Beauchampe, volume 2

William Gilmore Simms

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CHAPTER I.

Having seen his enemy fairly mounted and under way, as he thought, for Charlemont, Ned Hinkley returned to Ellisland for his own horse. Here he did not suffer himself to linger, though before he could succeed in taking his departure, he was subjected to a very keen and searching examination by the village publican and politician. Having undergone this scrutiny with tolerable patience, if not to the entire satisfaction of the examiner, he set forward at a free canter, determined that his adversary should not be compelled to wait. It was only while he rode that he began to fancy the possibility of the other having taken a different course; but as, upon reflection, he saw no other plan, which he might have adopted for lynching for suspected offences was not yet a popular practice in and about Charlemont, he contented himself with the reflection that he had done all that could have been done, and if Alfred Stevens failed to keep his appointment, he, at least, was one of the losers. He would necessarily lose the chance of revenging an indignity, not to speak of the equally serious loss of that enjoyment which a manly fight usually gave to Ned Hinkley himself, and which, he accordingly assumed, must be an equal gratification to all other persons. When he arrived at Charlemont, he did not make his arrival known, but repairing directly to the lake among the hills, he hitched his horse, and prepared,with what patience he could command, to await the coming of the enemy.

The reader is already prepared to believe that the worthy rustic waited in vain. It was only with the coming on of night that he began to consider himself outwitted. He scratched his head impatiently, not without bringing away some shreds of the hair, jumped on his horse, and, without making many allowances for the rough and hilly character of the road, went off at a driving pace, for the house of uncle Hinkley. Here he drew up only to ask if Brother Stevens had returned.

"No!"

"Then, dang it! he never will return. He's a skunk, uncle, as great a skunk as ever was in all Kentucky."

"How! what! what of Brother Stevens?" demanded the uncle, seconded by John Cross, who had only some two hours arrived at the village, and now appeared at the door. But Ned Hinkley was already off.

"He's a skunk! that's all!" His last words threw very little light over the mystery, and certainly gave very little satisfaction to his hearers. The absence of Alfred Stevens, at a time when John Cross was expected, had necessarily occasioned some surprise; but of course, no apprehensions were entertained by either the worthy parson or the bigoted host, that he could be detained by any cause whatsoever which would not fully justify his absence.

The next course of Ned Hinkley was for the cottage of Mr. Calvert. To the old man he gave a copious detail of all his discoveries, not only the heads of what he heard from the conspirators in the wood, but something of the terms of the dialogue. The gravity of Calvert increased as the other proceeded. He saw more deeply into the signification of certain portions of this dialogue than did the narrator; and when the latter, after having expressed his disappointment at the non−appearance of Stevens on the field of combat, at least congratulated himself at having driven him fairly from the ground, the other shook his head mournfully.

"I am afraid it's too late, my son."

"Too late, gran'pa! How? Is it ever too late to send such a rascal a−packing?"

"It may be for the safety of some, my son."

"What! Margaret you mean. You think the poor fool of a girl's too far gone in love of him, do you?"

"If that were all, Ned."

"Why, what more? Eh! you don't mean! "

The apprehensions of the simple, unsuspecting fellow, for the first time began to be awakened to the truth.

"I am afraid, my son, that this wretch has been in Charlemont too long. From certain words that you have dropped, as coming from Stevens, in speaking to his comrade, I should regard him as speaking the language of triumph for success already gained."

"Oh! hardly! I didn't think so. If I had only guessed that he meant such a thing, though I can't believe it, I'd ha' dropped him without a word. I'd have given him the pacificator as well as the peace−breaker. Oh, no! I can't think it I can't, I won't! Margaret Cooper is not a girl to my liking, but, Lord help us! she's too beautiful and too smart to suffer such a skunk, in so short a time, to get the whip−hand of her. No, gran'pa! I can't and won't believe it."

"Yet, Ned, these words which you have repeated convey some such fear to my mind. It may be that the villain was only boasting to his companion. There are scoundrels in this world who conceive of no higher subject of boast, than the successful deception and ruin of the artless and confiding. I sincerely hope that this may be the case now that it was the mere brag of a profligate to excite the admiration of his comrade. But when you spea of the beauty and the smartness of this poor girl, as of securities for virtue, you make a great mistake. Beauty is more apt to be a betrayer than a protector; and as for her talent, that is seldom a protection unless it be associated with humility. Hers was not. She was most ignorant where she was most assured. She knew just enough to congratulate herself that she was unlike her neighbours, and this is the very temper of mind which is likely to cast down its possessor in shame. I trust that she had a better guardian angle than either her beauty or her talents. I sincerely hope that she is safe. At all events let me caution you not to hint the possibility of its being otherwise. We will take for granted that Stevens is a baffled villain."

"I only wish I had a−dropped him!"

"Better as it is!"

"What! even if the poor girl is "

"Ay, even then!"

"Why gran'pa, can it be possible you say so?"

"Yes, my son; I say so, here, in moments of comparative calmness, and in the absence of the villain. Perhaps, were he present, I should say otherwise."

"And do otherwise! You'd shoot him, gran'pa, as soon as I."

"Perhaps! I think it likely. But, put up your pistols, Ned; You have nobody now to shoot. Put them up, and let us walk over to your uncle's at once. It is proper that he and John Cross should know these particulars."

Ned agreed to go, but not to put up his pistols.

"For, you see, gran'pa, this rascal may return. His friend may have kept him in long talk. We may meet him coming into the village."

"It is not likely, but come along. Give me that staff, my son, and your arm on the other side. I feel that my eyes are no longer young."

"You could shoot still, gran'pa?"

"Not well."

"What, couldn't you hit a chap like Stevens between the eyes at ten paces? I'm sure I could do it, blindfolded, by a sort of instinct."

And the youth shutting his eyes, as if to try the experiment, drew forth one of his pistols from his bosom and began to direct its muzzle around the room.

"There was a black spider there, gran'pa! I'm sure, taking him for Stevens, I could cut his web for him."

"You have cut that of Stevens himself, and his comb too, Ned."

"Yes, yes, but what a fool I was not to make it his gills!"

By this time the old man had got on his spencer, and, with staff in hand, declared himself in readiness. Ned Hinkley lowered his pistol with reluctance. He was very anxious to try the weapon and his own aim, on some body or something. That black spider which lived so securely in the domicile of Mr. Calvert would have stood no chance in any apartment of the widow Hinkley. Even the "pacificator," would have been employed for its extermination, if, for no other reason, because of the fanciedresemblance which it had always worn to Brother Stevens, a resemblance which occurred to him, perhaps, in consequence of the supposed similarity between the arts of the libertine, and those for the entrapping of his victims, which distinguish the labours of the spider.

The two were soon arrived at old Hinkley's, and the tale of Ned was told; but, such was the bigotry of the hearers, without securing belief.

"So blessed a young man!" said the old lady.

"A brand from the burning!" exclaimed Brother Cross.

"It's all an invention of Satan!" cried old Hinkley, "to prevent the consummation of a goodly work."

"We should not give our faith too readily to such devices of the enemy, friend Calvert;" said John Cross paternally.

"I never saw any thing in him that wasn't perfectly saint−like," said Mrs. Hinkley. "He made the most heartfelt prayer, and the loveliest blessing before meat! I think I hear him now 'Lord, make us thankful' with his eyes shut up so sweetly, and with such a voice."

"There are always some people, Brother Cross, to hate the saints of the Lord and to slander them! They lie in wait like thieves of the night, and roaring lions of the wilderness, seeking what they may devour."

"Ah," exclaimed Brother Cross, "how little do such know that they devour themselves; for whoso destroyeth his best friend is a devourer of himself."

"The blindness of Satan is upon them, and they do his work."

And thus, purr, purr, purr, they went on, to the end of the chapter. Poor Ned Hinkley found the whole kennel was upon him. Not only did they deny every thing that could by possibility effect the fair fame of the absent brother, but, from defending him, they passed, with an easy transition, to the denunciation of those who were supposed to be his defamers. In this the worthy old man Calvert came in for his share.

"All this comes of your supporting that worthless boy of mine in defiance of my will;" said old Hinkley. "You hate Brother Stevens because that boy hated him, and because I love him."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Hinkley;" said Calvert, mildly."I hate nobody; at the same time I suffer no mere prejudices to delude me against sight and reason."

"Ah!" said Brother Cross, gently, "it's that very reason, Brother Calvert, that ruins you worldlings. You must not rely on human reason. Build on faith, and you build on the Rock of Ages."

"I propose to use reason only in worldly matters, Mr. Cross," said the other; "for which use, only, I believe it was given us. I employ it in reference to a case of ordinary evidence, and I beg your regards now, while I draw your attention to the use I make of it in the present instance. Will you hear me without interruption?"

"Surely, Brother Calvert, but call me not Mr. Cross. I am not a Mister. I am plain John Cross; by virtue of my business, a brother, if it so please you to esteem me. Call me Brother Cross, or Brother John Cross, or plain John Cross, either of these will be acceptable unto me."

"We are all brothers, or should be," said Calvert; "and it will not need that there should be any misunderstanding between us on so small a matter."

"The matter is not small in the eye of the Lord;" said the preacher. "Titles of vanity become not us, and offend in his hearing."

The old teacher smiled, but proceeded.

"Now, Brother Cross, if you will hear me, I will proceed, according to my reason, to dwell upon the proofs which are here presented to you, of the worthlessness of this man, Alfred Stevens; and when you consider how much the feelings and the safety of the daughters of your flock depend upon the character of those moral and religious teachers to whom the care of them is entrusted, you will see, I think, the necessity of listening patiently, and determining without religious prejudice, according to the truth and reason of the case."

"I am prepared to listen patiently, Brother Calvert," said John Cross, clasping his hands together, setting his elbows down upon the table, shutting his eyes, and turning his face fervently up to heaven. Old Hinkley imitated this posture quite as nearly as he was able; while Mrs. Hinkley, sitting between the two, maintained a constant to and fro motion, first on one side, then on the other, as they severally spoke to the occasion, with her head deferentially bowing, like a pendulum, with a motionquite as regular and methodical. The movements of her nephew, Ned Hinkley, were almost as pleasant a study, after a fashion of his own. Sitting in a corner, he amused himself by drawing forth his "puppies," and taking occasional aim at a candle or flowerpot; and sometimes, with some irreverence, at the curved and rather extravagant proboscis of his worthy uncle, which, cocked up in air, was indeed something of a tempting object of sight to a person so satisfied of his skill in shooting as the young rustic. The parties being thus arranged in a fit attitude for listening, Mr. Calvert began somewhat after the following fashion:

"Our first knowledge of Alfred Stevens was obtained through Brother John Cross."

"And what better would you have?" demanded old Hinkley.

"None," said the other, "if Brother Cross knew any thing about the party he introduced. But it so happens, as we learn from Brother Cross himself, that the first acquaintance he had with Stevens was made upon the road, where Stevens played a trick upon him by giving him brandy to drink."

"No trick, Brother Calvert; the young man gave it me as a medicine, took it as a medicine himself, and, when I bade him, threw away the accursed beverage."

"Ordinary men, governed by ordinary reason, Brother Cross, would say that Stevens knew very well what he was giving you, and that it was a trick."

"But only think, Mr. Calvert," said Mrs. Hinkley, lifting her hands and eyes at the same moment, "the blessed young man threw away the evil liquor the moment he was told to do so. What a sign of meekness was that!"

"I will not dwell on this point," was the reply of Calvert. "He comes into our village and declares his purpose to adopt the profession of the preacher, and proceeds to his studies under the direction of Brother Cross."

"And didn't he study them?" demanded Mrs. Hinkley. "Wasn't he, late and early, at the blessed volume? I heard him at all hours above stairs. Oh! how often was he on his bended knees in behalf of our sinful race, ungrateful and misbelieving that we are!"

"I am afraid, madam," said Calvert, "that his studies were scarcely so profound as you think them. Indeed, Iam at a loss to conceive how you should blind your eyes to the fact that the greater part of his time was spent among the young girls of the village."

"And where is it denied," exclaimed old Hinkley, "that the lambs of God should sport together?"

"Do not speak in that language, I pray you, Mr. Hinkley," said Calvert, with something of pious horror in his look; "this young man was no lamb of God, but, I fear, as you will find, a wolf in the fold. It is, I say, very well known that he was constantly wandering, even till a late hour of the evening, with one of the village maidens."

"Who was that one, Brother Calvert?" demanded John Cross.

"Margaret Cooper."

"Hem!" said the preacher.

"Well, he quarrels with my young friend, the worthy son of Brother Hinkley "

"Do not speak of that ungrateful cub. Brother Stevens did not quarrel with him. He quarrelled with Brother Stevens, and would have murdered him, but that I put in in time to save."

"Say not so, Mr. Hinkley. I have good reason to believe that Stevens went forth especially to fight with William."

