it, it will do you good.

He laughed and took the paper as if it were a drug to swallow. Well, said he, after running his eye rapidly over it, I hope you are *not* offended.

Offended! no, faith. I never was more gratified in my life; I am delighted with her good sense and her courage.

Upon my word, I believe you.

Believe me! that you may. I would quarrel with her if I could, but she has me on the hip; so bitter, so careless, and yet so provokingly true give me the paper.

Certainly, if you wish it.

I do wish it I would not part with that critique for any thing.

Why how your eyes shine! I do believe you are pleased with it.

You will see one day or other; I mean to publish it.

To publish it!

Yes to weave it into a book.

The devil you do!

Yes.

Without my leave?

Yes if I cannot *with* your leave.

But consider how hastily it was written it is full of repetitions, and failures and a sort of a

So much the better; if I publish it as it is, every body will see that it is no invention of the trade. I hate authorship.

So do I give us your hand.

But we are all authors, are we not? said I, glancing at Sir George, who stood a little way off watching a hazard party, and grasping a handful of bank notes, which he drew out loose from his breeches' pocket.

Authors why a a yes, in our own way. You are an author, Barry, addressing himself to a young man who sat near, and you too, major, are you not?

An author? said Mr. Barry, and then after a minute's hesitation adding, Ah, yes, to be sure, and the major passed on with a bow.

I was rather nettled at the tone of Mr. Barry, and after a short pause, I asked him if he had written much.

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Much my dear sir yes, a good deal.

And about what, said I, angry at the impudent self-possession of the fellow, who spoke, it appeared to me, with a sort of sneer.

Oh, about several things, histories, and tragedies, and novels, and poems, and criticism, and the deuse knows what; a heap of things altogether.

Indeed.

Quite a heap, I assure you on the word of an author.

Perhaps you would mention their titles.

Titles pho pho as if I cared a fig for a title.

Or as if a title had any thing to do with a book now; said Sir George.

You may call to mind one, perhaps? you that have written so much.

One ay forty.

Well

Well upon my word sir the fact is you 'll excuse me.

A general laugh here, but whether at me or at him, I could not tell; but I was determined to know, before I gave up the point.

No no, said I, no no, give us the title of something no matter what, a history or a novel.

Ever read the History of Jack-the-giant-killer? playing with a cribbage-peg as he spoke.

I bowed with what I meant to be a look of surprise and admiration. Really, said I, I could not have supposed it possible.

By George, Barry, cried one of the party, *he* is up to you.

Or Little King Pippin? said Mr. Barry, irritated by a laugh which followed this remark.

Edwards thought proper to interfere now, and he showed by his manner that he thought his friend Barry was going a little too far, as he added What other histories are read now? What other books? Nothing but story-books, little and big, and picture-books, and blue-beards, and black-beards, of a larger growth.

But said I, addressing myself to Mr. Barry with a determination to know whether he had been quizzing me or not, before I proceeded a step further, You have written a history you say; tell me the name, if you wish me to believe you.

Have you ever read the History of Connecticut? said Sir George, with a good-natured laugh.

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Nay nay, Sir George you 'd better not interfere; Brother Jonathan will take care of himself, I 'll warrant you, said somebody near me, Edwards I thought then adding in a whisper which I overheard Barry will have his hands full.

There was a sort of a history of Connecticut, said I addressing myself to Mr. Barry, and speaking with a very subdued voice, but in such a way that every body in the room could hear me a small anonymous book, which I dare say Mr. Barry might have been capable of. The author speaks among other matters of a stream of water which runs so swiftly between two walls of rock and is so compressed by the straightness of the passage, that you cannot stick a crow-bar into it

Bravo Barry, bravo! that *is* like you! cried Sir George, clapping him on the back.

I remember the place, though I do not acknowledge the history you may boil an egg in the steam that rises over it in cold weather added Barry without appearing at all disturbed.

No doubt caloric disengaged by the pressure, Barry.

Precisely, Sir George

You have read a book which goes by the name of Hutchinson's Massachusetts, I hope? said Sir George, turning to me, evidently with a view to prevent a squabble.

No said I.

Nor Sullivan's District of Maine?

A great while ago, I did

Our friend Barry, with a wink, always writes under a fictitious name, or as he calls it *anonymously*, added Sir George; and we all burst out a laughing together. His look was inimitable.

Your friend Barry is to be regarded as the author, I suppose?

As you like I say nothing.

Under a *fictitious* name or anonymously you said Sir George?

At this remark, a sudden strange alteration took place in the expression of the faces about me. Edwards bit his lip, and Mr. Barry turned very pale, and a look passed from one to another, round the whole company, a look which any where, at any time, would have put me upon my guard.

A sort of tautology I confess, my dear Barry said Sir George recovering himself with an effort for the only way of writing anonymously now to advantage my dear Barry is to scribble under a fictitious name.

Sir George!

Or under another man's name it stops inquiry

By God sir! if you if I if I thought you had a

Barry recollect where you are

Authorship: A Tale

No no Mr. Edwards, no no; a joke's a joke, but no such twitting, if you please.

Are you mad, Barry!

No other way, my dear Barry no other way, continued Sir George, rapping the lid of his snuff-box, and offering a pinch to his neighbour, as if nothing on earth could ruffle or disturb him. But I observed his eye as he spoke it was riveted on a heap of gold that had been gathered up for play on the opposite side of the room, and was abiding the issue of a deal.

You never met with a little story of Barry's, published about a twelvemonth ago major, did you?

Not knowin' can't say; what 's the name o' the story?

Tom Jones

Never

Nor Sir Charles Grandison, hey?

No.

Nor Clarissa Harlow ah, look o' that, major; five to four on the dealer

Done for fifty

Done done

A bite, Sir George.

A bite, how so?

You didn't see the play.

Ah it 's loo, is it; I took it for vignt-un

Ha ha ha!

But continued Sir George, you have read Clarissa Harlow haven't ye major?

Never; these names are all new to me. I should like to read one o' the lot, if you say it 's worth reading

Ask Barry.

Not I, faith; I would not take the word of an author for sixpence I beg your pardon sir are they long, Sir George?

Long! no indeed; mere flea-bites my dear major; half a dozen volumes or so; just the thing waiter just the thing for a lounge under the trees in a hot summer-afternoon waiter, I say.

Comin' Sir

But give us an idea of the plot, Sir George.

Footnotes

Authorship: A Tale

A plot for a story, my dear major! why you might as well advertise for a moral. No no, that fashion has gone by; what say you, Edwards?

Just what you say, Sir George. You see nothing of plots now except in speeches and songs and ballads; nor any thing in the shape of moral now—a—days

Waiter!

Sir

A table this way; champaign for five, and fresh cards

Except in a charity sermon, or a fable by Mr. Gay

Or Mr. æsop

Or a mister any body, who makes little Red—Ridin'—hood stories for children. A plot indeed! no no our fashionable authors are above such tricks o' the trade; most of them avoid a plot as they would a conspiracy

Here a table prepared with cards and counters, champaign, loo—boxes, cribbage, pointers, and a large silver plate, was trundled up to the corner we occupied. But nothing was said about play, and they seated themselves one after another, some with their sides to the table and some with their backs, very much as if they had come together to smoke a cigar and chat over old stories.

And the hero, Sir George give us an idea of the hero, will you?

The hero! that 's a good one, faith capital! why do you think there was only *one* hero, my dear major!

To be sure I do one hero who ever heard of more at a time?

One hero and one catastrophe said somebody near me who had not opened his mouth before. It was a stranger a tall grave man with a deep scar over his temple and the steadiest eye you ever saw in your life.

Oh how little you understand these matters! why sir, the public would never endure a story, if it were not crowded with heroes and heroines, and if every chapter had not a catastrophe or two of its own what say you Mr. Holmes addressing himself to me.

Why, to tell you the truth glancing at Edwards, I am no longer of that opinion. I thought so, to be sure, till a certain critic did me the favor to say that one *very* extraordinary man was enough, and that even catastrophes may tire in a novel since which

Enough, I understand you, said he; and I hope she may prove to be right in daring to tell you the truth

Founded upon fact, I hope? continued the major, drawing up to the table as he spoke, and beginning to play with the fish in the loo—box.