"I would not believe it, if a prophet were to tell me it."

"Nevertheless, I believe it. We found both of them placed at the usual fighting distance."

"Ah! but where were Brother Stevens's pistols?"

"In his pocket, I suppose."

"He had none. He was at a distance from my ungrateful son, and flying that he should not be murdered. The lamb under the hands of the butcher. And would you believe it, Brother Cross, he had gone forth only to counsel the unworthy boy only to bring him back into the fold gone forth at his own prayer, as Brother Stevens declared to Betsy, just before he went out."

"I am of opinion that he deceived her and yourself."

"Where were his pistols then?"

"He must have concealed them. He told Ned Hinkley, this very day, that he had pistols, but that they were here."

"Run up, Betsy, to Brother Stevens's room and see."

The old lady disappeared. Calvert proceeded.

"I can only repeat my opinion, founded upon the known pacific and honourable character of William Hinkley, and certain circumstances in the conduct of Stevens, that the two did go forth, under a previous arrangement, to fight a duel. That they were prevented, and that Stevens had no visible weapon, is unquestionably true. But I do not confine myself to these circumstances. This young man writes a great many letters, it is supposed to his friends, but never puts them in the post here, but every Saturday rides off, as we afterwards learn, to the village of Ellisland, where he deposits them and receives others. This is a curious circumstance, which alone should justify suspicion."

"The ways of God are intricate, Brother Calvert," said John Cross, "and we are not to suspect the truth which we cannot understand."

"But these are the ways of man, Brother Cross."

"And the man of God is governed by the God which is in him. He obeys a law which, perhaps, is ordered to be hidden from thy sight."

"This doctrine certainly confers very extraordinary privileges upon the man of God," said Calvert, quietly, "and, perhaps, this is one reason why the profession is so prolific of professors now a−days; but the point does not need discussion. Enough has been shown to awaken suspicion and doubt in the case of any ordinary person; and I now come to that portion of the affair which is sustained by the testimony of Ned Hinkley, our young friend here, who, whatever his faults may be, has been always regarded in Charlemont, as a lover and a speaker of the truth."

"Ay, ay, so far as he knows what the truth is," said old Hinkley, scornfully.

"And I'm just as likely to know what the truth is as you, uncle!" retorted the young man, rising and coming forward from his corner. "Come, come," he continued, "you're not going to ride rough shod over me as you did over cousin Bill. I don't care a snap of the finger, I can tell you, for all your puffed cheeks and big bellied speeches. I don't, I tell you!" and, suiting the action to the word, the sturdy fellow snapped his fingers almost under the nose of his uncle, which was now erected heavenward, with a more scornful pre−eminence than ever. The sudden entranceof Mrs. Hinkley, from her search after Stevens's pistols, prevented any rough issue between these new parties, as it seemed to tell in favour of Stevens. There were no pistols to be found. The old lady did not add, indeed, that there was nothing of any kind to be found belonging to the same worthy.

"There! That's enough!" said old Hinkley.

"Did you find any thing of Stevens's, Mrs. Hinkley?" inquired Mr. Calvert.

"Nothing, whatever."

"Well, madam," said Calvert, "your search, if it proves any thing, proves the story of Ned Hinkley conclusively. This man has carried off all his chattels."

John Cross looked down from heaven, and stared inquiringly at Mrs. Hinkley.

"Is this true? Have you found nothing, Sister Betsy?"

"Nothing."

"And Brother Stevens has not come back?"

"No!"

"And reason for it, enough;" said old Hinkley. "Didn't you hear that Ned Hinkley threatened to shoot him if he came back?"

"Look you, uncle," said the person thus accused, "if you was any body else, and a little younger, I'd thrash you for that speech the same as if it was a lie! I would."

"Peace!" said Calvert, looking sternly at the youth. Having obtained temporary silence, he was permitted at length to struggle through his narrative, and to place, in their proper lights, all the particulars which Ned Hinkley had obtained at Ellisland. When this was done the discussion was renewed, and raged, with no little violence, for a full hour. At length it ceased through the sheer exhaustion of the parties. Calvert was the first to withdraw from it, as he soon discovered that such was the bigotry of old Hinkley and his wife, and even of John Cross himself, that nothing short of divine revelation could persuade them of the guilt of one who had once made a religious profession. Brother Cross, though struck with some of the details which Calvert had given, was afterwards prepared to regard them as rather trivial than otherwise, and poor Ned was doomed to perceive that the conviction was general in this holy family, that he had, by his violence, and the terror which his pistols had inspired, driven away, in desperation, the most meek and saintly of all possible young apostles. The youth was nearly furious ere the evening and the discussion were over. It was very evident to Calvert that nothing was needed, should Stevens come back, but a bold front and a lying tongue, to maintain his position in the estimation of the flock, until such time as the truth would make itself known a thing which, eventually, always happens. That night Ned Hinkley dreamed of nothing but of shooting Stevens and his comrade and of thrashing his uncle. What did Margaret Cooper dream of?

CHAPTER II.

What did Margaret Cooper dream of? Disappointment, misery, death. There was a stern presentiment in her waking thoughts, sufficiently keen and agonizing to inspire such dreadful apprehensions in her dreams. The temperament which is sanguine, and which, in a lively mood, inspires hope, is, at the same time, the source of those dark images of thought and feeling, which appal it with the most terrifying forms of fear; and when Saturday and Saturday night came and passed, and Alfred Stevens did not appear, a lurking dread that would not be chidden or kept down, continued to rise within her soul, which, without assuming any real form or decisive speech, was yet suggestive of complete overthrow and ruin. Her dreams were of this complexion. She felt herself abandoned. Nor merely abandoned. She was a victim. In her desolation she had even lost her pride. She could no longer meet the sneer with scorn. She could no longer carry a lofty brow among the little circle, who, once having envied, were now about to despise her. To the impatient spirit, once so strong so insolent in its strength what a pang what a humiliation was here! In her dreams she saw the young maidens of the village stand aloof, as she

had once stood aloof from them: she heard the senseless titter of their laugh; and she had no courage to resent the impertinence. Her courage was buried in her shame. No heart is so cowardly as that which is conscious of guilt. Picture onpicture of this sort did her fancy present to her that night; and when she awoke the next morning, the sadness of her soul had taken the colour of a deep and brooding misanthropy. Such had been the effect of her dreams. Her resolution came only from despair; and resolution from such a source, we well know, is usually only powerful against itself.

It is one proof of a religious instinct, and of a universal belief in a controlling and benevolent Deity, that all men, however abased, scornful of divine and human law, invariably, in their moments of desperation, call upon God. Their first appeal is, involuntarily, to him. The outlaw, as the fatal bullet pierces his breast the infidel, sinking and struggling in the water, the cold stony heart of the murderer, the miser, the assassin of reputation as of life all cry out upon God in the unexpected paroxysms of death. Let us hope that the instinct which prompts this involuntary appeal for mercy, somewhat helps to secure its blessings. It is thus also with one who, in the hey−day of the youthful heart, has lived without thought or prayer a tumultuous life of uproar and riot, a long carnival of the passions the warm blood suppressing the cool thought, and making the reckless heart impatient of consideration. Let the sudden emergency arise, with such a heart let the blood become stagnant with disease; and the involuntary appeal is to that God, of whom before there was no thought. We turn to him as to a father who is equally strong to help and glad to preserve us.

Margaret Cooper, in the ordinary phrase, had lived without God. Her God was in her own heart; beheld by the lurid fires of an intense, unmethodized ambition. Her own strength, or rather the persuasion of her own strength, had been so great, that hitherto she had seen no necessity for appealing to any other source of power. She might now well begin to distrust that strength. She did so. Her desperation was not of that sort utterly to shut out hope; and while there is hope, there is yet a moral assurance that the worst is not yet perhaps not to be. But she was humbled not enough, perhaps, but enough to feel the necessity of calling in her allies. She dropped by her bedside, in prayer, when she arose that morning. We do not say that she prayed for forgiveness, without reference to her future earthly desires. Few of us know how to simplify our demands upon the Deity to this one. We pray that he may assist us in this or that grand speculation. The planter for a great crop the banker for investments that give him fifty per cent. the lawyer for more copious fees, the parson for an increase of salary. How few pray for mercy forgiveness for the past strength to sustain the struggling conscience in the future. Poor Margaret was no wiser, no better, than the rest of us. She prayed, silly woman! that Alfred Stevens might keep his engagement!

He did not! That day she was to be married! She had some reference to this in making her toilet that morning. The garments which she put on were all of white. A white rose gleamed palely from amidst the raven hair upon her brow. Beautiful was she, exceedingly. How beautiful! But alas! the garb she wore, the pale sweet flower on her forehead, they were mockeries; the emblems of that purity of soul that innocence of heart, which were gone, gone for ever! She shuddered as she beheld the flower, and meditated this thought. Silently she took the flower from her forehead, and as if it were precious as that lost jewel of which it reminded her, she carefully placed it away in her toilet−case. Yet her beauty was heightened rather than diminished. Margaret Cooper was beautiful after no ordinary mould. Tall in stature, with a frame rounded by the most natural proportions into symmetry, and so formed for grace; with a power of muscle more than common among women, which, by inducing activity, made her movements as easy as they were graceful; with an eye bright, like the morning star, and with a depth of expression, darkly clear, like that of the same golden orb at night; with a face exquisitely oval; a mouth of great sweetness; cheeks on which the slightest dash of hue from the red, red rose in June, might be seen to come and go, under the slightest promptings of the active heart within; a brow of great height and corresponding expansion; with a bust that impressed you with a sense of the maternal strength which might be harboured there, even as the swollen bud gives promises of the full bosomed luxuriance of the flower when it opens; add to these, a lofty carriage, a look where the quickened spirit seems ever ready for utterance; a something of eager solemnity in her speech; and a play of expression on her lips which, if thebrow were less lofty and the eye less keenly bright, might be a smile; and you have some idea of that noble and lovely temple, on

which fires of lava had been raised by an unholy hand; in which a secret worship is carried on which dreads the light shrinks from exposure, and trembles to be seen by the very Deity whose favour it yet seeks in prayer and apprehension. These beauties of person as we have essayed, though most feebly to describe them, were enhanced, rather than lessened, by that air of anxiety by which they were now overcast. Her step was no longer free. It was marked by an unwonted timidity. Her glance was no longer confident; and when she looked round, upon the faces of the young village maidens, it was seen that her lip trembled and moved, but no longer with scorn. If the truth were told, she now envied the meanest of those maidens that security which her lack of beauty had guaranteed. She, the scorner of all around her, now envied the innocence of the very meanest of her companions. Such was the natural effect of her unhappy experience upon her heart. What would she not have given to be like one of them? She dared not take her place, in the church, among them. It was a dread that kept her back. Strange, wondrous power of innocence! The guilty girl felt that she might be repulsed that her frailty might make itself known must make itself known and she would be driven with shame from that communion with the pure to which she had no longer any claim! She sunk into one of the humblest seats in the church, drawing her reluctant mother into the lowly place beside her.

John Cross did not that day address himself to her case: but sin has a family similitude amongst all its members. There is an unmistakeable likeness, which runs through the connexion. If the preacher speaks fervently to one sin, he is very apt to goad, in some degree, all the rest: and though Brother Cross had not the most distant idea of singling out Margaret Cooper for his censure, yet there was a whispering devil at her elbow that kept up a continual commentary upon what he said, filling her ears with a direct application of every syllable to her own peculiar instance.

"See you not," said the demon, "that every eye is turned upon you? He sees into your soul he knows your secret. He declares it, as you hear, aloud, with a voiceof thunder, to all the congregation. Do you not perceive that you sit alone that every body shrinks from your side that your miserable old mother alone sits with you that the eyes of some watch you with pity, but more with indignation? Look at the young damsels late your companions they are your companions no longer. They triumph in your shame. Their titter is only suppressed because of the place in which they are. They ask 'Is this the maiden who was so wise, so strong who scorned us scorned us, indeed! and was not able to baffle the serpent in his very first approaches?' Ha! ha! How they laugh! Well, indeed, they may. It is very laughable, Margaret not less laughable and amusing than strange! that you should have fallen! so easily so blindly, and not even to suspect what every one else was sure of! Oh! Margaret, Margaret! Can it be true? Who will believe in your wit, now your genius your beauty? Smutched and smutted! Poor, weak, degraded! If there is pity for you, Margaret, it is full of mockery too it is a pity that is full of bitterness. You should now cast yourself down and cover yourself with ashes, and cry 'wo is me,' and call upon the rocks and the hills to cover you!"

Such was the voice in her soul, which to her senses, seemed like that of some jibing demon at her elbow. Margaret tried to pray to expel him by prayer; but the object of his mockery had not been attained. She could not surrender herself entirely to the chastener. She was scourged but not humbled; and the language of the demon provoked defiance, not humility. Her proud spirit rose once more against the pressure put upon it. Her bright, dazzling eye flashed in scorn upon the damsels whom she now fancied to be actually tittering scarce able to suppress their laughter at her obvious disgrace. On John Cross she fixed her fearless eye, like that of some fallen angel, still braving the chastener, whom he cannot contend with. A strange strength for even sin has its strength for a season came to her relief in that moment of fiendish mockery. The strength of an evil spirit was accorded her. Her heart once more swelled with pride. Her soul once more insisted on its ascendancy. She felt, though she did not say, "even as I am, overthrown, robbed of my treasure, I feel that I am superior to these. I feel that I have strength against the future. If they are pure and innocent,it is not because of their greater strength, but their greater obscurity. If I am overthrown by the tempter, it was because I was the more worthy object of overthrow. In their littleness they live; if I am doomed to the shaft, at least, it will be as the eagle is doomed! It will be while soaring aloft while aiming for the sun while grasping at the very bolt by which I am destroyed!"

Such was the consolation offered by the twin demons of pride and vanity. The latter finds its aliment in the heart which it too completely occupies, even from those circumstances which, in other eyes, make its disgrace and weakness. The sermon which had touched her sin had not subdued it. Perhaps, no sermon, no appeal, however powerful and touching, could, at that moment, have had power over her. The paroxysm of her first consciousness of ruin had not yet passed off. The condition of mind was not yet reached in which an appeal could be felt. As in the case of physical disease, so with that of the mind and heart, there is a period when it is neither useful nor prudent to administer the medicines which are yet most nesessary to safety. The judicious physician will wait for the moment when the frame is prepared when the pulse is somewhat subdued before he tries the most powerful remedy. The excitement of the wrong which she had suffered was still great in her bosom. It was necessary that she should have repose. That excitement was maintained by the expectation that Stevens would yet make his appearance. Her eye, at intervals, wandered over the assembly in search of him. The demon at her elbow understood her quest.

"He will not come;" it said "you look in vain. The girls follow your eyes they behold your disappointment they laugh at your credulity. If he leads any to the altar, think you it will be one whom he could command at pleasure without any such conditions one, who, in her wild passions and disordered vanity, could so readily yield to his desires, without demanding any corresponding sacrifice? Margaret, they laugh now at those weaknesses of a mind which they once feared if not honoured. They wonder, now, that they could have been so deceived. If they do not laugh aloud, Margaret, it is because they would spare your shame. Indeed, indeed, they pity you!"

The head of the desperate, but still haughty woman, was now more proudly uplifted, and her eyes shot forth yet fiercer fires of indignation. What a conflict was going on in her bosom. Her cheeks glowed with the strife her breast heaved; with difficulty she maintained her seat inflexibly, and continued, without other signs of discomposure, until the service was concluded. Her step was more stately than ever as she walked from church; and while her mother lingered behind to talk with Brother Cross, and to exchange the sweetest speeches with the widow Thackeray and others, she went on alone, seeing none, heeding none, dreading to meet any face lest it should wear a smile and look the language in which the demon at her side still dealt. He still clung to her, with the tenacity of a fiendish purpose. He mocked her with her shame, goading her, with dart upon dart, of every sort of mockery. Truly did he mutter in her ears

"Stevens has abandoned you. Never was child, before yourself, so silly as to believe such a promise as he made you. Do you doubt? do you still hope? It is madness? Why came he not yesterday last night to−day? He is gone. He has abandoned you. You are not only alone you are lost! lost for ever!"

The tidings of this unsolicited confident were confirmed the next day, by the unsuspecting John Cross. He came to visit Mrs. Cooper and her daughter among the first of his parishioners. He had gathered from the villagers already that Stevens had certainly favoured Miss Cooper beyond all the rest of the village damsels. Indeed, it was now generally bruited that he was engaged to her in marriage. Though the worthy preacher had very stoutly resisted the suggestions of Mr. Calvert, and the story of Ned Hinkley, he was yet a little annoyed by them; and he fancied that, if Stevens were, indeed, engaged to Margaret, she, or perhaps the old lady, might relieve his anxiety by accounting for the absence of his protégé. The notion of Brother John was, that, having resolved to marry the maiden, he had naturally gone home to apprise his parents and to make the necessary preparations. But this conjecture brought with it a new anxiety. It now, for the first time, seemed something strange that Stevens had never declared to himself, or to any body else who his parents were what they were where they were whatbusiness they pursued; or any thing about them. Of his friends, they knew as little. The simple old man had never thought of these things, until the propriety of such inquiries was forced upon him by the conviction that they would now be made in vain. The inability to answer them, when it was necessary that an answer should be found, was a commentary upon his imprudence which startled the good old man not a little. But, in the confident hope that a solution of the difficulty could be afforded by the sweetheart or the mother, he proceeded to her cottage. Of course, Calvert, in his communication to him, had forborne those darker conjectures which he

could not help but entertain; and his simple auditor, unconscious himself of any thought of evil, had never himself formed any such.

Margaret Cooper was in her chamber when Brother Cross arrived. She had lost that elasticity of temper which would have carried her out at that period among the hills in long rambles filled with those wild, wooing companions, which gambol along the paths of poetic contemplation. The old man opened his stores of scandal to Mrs. Cooper with little or no hesitation. He told her all that Calvert had said, all that Ned Hinkley had fancied himself to have heard, and all the village tattle touching the engagement supposed to exist between Stevens and her daughter.

"Of course, Sister Cooper," said he, "I believe nothing of this sort against the youth. I should be sorry to think it of one whom I plucked as a brand from the burning. I hold Brother Stevens to be a wise young man and a pious; and truly I fear, as indeed I learn, that there is in the mind of Ned Hinkley a bitter dislike to the youth, because of some quarrel which Brother Stevens is said to have had with William Hinkley. This dislike hath made him conceive evil things of Brother Stevens and to misunderstand and to pervert some conversation which he hath overhead which Stevens hath had with his companion. Truly, indeed, I think that Alfred Stevens is a worthy youth of whom we shall hear a good account."

"And I think so too, Brother Cross. Brother Stevens will be yet a burning and a shining light in the church. There is a malice against him; and I think I know the cause, Brother Cross."

"Ah! this will be a light unto our footsteps, Sister Cooper."

"Thou knowest, Brother Cross," resumed the old lady in a subdued tone but with a loftier elevation of eye−brows and head, "thou knowest the great beauty of my daughter Margaret?"

"The maiden is comely, sister, comely among the maidens; but beauty is grass. It is a flower which blooms at morning and is cut down in the evening. It withereth on the stalk where it bloomed, until men turn from it with sickening and with sorrow, remembering what it hath been. Be not boastful of thy daughter's beauty, Sister Cooper it is the beauty of goodness alone which dieth not."

"But said I not, Brother Cross, of her wisdom, and her wit, as well as her beauty?" replied the old lady with some little pique. "I was forgetful of much, if I spoke only of the beauty of person which Margaret Cooper surely possesseth, and which the eyes of blindness itself might see."

"Dross, dross all, Sister Cooper. The wit of man is a flash which blindeth and maketh dark; and the wisdom of man is a vain thing. The one crackleth like thorns beneath the pot the other stifleth the heart and keepeth down the soul from her true flight. I count the wit and wisdom of this daughter even as I count her beauty. She hath all, I think, as they are known to and regarded by men. But all is nothing. Beauty hath a day's life like the butterfly; wit shineth like the sudden flash of the lightning, leaving only the cloud behind it; and oh! for the vain wisdom of man which makes him vain and unsteady likely to falter liable to fall rash in his judgment erring in his aims blind to his duty wilful in his weakness insolent to his fellow presumptuous in the sight of God. Talk not to me of worldly wisdom. It is the foe to prayer and meekness. The very fruit of the tree which brought sin and death into the world. Thy daughter is fair to behold very fair among the maidens of our flock none fairer, none so fair: God hath otherwise blessed her with a bright mind and a quick intelligence; but I think not she is wise to salvation. No, no! she hath not yearned to the holy places of the tabernacle, unless it be that Brother Stevens hath been more blessed in his ministry than I!"

"And he hath!" exclaimed the mother. "I tell you, Brother John, the heart of Margaret Cooper is no longer what it was. It is softened. The toils of Brother Stevens have not been in vain. Blessed young man, no wonder they hate and defame him. He hath had a power over Margaret Cooper such as man never had before; and it is for this

reason that Bill Hinkley and Ned conspired against him, first to take his life, and then to speak evil of his deeds. They beheld the beauty of my daughter, and they looked on her with famishing eyes. She sent them a−packing, I tell you. But this youth, Brother Stevens, found favour in her heart. They beheld the two as they went forth together. Ah! Brother John, it is the sweetest sight to behold two young, loving people walk forth in amity born, as it would seem, for each other; both so tall, and young, and handsome; walking together with such smiles, as if there was no sorrow in the world; as if there was nothing but flowers and sweetness on the path; as if they could see nothing but one another; and as if there were no enemies looking on. It did my heart good to see them, Brother Cross; they always looked so happy with one another."

"And you think, Sister Cooper, that Brother Stevens hath agreed to take Margaret to wife?"

"She hath not told me this yet, but in truth, I think it hath very nigh come to that."

"Where is she?"

"In her chamber."

"Call her hither, Sister Cooper; let us ask of her the truth."

Margaret Cooper was summoned, and descended with slow steps and an unwilling spirit to meet their visiter.

"Daughter," said the good old man, taking her hand, and leading her to a seat, "thou art, even as thy mother sayest, one of exceeding beauty. Few damsels have ever met mine eyes with a beauty like to thine. No wonder the young men look on thee with eyes of love; but let not the love of youth betray thee. The love of God is the only love that is precious to the heart of wisdom."

Thus saying, the old man gazed on her with as much admiration as was consistent with the natural coldness of his temperament, his years, and his profession. His address, so different from usual, had a soothing effect upon her. A sigh escaped her, but she said nothing. He then proceeded to renew the history which had been given to him and which he had already detailed to her mother. She heard him with patience, in spite of all his interpolations from Scripture, his ejaculations, his running commentary upon the narrative, and the numerous suggestive topics which took him from episode to episode, until the story seemed interminably mixed up in the digression. But when he came to that portion which related to the adventure of Ned Hinkley, to his espionage, the conference of Stevens with his companion, then she started, then her breathing became suspended, then quickened, then again suspended and then, so rapid in its rush, that her emotion became almost too much for her powers of suppression. But she did suppress it, with a power, a resolution, not often paralleled among men seldom among women. After the first spasmodic acknowledgment given by her surprise, she listened with comparative calmness. She, alone, had the key to that conversation. She, alone, knew its terrible signification. She knew that Ned Hinkley was honest was to be believed that he was too simple, and too sincere, for any such invention; and, sitting with hands clasped upon that chair the only attitude which expressed the intense emotion which she felt she gazed with unembarrassed eye upon the face of the speaker, while every word which he spoke went like some keen, death−giving instrument into her heart. The whole dreadful history of the villany of Stevens, her irreparable ruin was now clearly intelligible. The mocking devil at her elbow had spoken nothing but the truth. She was indeed the poor victim of a crafty villain. In the day of her strength and glory she had fallen fallen, fallen, fallen!

"Why am I called to hear this?" she demanded with singular composure.

The old man and the mother explained in the same breath that she might reveal the degree of intercourse which had taken place between them, and, if possible, account for the absence of her lover. That, in short, she might refute the malice of enemies and establish the falsehood of their suggestions.

"You wish to know if I believe this story of Ned Hinkley?"

"Even so, my daughter."

"Then, I do!"

"Ha! what is it you say, Margaret?"

"The truth."

"What?" demanded the preacher, "you cannot surely mean that Brother Stevens hath been a wolf in sheep's clothing that he hath been a hypocrite."

"Alas!" thought Margaret Cooper "have I not been my own worst enemy did I not know him to be this from the first?"

Her secret reflection remained, however, unspoken. She answered the demand of John Cross.

"I believe that Alfred Stevens is all that he is charged to be a hypocrite a wolf in sheep's clothing! I see no reason to doubt the story of Ned Hinkley. He is an honest youth."

The old lady was in consternation. The preacher aghast and confounded.

"Tell me, Margaret," said the former, "hath he not engaged himself to you? Did he not promise is he not sworn to be your husband?"

"I have already given you my belief. I see no reason to say any thing more. What more do you need? Is he not gone fled has he not failed "

She paused abruptly, while a purple flush went over her face. She rose to retire.

"Margaret!" exclaimed the mother.

"My daughter!" said John Cross.

"Speak out what you know tell us all "

"No! I will say no more. You know enough already. I tell you, I believe Alfred Stevens to be a hypocrite and a villain. Is not that enough? What is it to you whether he is so or not? What is it to me, at least? You do not suppose that it is any thing to me? Why should you? What should he be? I tell you he is nothing to me nothing nothing nothing! Villain or hypocrite, or what not he is no more to me than the earth on which I tread. Let me hear no more about him, I pray you. I would not hear his name! Are there not villains enough in the world, that you should think and speak of one only?"