Ay ay, all founded on fact, all historical; an't they, Edwards? you know.

Of course of course very bitterly nothing else would be endured just now. Histories have become novels; novels, histories.

Authorship: A Tale

True true; one of Barry's you know his favorite and masterpiece I believe was founded on a

Sir George!

Nay nay, how sensitive you authors are it was founded on the true and faithful history of a young man who fell desperately in love with his own grandmother

Ninon de l' Enclos, hey?

Ay. It was very popular too, deny it if you can Barry. Ah my dear Edwards, you have no idea how fond the public are now of studying history; for ever at work now night and day; and then the catastrophe, that was so affecting

Indeed

Yes very very for just when the young dog was going to be rude to his own grandmother, poor boy! their relationship was discovered

By a picture I suppose, or a mole or a scar

Precisely

What a pity there was no moral, Sir George.

Why, between ourselves, my dear major, though neither morals nor manners are regarded now, in your first-rate hero, by your first-rate novel-reader, there was to tell to you the truth my dear major, a sort of a moral invented for it

Or *discovered*

Or discovered for it; just for the sake of appearances, to help off a third or fourth edition among the third and fourth class of novel-readers

But how, pray?

Oh, as usual. The publisher offered a reward, and a reviewer soon found a moral for it; and a very good moral it was too. He discovered that the whole work was a stout and courageous assault upon romping grandmothers and flirtation; a warning to such as run the risk of grandchildren without leave, a severe side-wind attack upon the profligacy of high life, hypocrisy, concealment, paint, patches, and coquetry with boys in old age; and best of all, he discovered a defence of the church in it

A defence of the church!

Ay, of the levitical marriage-table how serious you are, my dear fellow to Edwards; You are not offended we hope; have we gone too far glancing at me.

No no I was only thinking that if authors would agree to work together in partnership, how much better it would be for them

Don't you believe it!

A company of authors now, like a troop of players, playing for shares

Footnotes

Authorship: A Tale

My *dear* fellow! there's nothing new in that idea; if you look into the best novels of the day, and the best poetry of our age, you will see that in every case, the author has a company of his own a regular troop, ready to undertake a drama of a thousand pages or so, at a few weeks' notice

Very true, Sir George, very true; it's only changing their dresses, and giving them a new name a piece, and crack! you have a new novel, or poem, or tragedy half tossed up to your hands. One of these *managers* will keep four or five heroes to himself hard at work all the year round. Others are satisfied if they can secure two or three for tragedy in a summer—campaign trusting to chance among runaways, stragglers, strollers, for broad farce and pantomime. Others having no easier way of getting a livelihood, may be seen skulking about among the supernumeraries, and back—door gentry, who are always to be met with in the neighbourhood of our chief authors

Very true

Seducing this one away by a promise of better fare, and that by an appeal to his pride; borrowing a clown from this company, and a fool from that, an old woman here and a dwarf there, now snapping up a hero from Bartle'my fair, and now running off with a star from Lead—an'—all street.

A walking gentleman or two from God knows where

And a bit of the brogue from Convent—garden or DruryLane

Or a candle—snuffer from some private theatre of the west—end, where the actors who are generally more numerous than the spectators, do whatever they do at all, with a tragedystep

Very fair, Edwards, very fair; I see what you are driving at. However, do you know addressing himself to me, and lifting a bottle from which the cork had just been drawn do you know there sir, try that sir filling a large glass for me as he spoke that is what *we* call champaign sir no gooseberry there do you know my dear sir, that the most effectual catastrophe of our day, and just now the talk of the town is Ah bless me!

Here a pack of cards which he had been playing with slipped from the pressure of his hand with such a spring that one or two of the cards flew half across the room

Five to fifty, I name that card sir! cried one of the party at the other table, jumping up as he spoke and setting his foot on the card, which lay face down.

I was about to speak, merely to say that the chances were as one to fifty—two, when Edwards prevented me by a pressure of the arm, and the bet was taken by Sir George, who proceeded with what he was going to say, while the other named the card and acknowledged he had lost A very capital idea, I promise you; a catastrophe worthy of our day; a brother and sister marry each other in the last page of a fourth volume; she in the dress of a man, he in the dress of a woman, each believing the other to be what the dress intimated

Pshaw! how could that be! did the woman disguised as a man desire to marry a man; or the man disguised as a woman desire to marry a

How should I know! I only mention the facts a laugh the work is now under consideration, catastrophe plot and all; Another and all eyes were turned upon Barry who appeared to be getting very uneasy; but you are not aware perhaps that novels are made now, the characters of which are so mixed up together, and so doubled and twisted into each other sir! to Edwards, what the devil was that for! never tread on a fellow's toe; but if you have any thing to say, out with it like a man

Authorship: A Tale

A very hearty laugh, in which I could not join for the life of me; particularly after he added, that a book had lately appeared, the characters of which were so mixed up together, that although he had read it with great pleasure, he had never been able to say which was which.

You have won double or quits on the other card sir George, if you

Done

Ah, but you didn't hear me through, Sir George!

Ha ha ha! that reminds me of a bet I heard in your country, said Sir George, addressing himself to me. A dispute occurred between two people where I was. After it had continued a good while, one of the two struck his hands together and offered a bet in the usual way there

A beaver-hat, I suppose

No, a dozen of madeira; but before the words were well out of his mouth, he was taken up; I'll bet you a a very deliberately said one of the two, a dozen of Madei Done! said another with a snap Ah, but you did not take me up quick enough! replied the first.

Admirable! thought I; for his imitation was perfect; and I was just going to say that he had hit off the manners of my countrymen as well as ever Mathews did, when we were interrupted by a remark about a tragedy, actually in rehearsal at the time, all made up of heroes and heroines, most of whom appeared on the stage only to give a soliloquy or a speech and be killed

Of course what would you have in tragedy?

Ay, and the characters are all married on the stage

A catastrophe indeed

Ah but that is only a part of the catastrophe; for then sir then! they all die, every one of them, in their nuptial robes, with all their flowering coronets on

Ah!

In all their bridal purity

Do they indeed? that must be very awful, but how

By the yellow-fever

Devil take you Sir George! you are laughing at me.

My dear major! how could you imagine me capable of such a thing

What is the name of the tragedy you speak of? said I with a woful misgiving, though I saw his eye fixed upon poor Mr. Barry.

I forget I believe though, if I do not mistake but by the by, have you seen the Murderers

Authorship: A Tale

Another tragedy I suppose; and full of murder

No such thing, my dear sir not a murder in it, nor a death, nor a naughty word, nor a drop of blood spilt from beginning to end. The author is a reformer you must have heard of it he is a countryman of yours. He doesn't like Mr. Shakspeare quite shocking he says, people are cut up so many times, and in such a variety of ways by him, that his great tragedies are exceedingly improbable. And so, his tragedy is full of madmen, ghosts, and goblins, which prove to be neither goblins, ghosts, nor madmen; every character in it is a hero; and every speech a soliloquy or something worse, and about one fourth of every page is employed in particular directions to every body, heroes, scene-shifters and all, how to stand, how to step, how to look, and how to use their pocket-handkerchiefs

Ah, said I, with a very unsteady look ah but why, Sir George?

Several reasons were given by the author, after his tragedy appeared, among which

Oh it appeared then, did it, cried I, inexpressibly relieved; for some how or other, I had begun to fear that my turn had come to be baited.

Yes it appeared published, though never played that I know of

I had not another word to say.

He chose to write something he said, between a novel and a play, to compound the properties of the two narrative and the drama; to give a connected story, to describe the looks and behaviour of all parties, as you would in a book, so that if it did not do for the stage, it might do for the closet

For the *closet* Umph

To relieve the actor from the trouble of study, to embody the whole conception of the author, about which no two actors ever agree, in such a way, that hereafter it would be impossible for any two actors of that play ever to disagree.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE WINE-CRITIC... THE PLAY... THE ARREST.