With these vehement words she left the room, and hurried to her chamber. She stopped suddenly before the mirror.

"And it is thus!" she exclaimed "and I am "

The mother by this time had followed her into the room.

"What is the meaning of this, Margaret? tell me!" cried the old woman in the wildest agitation.

"What should it be, mother? Look at me! in my eyes do they not tell you? Can you not read?"

"I see nothing I do not understand you, Margaret."

"Indeed! but you shall. I thought my face would tell you without my words. I see it there, legible enough, myself. Look again! spare me if you can spare your own ears the necessity of hearing me speak!"

"You terrify me, Margaret I fear you are out of your mind."

"No! no! that need not be your fear; nor, were it true, would it be a fear of mine. It might be something to hope to pray for. It might bring relief. Hear me, since you will not see. You ask me why I believe Stevens to be a villain. I know it."

"Ha! how know it!"

"How! How should I know it? Well, I see that I must speak. Listen then. You bade me seek and make a conquest of him, did you not? Do not deny it, mother you did."

"Well, if I did?"

"I succeeded! Without trying, I succeeded! He declared to me his love he did! he promised to marry me. He was to have married me yesterday to have met me in church and married me. John Cross was to have performed the ceremony. Well! you saw me there you saw me in white the dress of a bride! Did he come? Did you see him there? Did you see the ceremony performed?"

"No, surely not you know without asking."

"I know without asking! surely I do! but look you, mother do you think that conquests are to be made, hearts won, loves confessed, pledges given, marriage−day fixed do these things take place, as matters of pure form? Is there no sensation no agitation no beating and violence about the heart in the blood in the brain! I tell you there is a blinding violence, a wild, stormy sensation, fondness, forgetfulness, madness! I say, madness! madness! madness!"

"Oh, my daughter, what can all this mean? Speak calmly, be deliberate!"

"Calm, deliberate! What a monster if I could be! But I am not mad now. I will tell you what it means. It means that, in taking captive Alfred Stevens in winning a lover securing that pious young man there was some difficulty, some peril. Would you believe it? there were some privileges which he claimed. He took me in his arms. He held me panting to his breast. His mouth filled mine with kisses "

"No more, do not say more, my child!"

"Ay, more! more! much more! I tell you then came blindness and madness, and I was dishonoured made a woman before I was made a wife! Ruined, lost, abused, despised, abandoned! Ha! ha! ha! no marriage ceremony, though I went to the church. No bridegroom there, though he promised to come. Preacher, church, bride, all present, yet no wedding. Ha! ha! ha! How do I know! Good reason for it, good reason Ha! ha! ah!"

The paroxysm terminated in a fit. The unhappy girl fell to the floor as if stricken in the forehead. The blood gushed from her nostrils, and she lay insensible in the presence of the terrified and miserable mother.

CHAPTER III.

For a long time she lay without showing any signs of life. Her passions rebelled against the restraint which her mind had endeavoured to put upon them. Their concentrated force breaking all bonds, so suddenly, was like the terrific outburst of the boiling lava from the gorges of the frozen mountain. Believing her dead, the mother rushed headlong into the highway, rending the village with her screams. She was for the time a perfect madwoman. The neighbours gathered to her assistance. That much abused woman, the widow Thackeray, was the first to come. Never was woman's tenderness more remarkable than hers never was woman's watch by the bed of sickness and suffering that watch which woman alone knows so well how to keep more rigidly maintained than by her! From the first hour of that agony under which Margaret Cooper fell to earth insensible, to the last moment in which her recovery was doubtful, that widow Thackeray whose passion for a husband had been described by Mrs. Cooper as so very decided and evident maintained her place by the sick bed of the stricken girl with all the affection of a mother. Widow Thackeray was a woman who could laugh merrily, but she could shed tears with equal readiness. These were equally the signs of prompt feeling and nice susceptibility; and the proud Margaret, and her invidious mother, were both humbled by that spontaneous kindness for which, hitherto, they had given the possessor so very little credit, and to which they were now equally so greatly indebted.

Medical attendance was promptly secured. Charlemont had a very clever physician of the old school. He combined, as was requisite in the forest region of our country, the distinct offices of the surgeon and mediciner. He was tolerably skilful in both departments. He found his patient in a condition of considerable peril. She had broken a blood−vessel; and the nicest care and closest attendance were necessary to her preservation. It will not need that we should go through the long and weary details which followed, to her cure. Enough, that she did recover. But for weeks her chance was doubtful. She lay for that space of time, equally in the arms of life and death. For a long period, she herself was unconscious of her situation. When she came to know, the skill of her attendants derived very little aid from her consciousness. Her mind was unfavourable to her cure; and this, by the way, is a very important particular in the fortunes of the sick. To despond, to have a weariness of life, to forbear hope as well as exertion, is an hundred to one, to determine against the skill of the physician. Margaret Cooper felt a willingness to die. She felt her overthrow in the keenest pangs of its shame; and, unhappily, the mother, in her madness, had declared it. The story of her fall of the triumph of the serpent, was now the village property, and of course put an end to all farther doubts on the score of the piety of Brother Stevens; though, by way of qualificationof his offence, old Hinkley insisted that it was the fault of the poor damsel. "She," he said, "had tempted him had thrown herself in his way had been brazen," and all that, of which so much is commonly said in all similar cases. We, who know the character of the parties, and have traced events from the beginning, very well know how little of this is true. Poor Margaret was a victim before she was well aware of those passions which made her so. Never was woman more unsophisticated less moved by unworthy and sinister design. She had her weaknesses her pride, her vanity; and her passions, which were tremendous, worked upon through these, very soon effected her undoing. But, for deliberate purpose of evil of any evil of which her own intellect was conscious the angels are not more innocent.

But mere innocence of evil design, in any one particular condition, is not enough for security. We are not only to forbear evil; virtue requires that we should be exercised for the purposes of good. She lacked the moral strength which such exercises, constantly pursued, would have assured her. She was a creature of impulse only, not of reflection. Besides, she was ignorant of her particular weaknesses. She was weak where she thought herself strong. This is always the error of a person having a very decided will. The will is constantly mistaken for the power. She could not humble herself, and in her own personal capacities capacities which had never before been subjected to any ordeal−trial she relied for the force which was to sustain her in every situation. Fancy a confident country girl supreme in her own district over the Hobs and Hinnies thereabouts in conflict with the adroit man of the world, and you have the whole history of Margaret Cooper, and the secret of her misfortune. Let the girl have what natural talent you please, and the case is by no means altered. She must fall if she seeks or permits the conflict. She can only escape by flight. It is in consideration of this human weakness, that we pray

God, nightly, not to suffer us to be exposed to temptation.

When the personal resources of her own experience and mind failed Margaret Cooper, as at some time or other they must fail all who trust only in them, she had no further reliance. She had never learned to draw equalstrength and consolation from the sweet counsels of the sacred volume. Regarding the wild raving and the senseless insanity, which is but too frequently the language of the western preacher, as gross ignorance and debasing folly, she committed the unhappy error of confounding the preacher with his cause. She had never been taught to make an habitual reference to religion; and her own experience of life, had never forced upon her those sage reflections which would have shown her that true religion is all of life, and without it life has nothing. The humility of the Psalmist, which was the real source of all the strength allotted to the monarch minstrel, was an unread lesson with her; and never having been tutored to refer to God, and relying upon her own proud mind and daring imagination, what wonder that these frail reeds should pierce her side while giving way beneath her.

It was this very confidence in her own strength this fearlessness of danger (and we repeat the lesson here, emphatically, by way of warning) a confidence which the possession of a quick and powerful mind naturally enough inspires that effected her undoing. It was not by the force of her affections that she fell. The affections are not apt to be strong in a woman whose mind leads her out from her sex! The seducer triumphed through the medium of her vanity. Her feeling of self−assurance had been thus active from childhood, and conspicuous in all her sports and employments. She led always in the pastimes of her playmates, many of whom were older than herself. She had no fears, when others trembled; and, if she did not, at any time, so far transcend the bounds of filial duty as to defy the counsels of her parents, it was certainly no less true that she never sought for, and seldom seemed to need them. It is dangerous when the woman, through sheer confidence in her own strength, ventures upon the verge of the moral precipice. The very experiment, where the passions are concerned, proves her to be lost. Margaret Cooper, confident in her own footsteps, soon learned to despise every sort of guardianship. The vanity of her mother had not only counselled and stimulated her own, but was of that gross and silly order, as to make itself offensive to the judgment of the girl herself. This had the effect of losing her all the authority of a parent; and we have already seen, in the few instances where thisauthority took the shape of counsel, that its tendency was to evil rather than to good.

The arts of Alfred Stevens had, in reality, been very few. It was only necessary that he should read the character of his victim. This, as an experienced worldling, experienced in such a volume, he was soon very able to do. He saw enough to discover, that, while Margaret Cooper was endowed by nature with an extraordinary measure of intellect, she was really weak because of its possession. In due proportion to the degree of exercise to which she subjected her mere mind making that busy and restless was the neglect of her sensibilities those nice antennæ of the heart,

"Whose instant touches, slightest pause,"

teach the approach of the smallest forms of danger, however inoffensive their shapes, however unobtrusive their advance. When the sensibilities are neglected and suffered to fall into disrepute, they grow idle first and finally obtuse; even as the limb which you forbear to exercise loses its muscle, and withers into worthlessness. When Alfred Stevens discovered this condition, his plan was simple enough. He had only to stimulate her mind into bolder exercise to conduct it to topics of the utmost hardihood to inspire that sort of moral recklessness which some people call courage which delights to sport along the edge of the precipice, and to summon audacious spirits from the great yawning gulfs which lie below. This practice is always pursued at the expense of those guardian feelings which keep watch over the virtues of the tender heart. The analysis of subjects commonly forbidden to the sex, necessarily tends to make dull those habitual sentinels over the female conduct. These sentinels are instincts rather than principles. Education can take them away, but does not often confer them. When, through the arts of Alfred Stevens, Margaret Cooper was led to discuss, perhaps to despise, those nice and seemingly purposeless barriers which society having the experience of ages for its authority has wisely set up between the sexes, she had already taken a large stride towards passing them. But of this, which a judicious

education would have taught her, she was wholly ignorant. Her mind was too bold to be scrupulous; too adventurous to be watchful; and if, at any moment, a pause in her progress permitted her to think of the probable danger to her sex of such adventurous freedom, she certainly never apprehended it in her own case. Such restraints she conceived to be essential only for the protection of the weak among her sex. Her vanity led her to believe that she was strong; and the approaches of the sapper were conducted with too much caution, with a progress too stealthy and insensible, to startle the ear or attract the eye of the unobservant, yet keen−eyed guardian of her citadel. An eagle perched upon a rock, with wing outspread for flight, and an eye fixed upon the rolling clouds through which it means to dart, is thus heedless of the coiled serpent which lies beneath its feet. The bold eye of Margaret Cooper was thus heedless. Gazing upon the sun, she saw not the serpent at her feet. It was not because she slept never was eye brighter, more far−stretching; never was mind more busy, more active, than that of the victim at the very moment when she fell. It was because she watched the remote, not the near, the region in which there was no enemy nothing but glory, and neglected that post which is always in danger. Her error is that of the general, who expends his army upon some distant province, leaving his chief city to the assault and sack of the invader.

We have dwelt somewhat longer upon the moral causes which, in our story, have produced such cruel results, than the mere story itself demands; but no story is perfectly moral unless the author, with a wholesome commentary, directs the attention of the reader to the true weaknesses of his hero, to the point where his character fails; to the causes of this failure, and the modes in which it may be repaired or prevented. In this way, alone, may the details of life and society be properly welded together into consistent doctrine, so that instruction may keep pace with delight, and the heart and mind be informed without being conscious of any of those tasks which accompany the lessons of experience.

To return now to our narrative.

Margaret Cooper lived! She might as well have died. This was her thought, at least. She prayed for death. Was it in mercy that her prayer was denied? We shall see! Youth and a vigorous constitution, successfully resistedthe attacks of the assailant. They finally obtained the victory. After a weary spell of bondage and suffering she recovered. But she recovered only to the consciousness of a new affliction. All the consequences of her fatal lapse from virtue have not yet been told. She bore within her an indelible witness of her shame. She was destined to be a mother without having been a wife!