I could bear this no longer; pray sir, said I, addressing myself to Mr. Barry who appeared to be enjoying the joke as if he knew that every part and parcel of it was intended for me pray sir, allow me to put a question to you, which you will please to recollect, I put half an hour ago, but which you have not answered

With all my heart sir

I beg you to be serious.

Well there! biting his lips and bracing his feet.

Are you an author?

Why after a little hesitation why, to tell you the truth *yes*.

Authorship: A Tale

Bravo, Barry, bravo! bravo! cried three or four of the company, gathering about the table, and preparing to take their places for play, at the same time.

Have a care, said somebody at my elbow; you are a stranger. It was the man I saw at the cottage, with a head so like that of Napoleon Bonaparte when he was first Consul I judge by the busts. We had not interchanged a word for several hours; but I had observed his gentlemanly air, and remembering what Edwards's wife had said of him, I thought better of the whole company for his being there. But for Edwards and him, and the tall stranger with a scar on his cheek, I should have had no doubt of the profession of the crew, notwithstanding all their talk about authorship, which I begun to believe was intended as a trap for me. But if so, Edwards had betrayed me and for what purpose? not surely to injure me, for he had put me upon my guard: perhaps to give me an opportunity of seeing how they wheedle their prey into the snare. Be it so, said I to myself be it so I shall drink no more champaign; I shall avoid play I wouldn't play for straws with such men; I'll take no bets, however advantageous they may appear; in short, I'll run no risk I'll trust nobody.

Come come, said Sir George, come come, Barry, you are in for it now; and you will try to speak the truth for once I hope

I will, Sir George, I will

Very well said I, as you have sworn to *try* to speak the truth *for once* will you say whether you have published any thing?

Published why, to tell you the truth, if you mean by *publishing*, what authors mean who live by publishing *books*, I can't say I have but if you mean

Stop sir; excuse me, I should like to know where I am

Why you are at Crockford's.

Pho look me in the face.

Well there!

Indeed is that what you call looking a man in the face?

To be sure

Well now, upon your oath, have you ever written any thing

To be sure I have.

That's a plumper faith! cried one of the party

Mind though; I don't say I've actually finished any thing for the press

Finished have you ever *begun* any thing for the press.

That's a very pretty seal o'yours give me leave

Answer me, I beg of you; have you ever *begun* any thing for the press

Authorship: A Tale

For the *press* I am afraid I have, said he glancing at the major with a piteous look, and with a significance of manner which set every body about us in a roar of laughter afraid I have *begun* rather a tragical story for the press. I did not see the joke, but I laughed as heartily as the rest.

Allow me, said Sir George, before the laugh had subsided, allow me sir, attempting to fill my glass, which I withdrew, while another of the party pushed a pack of cards up to my elbow, praying me with a very careless air, to cut for the deal

Excuse me, said I

Ah you don't play?

No sir, I'd rather not.

Well well, said Sir George; do as you like about play; but being here, you'll not refuse to tap another bottle of champagne for us, I hope?

Indeed Sir George, I had rather not, I assure you. The glass you gave me is very deep and large, and after the madeira we have drunk, the best madeira I ever saw in my life, by the way

Tut man, tut! our madeira is not to be compared with your Boston madeira. Every body knows that

Why to be sure, I have heard the Boston madeira praised by two or three of the best judges of wine that I ever met with in this country

Are you a judge of wine ?

I no indeed; I hardly know madeira from sherry; and when I praised the wine we had to day, I praised it for madeira, because to tell you the truth I saw that name on the collar of a large decanter that stood near me before the cloth was removed I tasted no other; and for all that I know, it may have been sherry or any other white wine.

Sir George bit his lip, one of the party cried bravo! bravo! and interchanged a look with Edwards who colored to the eyes, and for a minute or two appeared to be heartily ashamed of me; but the tall grave stranger with the scar in his cheek, thought otherwise of my behaviour.

Young man, said he, it requires no little courage to tell the truth in your case.

I thought so, for the words were hardly out of my mouth before I begun to feel as if I had betrayed myself in a very foolish way.

Very true, said Sir George, very true I do not know another man, who would dare to say that he does not know madeira from sherry; I would rather acknowledge of the two, that I do not love music.

The stranger withdrew his quiet stern eye from Edwards, and looked at Sir George without speaking a word; but I observed that Sir George grew uneasy more uneasy than he had been while the bets were at issue, and that he took an early opportunity of whispering to Edwards, after which a sort of combined attack was made on the stranger, evidently with a view to overcome his reserve.

Very true, as you say sir, very true, continued Sir George thrusting a handful of bank-notes into his pocket, and preparing to deal as if nothing had happened very true So with music, so with wine, so with a multitude of things which to be ignorant of or not to like, is to be a I beg your pardon sir; I have heard

Authorship: A Tale

Charley-over-the-water called for by twenty voices at a time, years and years ago, when I was a young fellow; and I have been told, on asking the reason, that a particular lady present was particularly remarkable for that particular song; so I have gone up to the lady, whom I happened to know, and persuaded her to sing The moonlight on the tufted bank, or some other pitiful affair which is never heard of now and the whole company have been delighted with it some declaring they were very fond of Charley-overthe-water and others that they had never heard it half so well sung before.

I laughed heartily, and so did the major; but Edwards appeared to be lost in thought, and the stranger sat with his eye on the door, as if he expected somebody else to join the party. Meanwhile the bank-notes covered the table, and heaps of gold were passing from hand to hand with a rapidity that I never saw equalled, and with a sort of high-bred indifference which gave me the head-ache.

But speaking of your Boston madeira, said Sir George, addressing himself to me. That reminds me of a circumstance which occurred full three-and-thirty, four-and-thirty, five-and-thirty years ago, at a table in Boston. That's your sort major pam be civil!

Very true sir, what you said very true addressing the stranger dare say you have seen a bottle of wine produced at a table sir, covered with cobwebs, decanted as if it was the elixir of life, into little glass acorn-cups, and swallowed with affected enthusiasm by grown men, who if they could have had their own way, would rather have swallowed so much cider, if not so much physic.

The stranger knitted his brow, and I began to feel rather uncomfortable for Sir George; but he proceeded with his play and his story at the same time, as if he neither knew nor cared to know what the stranger thought of him.

While I was there said he, a young chap from the city arrived with a cargo of Manchester goods to a merchant of Boston. I was invited to meet my countryman, who probably did not know that he was going to dine with perhaps the most extraordinary humorist of the age, a man of great wealth, who was a prodigal and a miser at the same time. It appeared ah you are in luck my dear Barry, I thought my hand a sure one a minute ago the youth had been laughing at your Yankee wines, I heard; they were not strong enough, they lacked body they hadn't so much flavor as the Thames water, which you know is remarkable for a sort of champaign spirit, peculiar to itself our sailors, God bless 'em! when they talk of the briskness of our Thames water have no idea of the cause of that briskness

No, faith! you may swear to that Sir George.

Well, there were six or eight of us. Now said Mr. G. our worthy host we had been sipping a variety of liquors and four or five sorts of wine, which I thought very well of, though my countryman looked as if he had never tasted such wine before

He never had, I dare say

Now gentlemen said our host, I am going to fetch you a drop or two a little out of the common way; you are to be the judges I say nothing. He left us, and there was a deal of whispering and chuckling and rubbing of hands till he came back; for he was reckoned the best judge of wines, and by far the most liberal provider of the day in America, never permitting a bottle of port which by the way was not much drunk with you, when I was there

No nor is it now we prefer madeira; and white wines are preferred all over the country.

To stand up or to be decanted, nor a guest to take hold of a bottle under any pretence, otherwise than by the neck ah my dear Barry you are playing a desperate game.

Curse the cards!

Pho pho never curse the cards; play off and fight shy, if they don't run as you wish; you are up like a bottle of soda-water just now well sir, he came back with a set of clean glasses which he wouldn't suffer the *help* to carry.