This, to her mother at least, was a more terrible discovery than the former. She literally cowered and crouched beneath it. It was the written shame, rather than the actual, which the old woman dreaded. She had been so vain, so criminally vain of her daughter. She had made her so constantly the subject of her brag, that, unwitting of having declared the whole melancholy truth, in the first moment of her madness, she shrunk, with an unspeakable horror, from the idea that the little world in which she lived should become familiar with the whole cruel history of her overthrow. She could scarce believe it herself, though the daughter, with an anguish in her eyes that left little to be told, had herself revealed the truth. Her pride, as well as her life, was linked with the pride and the beauty of her child. She had shared in her constant triumphs over all around her; and overlooking, as a fond, foolish mother is apt to do, all her faults of temper or of judgment, she had learned to behold nothing but her superiority. And now to see her fallen! a thing of scorn, which was lately a thing of beauty! the despised, which was lately the worshipped and the wondered at! No wonder that her weak, vain heart was crushed and humbled, and her head bowed in sorrow to the earth. She threw herself upon the floor, and wept bitter and scalding tears.

The daughter had none. Without sob or sigh, she stooped down and tenderly assisted the old woman to rise. Why had she no tears? She asked herself this question, but in vain. Her external emotions promised none. Indeed, she seemed to be without emotions. A weariness and general indifference to all things was the expression of her features. But this was the deceitful aspect of the mountain, on whose breast contemplation sits with silence, unconscious of the tossing flame which, within, is secretly fusing the stubborn metal and the rock. Anger was in her breast feelings of hate mingled up with shame scorn of herself, scorn of all feelings of defiance and

terror, striving at mastery; and, in one corner, abrooding image of despair, kept from the brink of the precipice only by the entreaties of some fiercer principle of hate. She felt life to be insupportable. Why did she live? This question came to her repeatedly. The demon was again at work beside her.

"Die!" said he. "It is but a blow a moment's pang the driving a needle into an artery the prick of a pin upon the heart. Die! it will save you from exposure! the shame of bringing into the world an heir of shame! What would you live for? The doors of love, and fame, even of society, are shut against you for ever. What is life? a long denial a protracted draught of bitterness the feeling of a death−spasm carried on through sleepless years; perhaps, under a curse of peculiar bitterness, carried on even into age! Die! You cannot be so base as to wish for longer life!"

The arguments of the demon were imposing. His suggestions seemed to promise the relief she sought. Hers seemed the particular case where the prayer is justified which invokes the mountains and the rocks upon the head of the guilty. But the rock refused to fall, the mountain to cover her shame, and its exposure became daily more and more certain. Death was the only mode of escape from the mountain of pain which seemed to rest upon her heart. The means of self−destruction were easy. With a spirit so impetuous as hers, to imagine was to determine. She did determine. Yet, even while making so terrible a resolve, a singular calm seemed to overspread her soul. She complained of nothing wished for nothing sought for nothing trembled at nothing. A dreadful lethargy, which made the old mother declaim as against a singular proof of hardihood, possessed her spirit. Little did the still idolizing mother conjecture how much that lethargy concealed.

The moment that Margaret Cooper conceived the idea of suicide, it possessed all her mind. It became the one only thought. There were few arguments against it, and these she rapidly dismissed or overcame. To leave her mother in her old age was the first; but this became a small consideration when she reflected that the latter could not, under any circumstances require her assistance very long; and to spare her the shame of public exposure was another consideration. The evils of the act to herself,were reduced, with equal readiness to the transition from one state to another by a small process, which, whether by the name of stab or shot, was productive only of a momentary spasm, for, though as fully persuaded of the soul's immortality as the best of us, the unhappy girl, like all young free−thinkers, had persuaded herself that, in dying by her own hands, she was simply exercising a discretionary power under the conviction that her act in doing so, was rendered by circumstances a judicious one. The arguments by which she deceived herself are sufficiently commonplace, and too easy of refutation, to render necessary any discussion of them here. Enough to state the fact. She deliberately resolved upon the fatal deed which was to end her life and agony together; and save her from that more notorious exposure which must follow the birth of that child of sin, whom she deemed it no more than a charity to destroy.

There was an old pair of pistols in the house which had been the property of her father. She had often, with a boldness not common to the sex, examined these pistols. They were of brass; well made; of English manufacture; with common muzzles, and a groove for a sight instead of the usual drop. They were not large, but, in a practised hand, were good travelling pistols, being capable of bringing down a man at twelve paces, provided there was any thing like deliberation in the holder. Often and again had she handled these weapons, poising them and addressing them at objects as she had seen her father do. On one occasion she had been made to discharge them, under his own instruction. She had done so without terror. She recalled these events. She had seen the pistols loaded. She did not exactly know what quantity of powder was necessary for a charge, but she was in no mood to calculate the value of a thimblefull. Availing herself of the temporary absence of her mother, she possessed herself of these weapons. Along with them in the same drawer, she found a horn which still contained a certain quantity of powder. There were bullets in the bag with the pistols which precisely fitted them. There, too, was the mould there were flints the stock was sufficiently ample for all her desires; and she surveyed the prize, in her own room, with the look of one who congratulates himself in the conviction that he holds in his hand the great medicine which is to cure his disease. In her chamber she loaded the weapons, and, with such resignation as belonged to her philosophy, she waited for the propitious moment when she might complete the deed.

CHAPTER IV.

It was the Sabbath and a very lovely day. The sun never shone more brightly in the heavens; and as Margaret Cooper surveyed its purple and mellow light, lying, like some blessed spirit, at sleep upon the hills around her, and reflected that she was about to behold it for the last time, her sense of its exceeding beauty became more strong than ever. Now that she was about to lose it for ever, it seemed more beautiful than it had ever been before. This is a natural effect, which the affections confer upon the objects which delight and employ them. Even a temporary privation increases the loveliness of the external nature. How we linger and look. That shade seems so inviting; that old oak so venerable! That rock, how often have we sat upon it, evening and morning, and mused strange, wild, sweet fancies! It is an effort to tear one's self away it is almost like tearing away from life itself, so many living affections feel the rending and the straining so many fibres that have their roots in the heart, are torn and lacerated by the separation. Poor Margaret! she looked from her window upon the bright and beautiful world around her. Strange that sorrow should dwell in a world so bright and beautiful! Stranger still, that, dwelling in such a world, it should not dwell there by sufferance only and constraint! that it should have such sway such privilege. That it should invade every sanctuary and leave no home secure. Ah! but the difference between mere sorrow and guilt! Poor Margaret could not well understand that! If she could but no! She was yet to learn that the sorrows of the innocent have a healing effect. That they produce a holy and ennobling strength, and a juster appreciation of those evening shades of life whichrender the lights valuable and make their uses pure. It is only guilt which finds life loathsome. It is only guilt that sorrow weakens and enslaves. Virtue grows strong beneath the pressure of her enemies, and with such a power as was fabled of the King of Pontus, turns the most poisonous fruits of earth into the most healthy food.

But even in the heart of Margaret Cooper, where the sense of the beautiful was strong the loveliness of the scene was felt. She drank in, with strange satisfaction, a satisfaction to which she had long been a stranger, its soft and inviting beauties. They did not lessen her sense of suffering, perhaps, but they were not without their effect in producing other moods, which, once taken in company with the darker ones of the soul, may in time succeed in alleviating them. Never, indeed, had the prospect been more calm and wooing. Silence, bending from the hills, seemed to brood above the valley even as some mighty spirit, at whose bidding strife was hushed, and peace became the acknowledged divinity of all. The humming voices of trade and merriment were all hushed in homage to the holy day; and if the fitful song of a truant bird, that presumed beside the window of Margaret Cooper, did break the silence of the scene, it certainly did not disturb its calm. The forest minstrel sung in a neighbouring tree, and she half listened to his lay. The strain seemed to sympathize with her sadness. She thought upon her own songs, which had been of such a proud spirit; and how strange and startling seemed the idea that with her, song would soon cease for ever. The song of the bird would be silent in her ears, and her own song! What song would be hers? What strain would she take up? In what abode before what altars?

This train of thought, which was not entirely lost, however, was broken, for the time, by a very natural circumstance. A troop of the village damsels came in sight, on their way to church. She forgot the song of birds, as her morbid spirit suggested to her the probable subject of their meditations.

"They have seen me," she muttered to herself as she hastily darted from the window. "Ay, they exult. They point to me me, the abandoned the desolate soon to be the disgraced! But, no! no! that shall never be.They shall never have that triumph, which is always so grateful a subject of regale to the mean and envious!"

The voice of her mother from below disturbed these unhappy meditations. The old lady was prepared for church, and was surprised to find that Margaret had not made her toilet.

"What! don't you mean to go, Margaret?"

"Not to day, mother."

"What, and the new preacher too, that takes the place of John Cross! They say he makes a most heavenly prayer."

But the inducement of the heavenly prayer of the new preacher was not enough for Margaret. The very suggestion of a new preacher would have been conclusive against her compliance. The good old lady was too eager herself to get under way to waste much time in exhortation, and hurrying off, she scarcely gave herself time to answer the inquiry of the widow Thackeray, at her own door, after the daughter's health.

"I will go in and see her;" said the lighthearted but truehearted woman.

"Do, do, ma'am, if you please! She'll be glad to see you. I'll hurry on, as I see Mrs. Hinkley just ahead."

The widow Thackeray looked after her with a smile, which was exchanged for another of different character when she found herself in the chamber of Margaret. She put her arms about the waist of the sufferer; kissed her cheeks, and with the tenderest solicitude spoke of her health and comfort. To her, alone, with the exception of her mother according to the belief of Margaret her true situation had been made known.

"Alas!" said she, "how should I feel how should I be! You should know. I am as one cursed doomed, hopeless of any thing but death."

"Ah! do not speak of death, Margaret," said the other kindly. "We must all die, I know, but that does not reconcile me any more to the thought. It brings always a creeping horror through my veins. Think of life talk of life only."

"They say that death is life."

"So it is, I believe, Margaret; and now I think of it, dress yourself and go to church where we may hear somethingon this subject to make us wiser and better. Come, my dear, let us go to God."

"I cannot, not to−day, dear Mrs. Thackeray."

"Ah, Margaret, why not? It is to the church, of all places, you should now go."

"What! to be stared at? To see the finger of scorn pointing at me wherever I turn? To hear the whispered insinuation? To be conscious only of sneer and sarcasm on every hand? No, no, dear Mrs. Thackeray, I cannot go for this. Feeling this, I should neither pray for myself, nor find benefit from the prayers of others. Nay, they would not pray. They would only mock."

"Margaret, these thoughts are very sinful."

"So they are, but I cannot think of any better. They cannot but be sinful since they are mine."

"But you are not wedded to sin, dearest. Such thoughts can give you no pleasure. Come with me to church! Come and pray! Prayer will do you good."

"I would rather pray here. Let me remain. I will try to go out among the hills when you are all engaged in church, and will pray there. Indeed I must. I must pray then and pray there, if prayer is ever to do me good."

"The church is the better place, Margaret. One prays better where one sees that all are praying."

"But when I know that they are not praying! When I know that envy is in their hearts, and malice, and jealousy and suspicion that God is not in their hearts, but their fellow; and not him with friendly and fond, but with

spiteful and deceitful thoughts!"

"Ah! Margaret, how can you know this? Judge not lest ye be judged."

"It matters not, dear Mrs. Thackeray. God is here, or there. He will be among the hills if any where. I will seek him there. If I can command my thoughts any where, it will be in the woods alone. In the church I cannot. Those who hate me are there, and their looks of hate would only move my scorn and defiance."

"Margaret, you do our people wrong. You do yourself wrong. None hate you none will point to you, or think of your misfortune; and if they did, it is only what you might expect, and what you must learn patiently to bear, as a part of the punishment which God inflicts on sin. You must submit, Margaret, to the shame as you have submitted to the sin. It is by submission only that you can be made strong. The burden which you are prepared to bear meekly, becomes light to the willing spirit. Come, dear Margaret, I will keep with you, sit by you show you, and all, that I forget your sin and remember only your suffering."

The good widow spoke with the kindest tones. She threw her arms around the neck of the desolate one and kissed her with the affection of a sister; but the demon of pride was uppermost. She withstood entreaty and embrace.

"I cannot go with you. I thank you, truly thank you, dear Mrs. Thackeray, but I cannot go. I have neither the courage nor the strength."

"They will come the courage and the strength, only try. God is watchful to give us help the moment he sees that we really seek his assistance. By prayer, Margaret "

"I will pray, but I must pray alone. Among the hills I will pray. My prayer will not be less acceptable offered among his hills. My voice will not remain unheard, though no chorus swells its appeal."

"Margaret, this is pride."

"Perhaps!"

"Ah! go with me and pray for humility?"

"My prayer would rather be for death."

"Say not so, Margaret this is impiety."

"Ay, death! The peace, the quiet of the grave of a long sleep an endless sleep; where the vulture may no longer gnaw the heart, nor the fire burn within the brain. For these I must pray." And thus speaking, the unhappy woman smote her throbbing head with violent hand.

"Shocking thought! But you do not believe in such a sleep? Surely, Margaret, you believe in life eternal?"