We never say help Sir George, in the cities of America, nor in the large towns, nor any where indeed except in a small part of the back country.

I dare say not with a bow. They were very small glasses, and richly ornamented. He put them upon the table with his own hands, wiped off the cobwebs from the bottle, drew the cork as if he were drawing a tooth, and went around with it on tip-toe, pouring a little into every glass in succession without filling any, and then going round again, till he had divided the contents of the bottle in such a way that no man appeared to have a single drop more than his neighbour. There gentlemen said he, when he had finished there my young friend! lifting his glass with compressed lips and watching the look of my countryman steady steady! Full-length, cried one of the party; ay ay, full length! cried another, and up we all rose to swallow the wine. There, gentlemen, said Mr. G., I want to know your real opinion of that 'ere stuff. We looked at each other all round we sipped a little of the sunshine, as we called it we smacked our lips and then we replaced our glasses very cautiously, without venturing to say a word all eyes were upon my countryman, whose countenance was particularly solemn and thoughtful. But he did not appear inclined to speak, any more than the rest of us; and stood looking sideways at the glass before him, with a sort of expression which might be interpreted either way, as the result should require. At last however he spoke, and vowed to Gad the stuff was pure, and worthy of a duke's table. We agreed with him, smacked our lips again, protested he was right, and swore it was a mouthful worthy of a prince's table a king's an emperor's liquid amber to say the least of it. And what may that wine have stood you in? said a rich na-tyve, with a sober calculating brow. No answer. How long have you had it by you? said another. We thought of the dust and cobwebs, and we smacked our lips again more heartily than before; but our host would not answer the question. It must have been a great while in the cork, said another: how long pray; do tell us; we have a curiosity to know. Guess. Did bottle it yourself? No. Ah ha! so I thought before your time I'd swear putting the glass to his lips with great fervor so I thought; heard o' this 'afore: but may be you 'll have no objection to say how it stood you in by the pipe. By the pipe! said Mr. G. By the pipe no by the gallon, said the other. By the gallon sir! By the dozen I should say beg your pardon. By the dozen! said Mr. G. with a look which made the other throw up his hands and cry, Good God! you did not lay it in by the bottle! No. But your father before you did; I see how it is, ah ha! Never mind who laid it in, but say what you think such wine ought to be worth now in the bottle. Why, say about a a very cautiously; eyeing Mr. G. between every two syllables a-a-about-twelve-dollars-a-dozen, hey? What; interest and all bottles and all! said Mr. G. Interest! why to be sure said the other, why to be sure, that ought to be considered; no, no glancing at our host and then at my countryman, who sat as if he were the foreman of a jury in a matter of life and death no, no I did not mean interest and all; no no, interest and all indeed! excuse me. I began to feel a very uncomfortable awe upon me when I heard this, and saw a merchant of high standing, and upwards of fifty years of age, gravely calculating the interest on a small bottle of wine; I felt as if I were doing what was hardly justifiable, in partaking of so precious a liquor. Say fifteen dollars a dozen, said another, touching the glass to his lips or sixteen, or sixteen-fifty, interest and all, which would be one twenty-five, one thirty-three-and-a-third a bottle, or one thirty-seven-and-a-half sipping a little before every bid interest and all. More more! cried another, who after looking at our host, threw his head back, and shut his eyes, with an air of perplexity, and sat with his lips moving as if he were saying over the multiplication-table to himself. Ah but I meant hard money, neighbour; sixteen dollars and fifty cents hard money; why bless your heart, only consider! one dollar and thirty-seven-cents-and-a-half cash ah, but you didn't say cash cash for a bottle of wine, why it 's out of all reason! Very true, retorted the other; and so, I say two dollars a bottle; two-fifty cried another; two-seventy five, two-eighty! and a full stop. No, said our host, no! You are wide o' the mark yet; you have no idea of the actual cost o' that 'ere wine I see; you surely haven't smacked the flavor; try it again, my lads, try it again; a little o' that 'll make you fat, as the song says, all round the body O! Nantucket for ever, cried a sly old codger; what stuff it is man; say three dollars a bottle! No said our host very positively, no! Four? No! Five six seven eight? up

Authorship: A Tale

went all the glasses together no no no, said our host, and we felt as if every drop was a jewel. Another dead stop. Fluid gold, as I 'm a sinner, cried the youngest man at the table eight-fifty, eight seventy-five. But still our host answered no. The company were all struck dumb. Wine had been sold we knew that for ten dollars a bottle in Boston; but that was at a time of great political excitement, and under very particular circumstances. And though the purchaser bought only five or six dozen, he had a supply years and years afterward.

No one dared to guess again. There was a deep dead silence dead as that of a New-England meeting-house in the middle of a warm summer-afternoon. We looked at each other at the wine at our host and then we dropped our eyes one after another, as if we had been guilty of some unpardonable sin. What had we to do with the precious ointment; what right had we to be drinking wine more costly than that in which Cleopatra dissolved the pearl

That was vinegar, Sir George.

And how could we drink it off with so little emotion. It was a thing never to be forgotten or forgiven. Why sir, to tell you the truth, even I I cannot deny it even I had begun to look upon the rich Mr. G. with singular veneration; to wonder now that he had been so prodigal, with his one little parsimonious, niggardly bottle bottle, it was n't a bottle! it was nothing more than a large phial; I began to reproach him for having dealt out the sunshine the fluid gold the liquid amber so munificently, in the vast acorn cups. Our glasses were nearly or quite empty; mine had been so for some time there was only a lurking drop at the bottom, the usual thumb-nail offering, which had been concocted from the rich exhalation of the glass, while we were engaged in estimating the total value of the treasure. I lifted the glass. I turned it up and held the edge upon the tip of my tongue, till that one thick drop had slowly trickled out O, the flavor and fragrance of that one drop! I had never tasted the virtue of the liquid before; and while I looked about me upon the more experienced wine-bibbers, and saw their glasses not more than half exhausted, I felt ashamed of my unskilful voracity. They were voluptuaries I a sensualist. But I was younger than they; and there was still hope for me I thought, if I should ever fall in the way of such another drop of wine while I breathed

Here the stranger drew forth his watch, and keeping his eye upon the door, appeared to be getting very impatient. I observed him, but I did not believe that any body else did, so engaged were the whole party between the play, and the story of Sir George, who continued as follows.

I was the first to speak after the last no of Mr. G. had been articulated the first to get my breath I believe. Now pray sir, said I, pray do tell us I stopped, I began to fear that I was going too far, and the company sat with their heads advanced and their mouths all open, as if they were so many purchasers in a lottery, the high-prize of which would appear at the first word spoken by Mr. G. how much did that wine cost you, interest and all, as near as you can tell? Why, said he, after a long pause, it would be very difficult, perhaps impossible to say exactly time interest compound-interest, labor, storage, leakage, breakage, agency, &c, &c, &c, but but as near as I am able to say we all pressed forward, and my poor countryman gasped for breath and I have taken some pains I promise you to arrive at the truth, knowing what sort of men were to drink it we all bowed, my countryman lower than any body else to arrive at the truth, and as near as I am able to say another pause and another long breath from the whole company and I assure you that I made the calculation myself not three hours ago, it cannot be far from twelve-and-a-half, or perhaps twelve and three-quarters Why how you talk, Mr. G., twelve dollars and three quarters for a bottle of wine! why you ought to be, what they say you are, the richest man in America. No sir, said Mr. G.; No sir, you are rather too lively. I did not say, nor mean to say, twelve and three-quarter *dollars* but twelve and three-quarter *cents*.

Bravo! Sir George, bravo! bravo! cried the major, just as the door opened, and a short, square-shouldered, vulgarlooking man stepped into the room and took a remote position which allowed him to reconnoitre the whole company. The moment the tall stranger saw him, his eye lighted up, and fell upon Edwards with a look which made me shiver it was but a momentary glance, but coupling it with what followed, I am sure I never shall forget the expression, till my dying day.

Authorship: A Tale

Well, how do you think we behaved, how do you think we felt, continued Sir George. Mr. G. had told us nothing but the truth. It was a wine that he had picked up for little or nothing, nobody knows where, and bottled off in old weather-worn, crooked bottles, covered with dust and cobwebs. It was a good lesson to me sir beginning to shuffle the cards, for a new deal I have never forgotten it I never shall forget it there is not a day, nor an hour, in which the moral of that lesson may not be applied, one two three, to the every-day transactions of life, one two three No sir! the value of every thing now is to be estimated by the cost in

Here the fellow who had just entered the room drew nearer to the party, and appeared anxious to catch the eye of some one at the table

By the cost in pounds, shillings, and pence a laugh, and he continued with a burlesque air of gravity In a word sir, the prodigal and the spendthrift are followed, and the worthy are despised now

Here the square-built stranger held up his fore-finger to Edwards, who did not perceive him, so diverted was he by the drollery of Sir George, and so deeply occupied with the game. He had been very successful it appeared, for the gold and the bank notes lay in a pile at his elbow, and he was more cheerful than I had ever seen him

Parade imposes upon every body. Champaign would pass for perry at a farmer's table; perry for champaign at a lord's well sir! who are you! He had caught the eye of the stranger what is your business here!

He grew very pale and the cards dropped out of his hand, as he spoke.

Every eye followed his and every lip quivered; for there stood a man, who was not of their party, nor of their knowledge, a man they had never seen before, and his hand was up, and his finger bent, and he was beckoning to one of the party to get up and follow him, as if he knew that no one there would have courage to disobey the signal.

Never never shall I forget the scene that followed. Every body silent as death, every body speechless, and yet every body aware of the truth, before half a minute was over.

Edwards got up, for he saw and they saw that the signal was for him and for nobody else; and when they were satisfied of that, they grew cheerful, and crowded about him, and whispered with him, and told him to be of good courage; but he shook them off one after another as if he could not bear the sympathy of such men, stood up with a brave desperate air, and was about to speak to the stranger who had betrayed him, as if *he* were the only creature to be trusted, at such a time. I could not bear this I stepped forward What can I do for you! said I. He seized my hand which he wrung with all his might he would have spoken I dare say, but he could not. Beware of that stranger, said I in a low voice. If you are betrayed now, he has betrayed you. Impossible you do not know him; he is the truest friend I have on earth. However that may be, said I, I tell you again that he has betrayed you ask him; he will not deny it. Ah! what say you Mr. O.? Good God! not the Mr. O. whom your wife was acquainted with years and years ago. The same. I have nothing more to say! And you, I believe sir, have nothing more to hope I should say to you now, if you were my own brother I *do* say to you, after what I have seen of his behaviour to-night be prepared for the worst you do not hear me for the worst whatever it may be.

I will I am. Stay, Mr. O., stay! a word with you, before we part. I have regarded you as a

Here Mr. O., who had been watching us, got up, and walked away as if he had never seen Edwards before.

Enough enough I am satisfied now. Fellow this way

Fellow! said the man, with a look which made my very blood run cold. It was the brutal impudent leer of a low nature invested with extraordinary power. Why there 's no great hurry d 'ye see; the gemmen better finish the

Authorship: A Tale

game; we likes to show fair play to them as *is* gemman

My dear Holmes, continued the prisoner I knew he was a prisoner, and I could have sworn that he was in great peril by the very tone of his voice my dear Holmes, I have no other friend left no other hope take this ring it was my wedding-ring take it to my wife

And what shall I say to her

Nothing nothing

What! have you nothing to say; no message to send to her! not a word

Poor Mary! The ring will be message enough to satisfy her. She will understand it farewell

No no what more can I do for you? where shall I find you to-morrow

To-morrow! with a bitter smile God only knows; but I pray you to leave me now, and go straightway to Mary with that ring; do that my dear sir I was deeply affected by his manner do that, and you will have done for me all that it is now possible for man to do

Edwards! what do you mean

I mean what I say. There is no hope for me

No hope! –

Now sir, he added, before I could finish what I had to say, turning toward the messenger who had several banknotes in his hand which he had picked up, without being observed, and which had been carried away, by the draft from the open door, while we were engaged in the fearful inquiry that his appearance had provoked Now sir, I am ready for you: Good night all good night!

Good night! Good night! said every body in the room; and almost every body with a voice of deep-seated emotion. They were scattered about, some sitting some standing as if a thunderbolt had fallen through the roof.

He passed out, and I was going to follow, when I was stopped by two strangers, while the man that I saw at the cottage Fontleroy stepped forward with a cheerful air and begged to know if bail would be received.

Bail No said a gruff voice, and we parted; he for a lock-up house I thought; and I to deliver a message to a woman that I had vowed never again to see.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE RING... THE WATCHMAN.

The moment I was in the street, I began to look about for a coach, determined whatever might be the hour, to lose no time in the delivery of the charge entrusted to me; for how could I be sure of the morrow? how could I know what story the ring would tell to the deserted wife? What was to be done? Should or should I not see her? Should I go to her at once, or wait till the morrow? There would be no sleep for her, while the husband of her heart was away no sleep for me, till I had done what I had undertaken to do.

Authorship: A Tale

But there was no coach to be had; the great squares and wide streets before me were all deserted. I drew out my watch with surprise I had no idea of the hour it was after three o'clock; the lamps were going out, and I saw on looking up, what I had not seen for a twelvemonth before, the day-light spreading over a clear blue sky, and felt as I stood there debating with myself how to proceed, what I have not felt since the cool air blowing upon my forehead as if I were at sea. There was no time to be lost, and after a little hesitation I hurried away, agitated with a fear that grew more and more insupportable at every step, and giddy with a feeling that I dare not speak of now. Before I had determined what course to pursue, I found myself at the door of No. , street, Bedford Square. I stopped I stood still my courage died away; and I strove to reason myself out of the dreadful vague fear that possessed me; but I could not, and I was actually turning away from the door, with a determination which a few minutes before nothing would have induced me to make, when I saw a light which appeared to proceed from the back parlor on the ground floor. It was a clear steady light, such as one may be sure to see from the place where a fond faithful wife is watching over a baby, or waiting for its father.

I knocked, and immediately the light moved, and a voice reached my ear with an accent of joy, and a step came hurrying to the door; but just when it was so near that I felt it necessary to draw back, I heard another step, and a heavier one approach, and after a word or two in a sweet kind voice that nobody could hear without emotion, the light eager step withdrew and the door was opened a little way a very little way just far enough for me to see the head of a man, stooping with age, who started back when he saw me, saying, Who are you? What do you want here, I should like to know? Where is master Ned?

Who is it, Philip? cried some one at the top of the staircase, where I saw the shadow of a woman projected along the white wall, with her clothes huddled up to her bosom, and her whole attitude that of one who listens with breathless anxiety.

I don't know I 'm sure it 's a stranger, said he, grappling the heavy door-chain with both hands, looking at me as if he had just been waked out of a sound sleep, and speaking as if he thought I intended to force my way.

A stranger is he alone?

I believe so peeping out as he spoke.

Go to your mistress and say to her, if she has not retired, that I beg leave to see her, said I I have a message for her.

Open the door, Philip, open the door! I know that voice

But the old man could not open the door; the chain was heavy, the catch had slipped, and he shook so, that I could not help asking where the other servants were.

He made no reply, but I saw by his look that notwithstanding all I had been a witness to a few hours before, the show of powdered lackeys and rich livery, there were no other servants in that large house, now that the dinner was over and the company away none but this aged and faithful man, who did every day in the week perhaps, what, on this particular day, five younger and better-clothed men had pretended to do. Shall I confess the truth? Shall I own that after this idea occurred to me, my sympathy for the sorrowful wife, my admiration for the deserted and beautiful wife grew less and less every moment? Who would have the courage to avow this? And yet, who is there to disbelieve me when I avow it? If the servants were contributed for the occasion who should say that the rich wines were not, and the superb furniture? And if the husband were not so wealthy as I had hoped of course the wife would not suffer so much by an overthrow.

Philip Philip continued the voice.