"Would I did not!"

"Oh, Margaret! but you are sick. You are very feverish. Your eyeballs glare like coals of fire your face seems charged with blood. I am afraid you are going to have another attack like the last."

"Be not afraid. I have no such fear."

"I will sit with you, at least," said the kindhearted woman.

"Nay, that I must positively forbid, Mrs. Thackeray;I will not suffer it. I will not sit with you. Go you to church. You will be late. Do not waste your time on me. I mean to ramble among the hills this morning. That, I think, will do me more good than any thing else. There, I am sure there only I will find peace."

The worthy widow shook her head doubtfully.

"But I am sure of it," said Margaret. "You will see. Peace! peace! The repose of the heart the slumber of the brain! I shall find all there!"

Mrs. Thackeray, finding her inflexible, rose to depart, but with some irresoluteness.

"If you would let me walk with you, Margaret?"

"No! no! dear Mrs. Thackeray, I thank you very much, but with a mood such as mine, I shall be much better alone."

"Well, if you are resolved."

"I am resolved! never more so."

These words were spoken in tones which might have startled a suspicious mind. But the widow was none.

"God bless you," she said, kissing her at parting. "I will see you when I come from church."

"Will you!" said Margaret with a significant but sad smile. Then, suddenly rising, she exclaimed

"Let me kiss you, dear Mrs. Thackeray, and thank you again before you go. You have been very kind to me, very kind, and you have my thanks and gratitude."

Mrs. Thackeray was touched by her manner. This was the first time that the proud spirit of Margaret Cooper had ever offered such an acknowledgment. It was one that the gentle and unremitting kindnesses of the widow amply deserved. After renewing her promise to call on her return from church, Mrs. Thackeray took her departure. Margaret Cooper was once more alone. When she heard the outer door shut, she then threw herself upon the bed, and gave way to the utterance of those emotions which, long restrained, had rendered her mind a terrible anarchy. A few tears, but very few, were wrung from her eyes; but she groaned audibly, and a rapid succession of shivering fits passed through her frame, wracking the whole nervous system, until she scarce found herself able to rise from the couch where she had thrown herself. A strong determined will alone moved her, and she rose, after a lapse of half an hour, tothe further prosecution of her purpose. Her temporary weakness and suffering of frame had no effect upon her resolves. She rather seemed to be strengthened in them. This strength enabled her to sit down and dictate a letter to her mother, declaring her intention, and justifying it by such arguments as were presented by the ingenious demon who assists always in the councils of the erring heart. She placed this letter in her bosom that it might be found upon her person. It was curious to observe, next, that she proceeded to tasks which were scarcely in unison with the dreadful deed she meditated. She put her chamber in nice order. Her books, of which she had a tolerably handsome collection for a private library in our forest country, she arranged and properly classed upon their shelves. Then she made her toilet with unusual care. It was for the last time. She gazed upon the mirror, and beheld her own beauties with a shudder. "Ah!" she thought, though she gave no expression to the thought, "to be so beautiful, yet fail!" It was a reflection to touch any heart with sorrow. Her dress was of plain white, she wore no ornament not even a riband. Her hair which was beautifully long and thick, was disposed in a clubbed mass upon her head, very simply but with particular neatness; and when all was done, concealing the weapon of death beneath a shawl which she wrapped around her, she left the house and stole away unobserved along the hills, in the seclusion and sacred silence of which she sought to avoid the evil consequences of one crime by the

commission of another far more heinous.

CHAPTER V.

At the risk of seeming monotonous, we must repeat the reflection made in our last chapter, that the things we are about to lose for ever, seem always more valuable in the moment of their loss. They acquire a newer interest in our eyes at such a time, possibly under the direction of some governing instinct which is intended to render ustenacious of life to the very last. Privation teaches us much more effectually than possession, the value of all human enjoyments; and the moralist has more than once drawn his sweetest portraits of liberty from the gloom and the denials of a dungeon. How eloquent of freedom is he who yearns for it in vain. How glowing is that passion which laments the lost! To one dying, as we suppose few die, in the perfect possession of their senses, how beautiful must seem the fading hues of the sunlight, flickering along the walls of a chamber how heavenly the brief glimpses of the blue sky through the half−opened window how charming the green bit of foliage that swings against the pane how cheering and unwontedly sweet and balmy, the soft, sudden gust of the sweet south breathing up from the flowers, and stirring the loose drapery around the couch. How can we part with these without tears? How reflect, without horror, upon the close coffin, the damp clod, the deep hollows of the earth in which we are to be cabined? Oh! with what earnestness, at such a moment, must the wholly conscious spirit pray for life. How greedily will he drink the nauseous draught in the hope to secure its boon. How fondly will he seize upon every chimera, whether of his own or of another's fancy, in order to gain a little respite in order still to keep within the grasp of mind and sight, these lovely agents of earth and its master, which, in our day of strength and exultation, we do not value at one half their worth! And how full of dread and horror must be that first awful conviction which assures him that the struggle is in vain that the last remedy is tried that nothing is left him now but despair despair and death! Then it is that Christianity comes to his relief. If he believes, he gains by his loss. Its godlike promise assures him then, that the things which his desires make dear his faith has rendered immortal.

The truth of many of these reflections made their way into the mind of Margaret Cooper, as she pursued the well−known path along the hills. She observed the objects along her route more narrowly than ever. She was taking that path for the last time. Her eyes would behold these objects no more. How often had she pursued the same route with Alfred Stevens! But then she had not seen these things; she had not observed these thousandgraces and beauties of form and shadow which now seemed to crowd around, challenging her regard and demanding her sympathies. Then she had seen nothing but him. The bitterness which this reflection occasioned made her hurry her footsteps; but there was an involuntary shudder that passed through her frame, when, in noting the strange beauty of the path, she reflected that it would be trodden by her for the last time. Her breathing became quickened by the reflection. She pressed forward up the hills. The forests grew thick around her, deep, dim, solemn and inviting. The skies above looked down in little blessed blue tufts, through the crowding tree tops. The long vista of the woods led her onward in wandering thoughts.

To fix these thoughts to keep them from wandering! This was a difficulty. Margaret Cooper strove to do so, but she could not. Never did her mind seem such a perfect chaos so full of confused and confusing objects and images. Her whole life seemed to pass in review before her. All her dreams of ambition, all the struggles of her genius! Were these to be thrown away? Were these all to be wasted? Was her song to be unheard? Was her passionate and proud soul to have no voice? If death is terrible to man, it is terrible, not as a pang, but as an oblivion; and to the soul of genius, oblivion is a soul−death, and its thought is a source of tenfold terror.

"But of what avail were life to me now? Even should I live," said the wretched woman, "would it matter more to the ambition which I have had, and to the soul which flames and fevers within me? Who would hearken to the song of the degraded? Who, that heard the story of my shame, would listen to the strains of my genius? Say that its utterance is even as proud as my own vanity of heart would esteem it say that no plaint like mine had ever touched the ear or lifted the heart of humanity! Alas! of what avail? The finger of scorn would be uplifted long

before the voice of applause. The sneer and sarcasm of the worldling would anticipate the favouring judgment of the indulgent and the wise. Who would do justice to my cause? Who listen? Alas! the voice of genius would be of little avail speaking from the lips of the dishonoured.

"To the talent which I have, and the ambition which stillburns within me, life then can bring nothing no exercise no fruition. Suppose then, that the talent is left to slumber the ambition stifled till it has no further longings! Will life yield any thing to the mere creature of society to my youth to my beauty to my sense of delight, if still there be any such sense left to me? Shall I be less the creature of social scorn, because I have yielded my ambition because I have forborne the employment of those glorious gifts which heaven in its bounty has allotted me? Alas! no! am I not a woman, one of that frail, feeble sex, whose name is weakness? of whom, having no strength, man yet expects the proofs of the most unyielding of a firmness which he himself cannot exercise of a power of self−denial and endurance of which he exhibits no example. If I weep, he smiles at my weakness. If I stifle my tears, he denounces my unnatural hardihood. If I am cold and unyielding, I am masculine and neglected if I am gentle and pliant, my confidence is abused and my person dishonoured. What can society, which is thus exacting, accord to me, then, as a mere woman? What shame will it not thrust upon me, a woman and as I am?

"Life then promises me nothing. The talent which I have, lies with me idle and without hope of use. The pure name of the woman is lost to me for ever. Shame dogs my footsteps. Scorn points its finger. Life, and all that it brings to others love, friends, fame, fortune which are the soul of life these are lost to me for ever. The moral death is here already. The mere act of dying, is simply the end of a strife, and a breathing and an agony. That is all!"

The day became overcast. A cloud obscured the sunlight. The blue tufts of sky no longer looked downwards through the openings of the trees. The scene, dim and silent before, became unusually dark. The aspect of nature seemed congenial with the meditated deed. She had reasoned herself into its commission, and she reproached herself mentally with her delay. Any self−suggestion of an infirmity of purpose, with a nature such as hers, would have produced precipitation. She turned down a slight gorge among the hills where the forest was more close. She knelt beneath a tree and laid down her pistols at its foot. She knelt strange contradiction! she knelt forthe purposes of prayer. But she could not pray. It would seem that she attributed this effort to the sight of the pistols, and she put them behind her without changing her position. The prayer, if she made any, was internal; and, at all events it did not seem to be satisfactory. Yet, before it was ended, she started with an expression of painful thought upon her face. The voice of her reason had ceased its utterance. The voice of her conscience, perhaps, had been unheard; but there was yet another voice to be heard which was more potent than all.

It was the mother's voice!

She placed her hand upon her side with a spasmodic effort. The quickening of a new life within her, made that new voice effectual. She threw herself on the ground and wept freely. For the first time she wept freely. The tears were those of the mother. The true fountain of tears had been touched. That first throb of the innocent pledge of guilty passion subdued the fiend. She could have taken her own life, but dared not lift the deadly weapon against that. The arm of the suicide was arrested. She groaned, she wept, bitterly and freely. She was at once feebler and more strong. Feebler as regarded her late resolution; stronger as regarded the force of her affections, the sweet humanities, not altogether subdued within her heart. The slight pulsation of that infant in her womb had been more effectual than the voice of reason, or conscience, or feminine dread. The maternal feeling is, perhaps, the most imperious of all those which gather in the heart of woman.

Margaret Cooper, however, had not altogether resolved against the deed. She only could not do it there and then. Her wretched determination was not wholly surrendered, but it was touched, impaired; and with the increasing powers of reflection, the impetuosity of the will became naturally lessened. Those few glimpses along the roadside which had made her sensible to the beauties she was about to lose, had prepared her mind to act in

counteraction of her impulse; and the event which had brought into play the maternal instinct, naturally helped the cause of reason in her soul. Still, with the erring pride of youth she reproached herself with her infirmity of purpose. She resolved to change her ground, as if the instinct which had been awakened in one spot would not every where pursue her. Time was gained, and in such cases, to gain time isevery thing. Perhaps no suicide would ever take place if the individual would wait ten minutes. The soul takes its colour from the cloud, and changes its moods as often. It is one of the best lessons to the young, to wait! wait! wait! One of the surest signs of strength is where the individual waits patiently and makes no complaint.

Margaret Cooper changed her ground. The spot was a wild one. A broken ledge of rock was at her feet, and just below it ran a dark, narrow winding footpath half−obscured by the undergrowth. Here she once more proceeded to nerve her mind for the commission of the deed, but she had not been there an instant when she was surprised to hear the sound of voices. This was unusual. Who could they be? The villagers were not apt to stray from church service whenever a preacher was to be found, and there was a new one, and consequently a new attraction that day for the spiritual hungry of Charlemont. The path below was seldom trodden except by herself and an occasional sportsman. The idea that entered her mind was that her purpose had been suspected and that she was pursued. With this idea she placed the pistol to her breast. She had already cocked the weapon. Her finger was on the trigger. But the tones of another voice reached her ears from below. They were those of a woman sweet, musical and tender. A new light broke in upon her mind. This was the language of love. And who were these new lovers in Charlemont? Could it be that the voice of the male speaker was that of Stevens? Something in the tone sounded like it. Involuntarily, with this impression, the weapon was turned from her own bosom, and addressed in the direction in which the persons below were approaching. A sudden joyous feeling touched her soul. The thought to destroy the criminal by whom she had been destroyed was a source of exultation. She felt that she could do it. Both pistols were in her hand. The pathway was not more than twenty paces distant, and her nerves, for the first time, braced to an unusual tension, trembled with the new excitement in her soul.