Madam

Say to Mr Holmes that I cannot possibly see him.

D' ye hear that sir? no use openin' the door now

But perhaps he will be so kind as to leave the message with you.

Very fair, thought I, vexed and sore at my reception a pretty reward for my trouble! tearing a leaf out of my pocket-book and writing these words on it 'I have no message to deliver; nothing but this I have called now at the desire of your husband; I do not know that he wished me to see you, but in the hope that I might be of use, I have begged the favor a favor that I shall never beg either of him or of you, again. Farewell! God bless you. If it be in my power to serve you, command me.'

There, said I, wrapping up the ring in the paper and giving it to the old man. There take that to your mistress immediately

Yes sir

Give it into her own hands, d' ye hear?

I left him as I said this, and had got a considerable way off, when I heard a shriek a scream a short brief cry that pierced my heart like a knife. I stopped and listened and held my breath, and hurried back just in time to have the door shut in my face, to see lights moving about, and to hear steps hurrying hither and thither through every part of the house. O, the agony, the unutterable agony that followed! for I knocked and knocked and nobody came to relieve me, and the whole house grew dark and silent as the grave. But I would not stir from the step I would not leave the door, till I heard some one say in a low terrified voice from within, For God's sake, who is there!

I repeated my name.

Do go away sir! do, do! you know not the mischief you are doing; you 'll have the watch about you.

I 'll never go away never, never! till I know how she is

Go away sir, for God's sake! you have killed my poor mistress!

Killed her

Yes, that you have; she can hardly speak now; and you are determined not to let her sleep

Why don't you send for somebody?

We' ve nobody to send I wish you *would* go away!

Off I started, meaning to go for Dr. Armstrong, who lived not very far off; but the moment I left the door, somebody called out for me saying, Heave to! Holloa there, heave to, I say!

I paid no attention to the call

Heave to! heave to!

Authorship: A Tale

Some sailor thought I, with too much grog aboard

I've been a watchin' you this half hour, my fine feller; which if you don't heave to, afore I give the word, you 'll be brought up with a round turn

Who the devil are you? said I.

I 'm the watch; who the devil are you?

Oh, I beg your pardon

What were you doin' there jess now

Delivering a message

Ugh and what are you runnin' away for?

Going for a doctor.

Ugh you must go with me if you please.

With you what for?

Don't like your looks pretty story to gammon them as knows what 's what.

My looks you impudent blackguard!

Come come, master, none o' that now; better keep a civil tongue in your head, afore we clap the screws to you.

Why, how dare you speak to a gentleman in this way!

A gentleman poh don't I know you?

Know me!

Yes you, and all the rest o' the troop; and wasn't we put on our guard no longer ago 'an yesterday; and didn't I see you try to get into that 'ere house not an hour ago under false pertences; but they knowed you afore to-day, they was up to your tricks, and wouldn't let you in

Look you, said I, pulling off my gloves and buttoning up my coat

A nice gentleman you, to be sure; tryin' to get into a house when you know the people's away; come come, give an account of yourseff.

Look you, I have not much to say to you; you are under a mistake

Phoo with an impudent leer.

You are under a mistake, I say! You have your duty to perform and I have mine. There lies my way; I am going for a doctor, and if you stop me, or interfere with me, you shall rue it the longest day you have to live.

Authorship: A Tale

Phoo

Shall I knock him down! said I to myself; or shall I set off and try to outrun the watch or shall I try to escape in a quieter way. It would be the devil to be stopped here.

I adopted the latter course, determined to try the value of a system which every body recommended to me, almost every day in the week that is, whenever I was in a scrape or just out of a scrape to give soothing syrup.

My good fellow, said I

Ugh I thought you'd come to

You see how it is a matter of life and death; I tell you I am going for a doctor; if you don't believe me, go with me.

He shook his head with a sort of smile which gave me a convulsion of the right shoulder I saw that I should have to drop him. Phoo phoo, said he, that won't do, that's an old story; every body we catch a runnin' away, is always agoin' for the doctor.

Upon my word, it 's a true story

Well well, you come along o' me, and if they believe you, they 'll either send a doctor to the house, or let you go for one.

Here, said I here 's a crown for you; you may either go with me or let me go by myself.

Thank your honor; but you see pocketing the crown with a bow and buttoning up to the chin as he spoke, with a very deliberate slow motion we never goes off our beat.

Well then I suppose you dare not go with me?

No your honor

Very well good night

Stop, your honor.

Stop what for? Don't you mean to let me go?

No, your honor

Why you impudent rascal how dare you! Do you mean to keep the silver?

To be sure I do, your honor.

You are a knave.

How so, your honor

I 'll have you dismissed.

Authorship: A Tale

What for, your honor? If your honor 's a gemman you gives it to me as a free gift, you know, an' if your honor is no gemman, its a bribe, an' as I mean to own to 't as soon as iver you are safe, I don't see where 's the harm.

What could I say? There was but one hope left I took out a sovereign. If you will suffer me to go, said I, here is a sovereign for you and here is my card

He took the card, and holding the wrong side up, affected to be reading it

What say you; it is now four o'clock.

Ugh

Will you take the sovereign?

Yes, your honor.

Will you let me go?

No, your honor

Shall I give you more?

As much as you like, your honor

Will you let me go, or will you not?

I will not, your honor.

I looked at my watch; it wanted five minutes of four; and without saying another word, I walked away. He pursued me, and got before me, and put out his hand to arrest me. Touch me at your peril, said I.

Phoo, your honor

I quickened my step, he touched me, and received a blow which sent him headlong into the street. He was probably stunned, for though I walked away, I had time to get a considerable distance before I heard the noise of pursuit or the spring of the rattle. It grieved me to strike the poor fellow, but what was I to do a guinea would repair all the damage that *he* suffered or could suffer, while on the other side the damage might be incalculable.

It was a very awkward affair though the rattles were sprung at last, and in five minutes more, owing to the noise of my heavy-shod boots in the vast echoing solitude, I was captured and led off to the watch-house in broad day-light; and although I succeeded in satisfying all parties, and in sending a message to Dr. Armstrong, it was near five o'clock in the afternoon before I was liberated. And how was I liberated after all? why, in such a condition that I was afraid to look up as I hurried through the streets, afraid to appear at my lodgings, till I had sneaked into a bath at Leicester-Square, and afraid even to go to a chop-house for a dinner, till I had changed every rag of clothes I had on.

It was eight in the evening before I got back to street, Pall-Mall, whither I hurried with a mixture of feelings which it would be idle for me to attempt to describe. To this hour I know not, I cannot imagine how I lived through the day as I did. The woman I most loved on earth for aught I knew was no more. The proud, beautiful woman! I had struck her to the heart her cry had reached me a whole day had passed over, and yet I knew not whether she was dead or alive. And why so fearful a change? The day before I would have died for her. Could it

Authorship: A Tale

be that a little wrath was too mighty for such love? Could it be that my hope was not pure, and that by refusing to see me, she had rebuked it for ever? And how had I passed the day? I did not know; I do not know to this hour; I only know that I was in a fever all day long; that I was piqued when I left the message at the door, and that I was in wrath, when I got back to my lodgings after a day of bitter trial, to find that no message had been left for me.

It was very dark when I arrived at the house; and my heart failed me when I lifted the knocker. It sounded heavily to my ear, and perhaps I struck it heavily; but however that may be, I declare that I was not much surprised when a little boy came up to me and said that the people of the house were gone away.

Gone away, my poor boy and where have they gone? said I.

We don't know, sir

We and who are you? Do you belong to the house?

No mother an' me, we had the run o' the kitchen till to-day; and to-day the poor lady has gone off; and we don't know what to do sir, please.

What time did she go?

Jest afore dinner

Did you see her? was she well

Oh no sir; she was very bad, she and the little chambermaid and the poor old man; but she didn't cry, and they did.

Where is your mother? Did she see them?

No sir; mother's bad too; she hasn't been here this most a week, but the poor lady used to send her the vittles every day.

Do you know who owns the house?

No sir.

Did she leave no message for any body when she went away?