The intruders continued to approach. Their voices became more distinct, and Margaret Cooper was soon undeceived as to one of them being that of Alfred Stevens. She was compelled to lie close that she might not betray her position and purpose. The male speaker was very urgent the voice seemed that of a stranger. That of the female was not so clearly distinguishable, yet it seemed more familiar to the unintentional listener. Something of feminine curiosity now entered the bosom of Margaret Cooper. Crouching where she was, she deposited the pistols at her feet. She remained breathlessly, for the slightest movement would have revealed her to the persons who were now just below. They passed close beneath the place of her concealment; and she soon discovered that they were lovers, and what their language was, even if she had not heard it, might have been conjectured. The girl was a very pretty brunette of Charlemont, a sweet retiring damsel of her own age named Rivers, whom she knew only slightly. She was a shy, gentle, unpresuming girl, whom, for this reason, perhaps, Margaret had learned to look upon without dislike or scorn. Her companion was a youth whom Margaret had known when a lad, but who had been absent on the Mississippi for two years. His tall and masculine, but well made and graceful person, sufficiently accounted for, while it justified, the taste of the maiden. He was a youth of fine, frank, manly countenance. His garb was picturesque, that of a bold border hunter, with hunting frock of yellow buckskin, and Indian leggings. The girl looked up to him with an expression at once of eagerness and timidity. Confidence and maiden bashfulness spoke equally in the delight which glowed upon her features. The bright eyes and sunburned features of the youth, denoted a feeling of happy triumph and assuring love. The relation of the two was sufficiently evident from their looks, even had they no other language. What were the emotions of Margaret Cooper as she looked down upon this pair! At first she thought, as will most persons surely there is nothing in nature so lovely as the union of two fond devoted hearts. The picture is one equally of moral and physical beauty. The slight, fragile, depending damsel hanging in perfect confidence on the arm of the manly, lofty and exulting youth looking up into his eyes in hope, while he returns the gaze with pride and fondness. Unconscious of all things but the love which to them is life and all things beside, they move along the covered way and know not its solitude they linger and loiter along the protracted paths, and see not their length they cling together through thelengthened hours, and fancy they have lost no time they hear each other's voices, and believe that life is all music and delight.

While Margaret Cooper looked down and heard the pleadings and promises of the youth, and beheld the sweet emotions of his companion, engaged in a pleasant struggle between her hopes and misgivings, she scarcely restrained herself from rising where she was and crying aloud, like another Cassandra, not to be believed

"Beware! Beware!"

But the warning of Margaret Cooper would have been unnecessary. The girl was not only free from danger, but she was superior to it. She had the wholesome fear of doing wrong too strongly impressed upon her by education she had too little confidence in herself was too well assured of her own weakness, to suffer herself, even for a moment, to depart, either in thought or deed, from those quiet but stern proprieties of conduct which are among the best securities of the young. While she looked in her lover's face with confidence, and held his arm with the grasp of one who is sure of a right to do so, there was an air of childish simplicity in her manner which was wholly at variance with wild passions and improper fancies. While the hunter maintained her on his arm and looked down into her eyes with love, his glance was yet as respectful, as unexpressive of presumption, as her own. Had the eyes of all Charlemont been looking on, they would have beheld nothing in the conduct of either which could have incurred the censure of the most becoming delicacy.

Keen was the emotion and bitter was the thought which worked in the mind of Margaret Cooper. She looked on the deportment of that young maiden, whose intellect at another day she would have despised, with envy and regret. Truer thoughts and feelings came to her as she listened to the innocent but fond dialogue between the unconscious pair. The hunter was pursuing an erratic life of enterprise and industry, then very common among the western youth. He had been down upon the Mississippi seeking his fortune in such adventures as make border life in our country something like the more civilized life of the middle ages. He had returned after a long absence, to claim the bride whose affections he had won long before he had departed. Never had knight errant been more true to his mistress.Her image had been his talisman as well against danger from without, as against the demon within. It had never left his mind, and he now returned for his reward. He had returned to Charlemont just before the church service had begun, and being unprepared to go thither, had found no difficulty in persuading his sweetheart to give the hour of morning service to himself. Mixed up with his professions of love was the story of his wanderings. Never were adventures more interesting to any auditor. Never was auditor more easily moved by the transitions of the tale, from tears to smiles, and from smiles again to tears. His risks and rewards; his defeats and successes; his wild adventures by fell and flood, not perhaps so perilous as those of Othello, but such as proved he had the soul to encounter the worst in Othello's experience, and maintain himself as well, drew largely on the maiden's wonder and delight; increased her tenderness and tremors, and made her quite as devoted to her hero as ever was Desdemona to her dusky chief. As they went from hearing below, the manner in which the hunter concluded his narrative provided a sufficient test for the faith of his companion.

"And now, Selina, you see all the risks and the dangers. There's work and perhaps trouble for you to go down with me along the Choctaw borders. But if there's work, I am the man to do my own share and help you out in yours; and if there's trouble here's the breast to stand it first, and here's the arm to drive it back, so that it'll never trouble yours. No danger shall come to you, so long as I can stand up between it and you. If so be that you love me as you say, there's one way to show it, you'll soon make up your mind to go with me. If you don't, why, "

"But you know I do love you, John " murmured the girl.

"Don't I believe it? Well, if what you say means what it should, you're ready. Here's my hand and all that it's good for. It can work for you and fight for you, Selina, and it's yours etarnally, with all that I have."

The hand of the girl was silently put into that of the speaker. The tears were in her eyes; but if she made any other answer it was unheard by Margaret Cooper. The rustic pair moved from sight even as they spoke, and the desolate woman once more remained alone!

CHAPTER VI.

Margaret Cooper was at length permitted to emerge from the place of her concealment. The voice of the lovers were lost, as well as their forms, in the wooded distance. Dreaming, like children as they were, of life and happiness, they had wandered off, too happy to fancy for a moment that the world contained, in its wide vast bosom, one creature half so wretched as she who hung above them, brooding, like some wild bird of the cliff, over the storm which had robbed her of her richest plumage. She sank back into the woods. She no longer had the heart to commit the meditated crime. This purpose had left her mind. It had given place to another, however, scarcely less criminal. We have seen her, under the first impression that the stranger whose voice she heard was Alfred Stevens, turning the muzzle of the pistol from her breast to the path on which he was approaching. Though she discovered her error and laid the weapon down, the sudden suggestion of her mind, at that moment, gave a new direction to her mood. Why should she not seek to avenge her wrong? Was he to escape without penalty? Was she to be a quiescent victim? True she was a woman, destined it would seem to suffer, perhaps, with a more than ordinary share of that suffering which falls to her sex. But she had also a peculiar strength the strength of a man in some respects; and in her bosom she now felt the sudden glow of one of his fiercest passions. Revenge might be in her power. She might redress her wrong by her own hand. It was a weapon of death which she grasped. In her grasp it might be made a weapon of power. The suggestion seemed to be that of justice only. It was one that filled her whole soul with a triumphant and a wild enthusiasm.

"I shall not be stricken down without danger to mine enemy. For this, this, at least, strength was allotted me. Let him tremble. In his place of seeming security let him tremble. I shall pursue his steps. I will find him out. There shall be a day of retribution! Alfred Stevens, there is a power within me, which tells me you are no longer safe!

"And why may I not secure this justice this vengeance? Why? Because I am a woman. Ha! We shall see. If I am a woman, I can be an enemy and such an enemy! An enemy not to be appeased, not to be overcome. War always with my foe war to the knife war to the last!

Such a nature as that of Margaret Cooper needed some such object to give it the passionate employment without which it must recoil upon itself and end either in suicide or madness. She brooded upon this new thought. She found in it a grateful exercise. From the moment when she conceived the idea of being the avenger of her own wrong, her spirit became more elastic she became less sensible to the possible opinions upon her condition which might be entertained by others. She found consolation, in retreating to this one thought, from all the rest. Of the difficulties in the way of her design, it was not in her impetuous character to think. She never once suspected that the name of Alfred Stevens had been an assumed one. She never once asked how she was to pursue and hunt him up. She thought of a male disguise for herself, it is true, but of the means and modes of travel in what direction to go, and after what plan to conduct her pursuit, she had not the most distant idea.

She addressed herself to her new design, however, in one respect, with amazing perseverance. It diverted her from other and more oppressive thoughts. Her pistols she carried secretly to a very distant wood, where she concealed them in the hollow of a tree. To this wood she repaired secretly and daily. Here she selected a tree as a mark. A small section of the bark, which she tore away, at a given height, she learned to regard as the breast of her seducer. This was the object of her aim. Without any woman fears she began her practice and continued it, day by day, until, as we are told by one of the chroniclers of her melancholy story, "she could place a ball with an accuracy, which, were it universally equalled by modern duellists, would render duelling much more fatal than it commonly is." In secret she procured gunpowderand lead, by arts so ingenious as to baffle detection. At midnight when her mother slept she moulded her bullets. Well might the thoughts and feelings which possessed her mind, while engaged in this gloomy labour, have endowed every bullet with a wizard spell to make it do its bidding truly. Bitter, indeed, were the hours so appropriated; but they had their consolations. Dark and terrible were the excited moods in which she retired from her toils to that slumber which she could not always secure. And when it did come, what were its images! The tree, the mark, the weapon, the deep, dim forest, all the scenes and trials of

the day, were renewed in her sleep. A gloomy wood filled her eyes a victim dabbled in blood lay before her; and, more than once, her own fearful cry of vengeance and exultation awakened her from those dreams of sleep, which strengthened her in the terrible pursuit of the object which occasioned them.

Such thoughts and practices, continued with religious pertinacity, from day to day, necessarily had its effect upon her appearance as well as her character. Her beauty assumed a wilder aspect. Her eye shot forth a supernatural fire. She never smiled. Her mouth was rigid and compressed as if her heart was busy in an endless conflict. Her gloom, thus nurtured by solitude and the continual presence of a brooding imagination of revenge, darkened into something like ferocity. Her utterance became brief and quick her tones sharp, sudden, and piercing. She had but one thought which never seemed to desert her, yet of this thought no ear ever had cognizance. It was of the time when she should exercise the skill which she had now acquired upon that destroyer of herself, whom she now felt herself destined to destroy. Of course we are describing a madness one of those peculiar forms of the disease which seems to have its origin in natural and justifiable suggestions of reason. Not the less a madness for all that. Succeeding in her practice at one distance, Margaret Cooper changed it. From one point to another she constantly varied her practice, until her aim grew certain at almost any distance within the ordinary influence of the weapon. To strike her mark at thirty paces, became, in a little while, quite as easy as to do so at five; and, secure now of her weapon, her next object thoughthere was no cessation of her practice was how to seek and where to find the victim.

In this new object she meditated to disguise herself in the apparel of a man. She actually commenced the making up of the several garments of one. This was also the secret labour of the midnight hour, when her feeble−minded mother slept. She began to feel some of the difficulties lying in the way of this pursuit, and her mind grew troubled to consider them, without, however, relaxing in its determination. That seemed a settled matter. While she brooded over this new feature of her purpose as if fortunately to arrest the mad design her mother fell seriously sick, and was for some time in danger. The duty of attending upon her, put a temporary stop to her thoughts and exercises; though without having the effect of expelling them from her mind. But another event, upon her mother's recovery, tended to produce a considerable alteration in her thoughts. A new care filled her heart and rendered her a different being, in several respects. She was soon to become a mother. The sickness of soul which oppressed her under this conviction, gave a new direction to her mood without lessening its bitterness; and, in proportion as she found her vengeance delayed, so was the gratification which it promised, a heightened desire in her mind.

For the humiliating and trying event which was at hand, Margaret Cooper prepared with a degree of silent firmness which denoted quite as strongly the resignation of despair as any other feeling. The child is born. Margaret Cooper has at length become a mother. She has suffered the agony, without being able to feel the compensating pride and pleasure of one. It was the witness of her shame could she receive it with any assurances of love? It is doubtful if she did. For some time after its birth, the hapless woman seemed to be unconscious, or half−conscious only, of her charge. A stupor weighed upon her senses. When she did awaken, and her eyes fell upon the face and form of the infant with looks of recognition, one long, long piercing shriek burst from her lips. She closed her eyes she turned away from the little unoffending, yet offensive object with a feeling of horror. Its features were those of Alfred Stevens. The likeness was indelible; andthis identity drew upon the child a share of that loathing hatred with which she now remembered the guilty father.

It may very well be supposed that the innocent babe suffered under these circumstances. The milk which it drew from the mother's breast, was the milk of bitterness, and it did not thrive. It imbibed gall instead of nutriment. Day after day it pined in hopeless misery; and though the wretched mother strove to supply its wants and soothe its little sorrows, with a gradually increasing interest which overcame her first loathing, there was yet that want of sweetest sympathy which nothing merely physical could well supply. Debility was succeeded by disease fever preyed upon its little frame, which was now reduced to a skeleton. One short month only had elapsed from its birth, and it lay, in the silence of exhaustion upon the arm of its mother. Its eyes, from whence the flickering light was escaping fast, looked up into hers, as she fancied, with an expression of reproach. She felt, on the instant, the

pang of the maternal conscience. She forgot the unworthy father, as she thought of the neglectful mother. She bent down, and, for the first time, imprinted on its little lips the maternal kiss. A smile seemed to glimmer on its tiny features; and, from that moment, Margaret Cooper resolved to forget her injuries, for the time at least, in the consideration of her proper duties. But her resolution came too late. Even while her breast was within its boneless gums, a change came over the innocent. She did not heed it. Her eyes and thoughts were elsewhere; and thus she mused, gazing vacantly upon the wall of her chamber until her mother entered the room. Mrs. Cooper gave but a single glance at the infant when she saw that its little cares were over.