No sir; she went away as fast as ever she could, sir.

In a coach?

In two coaches and a cart, if you please sir.

Very well, thought I; if I do not hear within a day or two, I will give her up entirely, or stay here 's my old friend the watchman; perhaps he can tell me more about the matter. I say, heave to there!

Heave to yourself then! cried a voice from the box; but it was not the voice of the man that hailed me the night before; it was altogether different, more good-natured and more agreeable. At first, I gave myself credit for the change; but on coming to the box, I found out my mistake. It was a new watchman I felt sorry, for in spite of the rude behaviour of the fellow whom I had quarrelled with, I was delighted with his humor and courage; and his fidelity was worthy of all praise, for I could neither terrify, nor coax, nor bribe him. It was a pity for such a pure

Authorship: A Tale

specimen of the Charleys to be turned adrift I will intercede for him, thought I; and I spoke to the incumbent, who speedily satisfied me that I had no occasion to give myself any farther trouble about him, for he was still in office, and likely to be there as long as he could wear a watch-coat or twirl a rattle. So much the better, said I; vexed nevertheless, that I had no opportunity of showing how magnanimous I *could* be.

But this man was unable to give me any farther information about the people of the house; they had not been there long, he said, but some how or other, a notion had got abroad before they had been there a week, that there was a sort of mystery about them. They were very quiet people to be sure; but they saw nobody, they never went abroad, except in the evening; the door was always kept bolted and barred, which was all proper enough to be sure in such a place, but then they had no servants, and they never appeared to eat any thing. God knows how they live, said he

Very true, said I. But as I do not happen to care much how they live, I wish you would take my card here take two or three of them and here's a trifle for you, and if you hear any thing more of the parties, or if you are able to find out who owns the house, let me know immediately.

Yes, your honor

Fire and fury; if you ever say yes your honor, to me, I 'll serve you as I did your predecessor!

No your honor

I started off! it was quite impossible to bear another such attack of yes your honor, no your honor, and the devil knows what, from a watchman surprised into civility by a bribe.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CATASTROPHE.

My next move was to Russel Square, No 48, where Dr. Armstrong lived. I was lucky enough to find him at home. He had called with my note, according to my desire, and immediately after receiving it; but the lady would not suffer him to see her; she would see nobody, the servant said, being very ill, and trying to get some sleep. I went away, said the doctor, with a design to see you; but was prevented by a variety of circumstances, and I took another opportunity of calling on the lady. But the house was already shut up, and all that I know of her is, that a fee has been left here which I do not choose to receive, with the respectful compliments of Mrs. M E who being attended by her own physician has only to thank me for my obliging promptitude, &c. &c. &c.

M. E., M. E. allow me to see the note if you please; It will be a great relief to me to know that she is able to write.

Certainly, said he.

But the hand-writing was not hers. And here it might be well for me to stop; for if I were to write for ever, it would be impossible to give a true idea of the perplexity and grief that pursued me day after day, that pursue me still on account of that mysterious woman. I would go on a pilgrimage to the ends of the earth I would journey the world over to see her again, as I saw her at the Isle-of-Wight. I would give but no I have begun the story and it must be told now, and what is more, it must be told in such a way, that those who hear it shall go with me step by step, through the labyrinth, out of which I am now laboring to extricate myself as I never labored before.

A week passed over, and as I heard nothing from her, from Edwards, nor from any body else, relating to either of

Authorship: A Tale

them, and as I could not throw off the trouble that was changing me hour by hour, and making me peevish in spite of all I could do, I determined to lay every thing else aside for a week or two, and give up my whole time, if necessary, to the investigation of the affair. I saw the landlord; but he could give me no satisfaction. All that he knew was, that he had been well treated by a gentlemanly man, who after engaging his house for half a year and paying for it in advance, went away long before the time had expired, and leaving the furniture in the best possible order, and every part of the house in capital condition. Others might say what they liked, but he should say from that circumstance alone, if there were nothing else in their favor, that they were well brought up. As for the wife, he never saw her but once but that was enough to satisfy him that she was a gentlewoman, every inch of her no leaning her head against the new paper, no shuffling about over the carpets, no dragging of chairs, and sofas, and tables, every thing was lifted up and carried in a lady-like way where she was; that any body could see, by the sofa she occupied all the time she was there. Why bless you 't was as good as new, and quite smooth when she left it. And as for the man he was a gentleman too, though rather uppish if any thing, but he liked him all the better for that.

Why so

It showed he had good blood in his veins, or ought to have.

True did he refer to any body when he took your house?

Ay, to a banker in Great Berners street, describing the very individual whom I saw at the cottage, and who on the night of the arrest had offered to bail Edwards.

Enough, I will go to him, said I.

He is out of town Sir, just now. I wanted to see him two or three days ago, about this very affair, and I was told that he would be absent for three weeks.

For three weeks, thought I. Then will I see some one else of the party; Sir George, or Mr. Barry, or that blockhead of a major; but where were they to be found? At 's Hotel to be sure; and away I posted to 's Hotel, where I had the satisfaction to hear that nobody knew either Sir George, or Mr. Barry, or that blockhead of a major. They had never met there till about a week before one of the party was taken up, nobody knew what for, while they were engaged at what would never have been permitted in the house, if it had been known very high play. Their behaviour had always been proper enough, said the principal waiter, eyeing me as he spoke, but no one of the party would ever be permitted to play under that roof again, till the matter was cleared up.

I had nothing more to say nothing more to do; my search was at an end; I had come to a full stop. I knew this, and yet I could not give up the inquiry, nor the hope that something would come of it; until at the end of two weeks, finding that my health was impaired, that I could neither eat nor sleep, that my hair was falling off with a fever of the mind; that I was growing nervous, actually nervous, and that a preternatural anxiety had got possession of me, which I knew would be fatal, if I did not make a desperate and a speedy effort, I determined to throw up my books and go into the country for a while. There was much to see, and how could I employ my time better than by seeing it, under circumstances which, whatever else they did, were pretty sure to make me happier and healthier. I could not be worse for I had begun to feel what I had never felt before and what I hope never to feel again, a dread of the future. I could not bear the idea of living to old age; time was getting too heavy and the days too long for me. I could not work perhaps I might play.

But no no I mistook the remedy; for after journeying east, west, north, and south, till I was weary tired of the large trees, the blue water and the deep green earth, tired of the very sky, and fatigued with perpetual change, I discovered that when the heart is too full for work it is much too full for play; that when the spirit is overcharged and vexed and sore, it is no time to go abroad for joy, or to move in the pathway of strangers a bitter truth to

Authorship: A Tale

know after solitude has worn us to the grave; but still, the sooner we know it the better; for if we are unhappy it may drive us to the only refuge below for the unhappy occupation. If there be no hope in solitude, no hope in the great over-crowded thoroughfares of life, there may be hope, there is hope in steady and useful occupation. We have but to persevere for a few days, and that which was a labor, will become a joy to the heart.

I could not keep away after I came to the knowledge of this truth; and so I lost no time in returning to my studies. To-morrow five weeks to-morrow, said I, as I sat on a little stone-bridge that crossed the river at three of which I have spent here, I hardly know why, I hardly know how, here in the very neighborhood of where she was born. Every body knew her, and every body speaks well of her, and yet nobody knows, not even her own mother, where she is, nor whether she is alive or dead. I have been to the cottage, I have been to the sea-shore, I have trod again every step of the way that we ever trod together, I have pursued her as the North-American savage would pursue his prey, and I have no hope now that I shall ever see her again. Five weeks to-morrow! To-morrow I will be where I was, before that woman crossed my path on my way over the sea; or to-morrow, I will return to my studies and forget her if it be possible. I drew out my watch, there was time for either. Liverpool was not far off, and I might be at sea before the morrow was over; London was not far off, and I might be at work, before the sun rose again. But wherefore at sea? Shall I give up and go back after all that I have endured, because of a beautiful woman? Shall I forego my birthright for ever, my proud hope, and the high station that I have struck for, day after day and year after year, because of that, which they who best know me, would not believe to be capable of turning me aside for so much as an hour? No no I will do what is more worthy of her. I will go back to the great business of life. It may be in my power to do much good I will try to do it. I will try to be a man, the recollection of whose love, wherever she may be, and whatever she may be, will be a comfort to her. I started up so proud, and so happy, and so eager to begin! with my heart and my lips running over! Five weeks to-morrow! said I it is now early in the day: one more stroll into the woods there, one more look at the river while it passes underneath the little window of the summer-house, where I have stood by the hour, agitated with a hope that I am sorry for now, and ashamed of a superstitious hope which would be unintelligible to the happy; one more look at the smooth dark water she told me of, where the tear-drop fell, and though my heart should break for it, I will go away from this neighbourhood for ever before the sun sets.

I did so. Before the sun set I was on my way back to town. That I might keep my vow the better, I took a postchaise, after getting as far as I could by the coach, and arrived on the morrow just before the clock struck eight. I had been asleep for two or three hours, when a heavy bell, connected in some way or other with a dream I had, awoke me. It was several minutes before I could recollect myself; the carriage had stopped, the morning was very dull and thick, and there was a heavy roar about me for a good while after I awoke, which I could not imagine the cause of; it appeared to be growing louder and louder, and was like the roar of the sea. After a minute or two, the great bell sounded again so near me and with a sound so unlike any thing I ever heard in my life, that I started broad awake, and calling out to the boy, asked him what he was stopping for.

Can't move sir; wedged up sir no help for it now sir, till the job is over; whoa there, whoa!

Stop stop what 's the matter! said I, tearing away the curtain from the glass and looking through it as well as the moisture would allow me. There appeared to be a great multitude on every side of the carriage, most of whom had their hats off, though the fog was like a heavy dew. Who are these people? what are they doing here?

Before he could reply there was a great rush among the crowd, cries and shrieks, and before they had subsided one universal groan.

There there that 's he! cried some one who stood upon the wheel of the carriage.

That 's he that 's he there they come, cried several others, who appeared to be on the top of the carriage.

Authorship: A Tale

Poor fellow poor fellow! God bless you! God bless you! cried several more, just as the boy let down the window and called out to me to look, look! and I should see 'em better nor if I was outside, or on the top of the coach.

Where are we? How long have we been here? said I.

Above an hour.

How did you get over the chain? cried a bystander.

What chain I saw no chain.

Here a man rode up on horseback, and ordered the people off the carriage, with an air of authority.

I shuddered at his look, and began to have some idea of the dreadful truth, for I could see huge walls before me, with heavy fetters and bars hung up in festoons over the arched gate-way. Drive on drive on! I cried I see where we are now! Drive on I say or let me escape.

Lord Sir there they go!

I could not help looking out for there was no other way to look; nor could I help seeing right before me, within a few yards of the carriage, when I did look out, preparations for putting a fellow-creature to death. I was terror struck fascinated with fear and though I withdrew my head and shut my eyes, and stopped my ears before I drew my breath, I had time to see the figure and shape of the man who was about to die time to feel what I would not feel again for the wealth of a kingdom, for they were the figure and shape of a man that I knew of the man that I saw at the cottage time to hear the multitude speak his name, as if Oh God! as if they were no parties to the dreadful work time to hear that he was to die for forgery, though heaven and earth had been moved in his behalf.

Let me pass over what followed. I could not bear to think of the frightful possibility which the death of poor Fontleroy obtruded upon my mind. If he was a forger, what were they who appeared so inferior to him? Could this be the authorship they meant? If so, how heartless their behavior! how treacherous their levity! If he were worthy of such a death, he who had occupied so high a place in good society; he who whenever I saw him and wherever I saw him, had appeared to such advantage over all that I saw him with, if nothing could save him, what was to become of poor Edwards? If there were no hope for the man, who but a little time before, the very last evening I saw them together, had been permitted to go free, while Edwards went away before him, as it were under the ban of society, what hope could there be for Edwards?

I grew sick with terror, giddy with a strange fear. I thought of my own escape, of the beautiful woman, of the wretch who betrayed her husband, of all that I have related here and of much that I want courage to speak of now.

But I returned to my studies, fearful that if I inquired further, I should learn the issue of what I trembled to think of; and lose the only hope I now had left. Month after month passed over, and I had begun to be cheerful. I never trusted myself to speak of my adventure; to be idle for a day, nor even to look at the papers which now lie before me. I had begun to sleep as I did in my youth I no longer dreamed of the cottage and the sea-shore, the summer-house, the bridge, or the cliff. But one day, as I stood in the square at Somerset-House, happening to turn my head, I saw the tall man with the scar in the cheek, who it appeared to me was chargeable with whatever had happened to poor Edwards. For a moment or two, I could not have spoken loud enough to be heard, if it had been to save my life; but afraid of losing the only opportunity I might ever have, an opportunity that I had languished for, of telling him to his teeth what I thought of him, and what she had thought of him, the poor credulous wife, whom he would have sacrificed over and over again, if he had had the power, I pursued him and put myself before him; and signified to him that I had something to say as soon as I could speak.

Authorship: A Tale

The moment he saw me, he stopped with a look of surprise, and putting his hand into his bosom appeared to be griping after what I felt sure was a knife or a pistol.

As soon as I had got my breath, I lowered my voice to a very quiet pitch one that I never use till I am ready to put my life at stake, and after a brief apology began to relate so much of the story told me by Mary P as concerned her faith in his word, long after she was married to another, and her high opinion of his probity; and I was just going to add a few little remarks of my own, to show that I, who knew mankind better, had always a very bad opinion of his behavior; but before I came to this part of my speech he put me out with a bow and a grave smile, which provoked me beyond measure.

I am very happy to meet with you, said he; I have been looking for you.

You have here is my card.

Much obliged to you; this, I take it, is your *real* name?

It is while I am here.

I wish I had known it a few weeks ago I had a message for you.

A message for me!

He drew out a memorandum–book, opened it, and produced a letter as he spoke. I have a letter in which you are interested; I have been very anxious to see you, but as I had not your address, and knew not where to obtain it, for the lady herself could not furnish me with it, I have not been able to find you.

Ah I know that hand–writing!

I dare say you do; she speaks of you, as if next to her husband, there was nobody on earth for whom she cared so much. Here here read it folding down the top of the first page as he spoke you may read all but the date and address.

I read the letter; and as I read it, such was the joy that came over me, such was the sorrow I felt for having outraged a lofty nature, that upon my word, I was ready to kneel down at his feet, and beg him to forgive me. I do not remember the words I have no copy of the letter it was not intended for me but I remember that I saw in it all the proof I could have prayed for, touching herself her husband this man who had saved her husband's life and restored him to her love, and I may add of her affection for me.

But where are they now? said I.

He shook his head.

You mean to let me know, of course?

No.

No!

I am afraid she cares a little too much for you.

Sir!

Authorship: A Tale

And you a little too much for her! She says you would'nt mind the voyage, if you knew where she was.

The *voyage*, hey?

Yes, poor girl! and being aware of that, she has begged me to do nothing which may lead either to a renewal of your acquaintance, or to so much as a correspondence by letter. You are a little piqued I see.

Piqued I oh no, not in the least no no *no*.

Yes you are. But you are to know that she has only written me once, and that although the letter she wrote then was more to *you* than to me, she promises never to write me again. And what is more, she begs you to send your address.

I gave her my address at the door, that morning.

So you thought, and so I told her; but the paper you speak of did not contain your address, or you would have been told that day, what I now tell you in her name, that she refused to see you from a fear which but enough you have done more than I, toward making her happy, and therefore it is that she will never see you again.

A pretty reward!

So it is.

But how am I to know, after I have left you, that she *is* happy? That voyage you spoke of I understand you, I suppose; Botany Bay or Van Diemen's Land, eh?

Botany Bay!

Yes gone there, eh?

No indeed.

Where then?

To America the United States of North America.

Gracious God! you don't say so, then I shall see her again!

END. 1 No not now; but I would when this was written.