"Oh, Margaret!" she exclaimed, "the child is dead."

The mother looked down with a start and shudder. A big tear fell from her eyes upon the cold cheek of the innocent. She released it to her mother, turned her face upon the couch, and uttered her thanks to Heaven that had so decreed it that had left her again free for that darker purpose which had so long filled her mind.

"Better so," she murmured to her mother. "It is at peace. It will neither know its own nor its mother's griefs. It is free from that shame for which I must live!"

"But there are other things to live for besides shame, Margaret," said the mother.

"There are!" said Margaret solemnly. "There are! Were there not I should, indeed, be desperate!"

When all the cares of the burial were over, and the crowd gone, and the cottage of the widow Cooper was once more abandoned to the cheerlessness and wo within, Margaret Cooper spoke to her mother in the language of that will which the latter had not often found courage to resist.

"Let us leave this place, mother. I cannot, I will not live here any longer."

"Why, where would you go?"

"Back to that old farm of which you speak so much, and from which, in evil hour, you brought me. It was my childhood's home would it could receive me as a child again. At all events let us leave this place. Here, every thing offends me every face, every spot. The eyes of people mock me with their looks of pity, or it may be of scorn. Let us go. We cannot depart too soon."

"But, Margaret "

"Mother, if I stay here I madden!"

The entreaties of the unhappy girl prevailed. The mother had not often prevailed in their controversies. The strong naturally swayed the feebler will. A few days were devoted to necessary arrangements, and then they left Charlemont for ever.

"She retired," says the rude chronicle from which many of our facts have been borrowed, "to a romantic little farm in , there to spend, in seclusion, with her aged mother, and a few servants, the remainder of her days."

With their departure, we also take leave of Charlemont. We shall meet some of its people hereafter, but our scene, henceforward will lie in another region, to which our readers are implored to follow us.

CHAPTER VII.

Time does not move the less rapidly because his progress is so insensible. The reader will suppose, that, from the close of the last chapter to the opening of this, a period of five years has elapsed. There is not only a change in time but in place. We have abandoned Charlemont for ever; and so, at a subsequent period, have all the well known villagers. Our scene opens at a very beautiful town, surrounded by a cluster of steep hills, on the banks of the Kentucky river. The city of F is a capital beautifully built, laid out in rectangular sections, and presenting altogether a view at once pleasing and surprising from any of the numerous eminences which wall it in. A city of considerable opulence, and tolerably large population, it is abundantly distinguished by talent, of which the Union has been presented with numerous proofs, at this and subsequent periods. Upon the resources of the city, however, it is not our purpose to dwell. We confine ourselves to some few among its members. Let us introduce them.

The reader will suppose himself within one of those dark, dusty tabernacles, which, in silent, narrow streets, and parts of a city secluded from the more uproarious clamours of trade, have been usually assigned to the professors of the law. Like the huge spiders to which they have been likened, these gentlemen have always exhibited a decided preference to the dim and dusty corners. A neat, well−painted suite of rooms, among these, rightly incurs the imputation of professional dandyism; and is an error of taste and judgment into which none of the adepts of the profession will readily fall. That to which we now repair, is evidently one belonging to a veteran. If ever dust and dismals could sanctify one spot more than another, in the eye of a grave and thoughtful lawyer, this was the one. It consisted of two small snug chambers, dimly lighted by a single window in each, the panes of which were not often subjected to the influence of soap and water. Shelves of cumbrous books, of that uniformcomplexion which distinguishes a lawyer's office, added to the dusky gravity of the apartments. A huge table occupied the centre of one of the rooms, which also bore its burden of volumes. Rigid cases of painted pine occupied the niches on each side of the chimney, divided into numerous sections, each filled with its portly bundles of closely written papers;

"Strange words, scrawled with a barbarous pen."

In short, all the proofs were there of a law office, the proprietor of which was in very active and successful practice. But the gravity which distinguished the solemn fixtures, and the silent volumes, did not extend to the human inmates of this dim lodging house of law. Two of these sat by the table in the centre of the room. Their feet were upon it at opposite quarters, while their chairs were thrown back and balanced upon their hind legs, at such an angle as gave most freedom and ease of position to the person. Something of merriment had inspired them, for the room was full of cachination from their rival voices, long before our entrance. Of the topics of which they spoke, the reader must form his own conjectures. They may have a significance hereafter, of which we have no present intimation. It may be well to state, however, that it is our present impression that we have been introduced to both of these persons on some previous occasion. We certainly remember that tall, slender form, that sly, smiling visage, and those huge bushy whiskers. That chuckling laugh enters into our ears like a well remembered sound; and, for the companion of him from whom it proceeds, we cannot mistake. Every word and look is familiar. It is five years gone, indeed, but the impression was too strongly impressed to be so easily obliterated. Our companions were still merry. The conversation was still disjointed just enough being said to renew the laughter of both parties. As, for example:

"Such an initiation!" said one.

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the other, at the bare suggestion.

"And did you mark the uses made of old Darby, Warham?"

"No: I missed him before eleven. Did he not escape? Where was he?"

"Quiet as a mouse, unconscious as a pillow, under the feet of Barnabas. Barnabas used him as a sort of foot−stool. First one foot, then another, came down upon his breast; and you know the measure of Barnabas' legs. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Ha! ha! ha!"

"Hundred pounds each, by Jupiter. Whenever they came down you could hear the squelch. Poor Darby did not seem to breathe at any other time, and the air was driven out of him with a gush. Ha! ha! ha! It was decidedly the demdest fine initiation I ever saw at the club."

"But Beauchampe!"

"Ah! that was a dangerous experiment. He can't stand the stuff."

"No, Ben, and that's not all. It will not do to put it in him, or there will be no standing him. What passions! Egad, I trembled every moment lest he should draw knife upon the Pope. He's more a madman when drunk than any man I ever saw."

"He's no gain to the club. He has no idea of joking. He's too serious."

"Yet what a joke it was, when he took the Pope by his nose, in order to show how a cork could be pulled without either handkerchief or corkscrew."

"Ha! ha! ha! I thought he'd have wrung it off."

"That was the Pope's fear also: but he was too much afraid of provoking the madman to do worse, to make the slightest complaint, and he smiled too, with a desperate effort, while the water was trickling from his eyes."

"Ha! ha! ha!" and the chuckling was renewed, until the sound of footsteps in the front room induced their return to sobriety.

"Who's there?" demanded one of the merry companions.

"Me! the Pope," answered the voice of the intruder.

"Ha! ha! ha!" was the simultaneous effusion of the two, concluded, however, with an invitation to the other to come in.

"Come in, Pope, come in."

A short, squab, but active little man, whose eyes snapped continually, and whose proboscis was of that truculent complexion and shape which invariably impresses you with the idea of an experienced bottle−holder, at once made his appearance.

"Ha! ha! ha! Your reverence, how does your dignity feel this morning your nose, I mean?"

"Don't talk of it, Warham, I was never so insulted in all my life."

"Insulted! How? By what?"

"By what! why that d d fellow pulling my nose."

"Indeed, why that was universally esteemed a compliment, and it was supposed by every one to give you pleasure, for you smiled upon him in the most gracious manner, while he was most stoutly tugging at it."

"So I did, by the ghost of Naso, but reason good was there why I should? The fellow was mad stark mad."

"Oh, I don't think he would have done any harm."

"Indeed, eh! don't you. By the powers, and if you have your doubts on that point, get your nasal eminence betwixt his thumb and finger, as mine was, and you will be ready enough to change your notion, before the next sitting of the Symposia. D n it, I have no feeling in the region. It's as perfectly dead to me ever since, as if it were frozen."

"It certainly does wear a very livid appearance, eh, Ben?" remarked the other, gravely.

"Do you think so," responded the visiter, with some signs of disquiet.

"Indeed, I think so. Will you pass Dr. Filbert's this morning if so, take his opinion."

"I will make it a point to do so. I will."

"It's prudent only. I have heard of several disastrous cases of the loss of the nose. Perhaps there is no feature which is so obnoxious to injury. The most fatal symptom is an obtuseness, a sort of numbness a deficiency of sensibility."

"My very symptom."

"Amputation has been frequently resorted to, but not always in season to prevent the spread of mortification."

"The devil, you say, amputation!"

"Yes, but this is a small matter."

"What! to lose one's nose and such a nose!"

"Yes, a small matter. Such is the progress of art that noses of any dimensions are supplied to answer all purposes."

"Is this true, Warham? But dang it, even if it were there's no compensating a man for the loss of his own. No nose could be made to answer my purposes half so well as the one I was born with."

"But you do not suppose that you were born with that nose."

"Why not?"

"You were born of the flesh. But that nose is decidedly more full of the spirit."

"That's an imputation. But I can tell you that a man's nose may become very red, yet he be very temperate."

"Granted. But temperance, according to the Club, implies any thing but abstinence. Besides, you were made perpetual Pope only while your nose lasted, and colour, size, and the irregular prominences by which yours is so thickly studded, were the causes of your selection. The loss of your nose itself would not be your only loss. You would be required to abdicate."

"But you are not serious, Warham, about the susceptibility of the nose to injury."

"Ask Ben!"

"It's a dem'd dangerous symptom, you have, your reverence."

"Coldness at once a sign of inferior capacity, for it is the distinguishing trait of cat and dog."

"And the dem'd numbness."

"Ay, the want of sensibility is a bad sign. Besides, I think the Pope's nose has lost nearly all its colour."

"Except a dark crimson about the roots."

"And the bridge is still passable."

"Yes, but how long. That has grown pale also."

"To a degree, only, Ben: I don't think it much faded."

"Perhaps not; and now I look again, it does seem to me that one of the smaller carbuncles on the main prominence keeps up appearances."

"Look you, lads, d n it, you're quizzing me!" was the sudden interruption of the person whose nose furnished the subject of discussion, but his face wore a very bewildered expression, and he evidently only had a latent idea of the waggery of which he was the victim."

"Quizzing!" exclaimed one of the companions.

"Quizzing!" echoed the other. "Never was more dem'd serious in all my life!" and he stroked his black, bushy whiskers in a very conclusive manner. The visiter applied his fingers to the nasal prominence which had become so fruitful a source of discussion, and passed them over its various outline with the tenderness of a man who handles a subject of great intrinsic delicacy.

"It feels pretty much as ever!" said he, drawing a long breath.

"Ay, to your fingers. But what is its own feeling? Try now and snuff the air."

The ambigious member was put into instant exercise, and such a snuffing and snorting as followed, utterly drowned the sly chuckling in which the jeering companions occasionally indulged. They played the game, however, with marvellous command of visage.

"I can snuff I can draw in, and drive out the air!" exclaimed the Pope, with the look of a man somewhat better satisfied.

"Ay, but do you feel it cut is it sharp does the air seem to scrape against and burn, as it were, the nice, delicate nerves of that region."

"I can't say that it does."

"Ah! that's bad. Look you, Ben. There's a paper of snuff, yellow snuff, on the mantelpiece in t'other room. Bring it, let the Pope try that."

The other disappeared, and returned, bringing with him one of those paper rolls which usually contain Sanford's preparation of bark. Nor did the appearance belie the contents. The yellow powder was bark.

"Now, Pope, try that! The test is infallible, that is the strongest Scotch snuff, and if that don't succeed in titillating your nostrils, run to Filbert with all possible despatch. He may have to operate!"

The Pope's hand was seen to tremble, as a portion of the powder described as so very potent, was poured into it by the confederate. He put it to his nose, and, in his haste and anxiety, fairly buried his suspected member in the powder. His cheeks shared freely in the bounty, and his mouth formed a better idea of the qualities of the "snuff," than ever could his proboscis. The application over, the patient prepared himself to sneeze, by clappingone hand upon the pit of his stomach, opening his mouth, and carefully thrusting his head forward and his nose upward.

"Oh! you're trying to sneeze!" said one of the two. "You shouldn't force the matter."

"No, I don't. But is the snuff so very strong?"

"The demdest strongest Scotch that I ever nosed yet."

"I can't sneeze!" said the Pope, in accents of consternation.

His companions shook their heads dolefully. He looked from one to the other as if not knowing what to do.

"A serious matter," said one.

"Dem'd serious! There's no telling, Warham, what sort of a looking person the Pope would be without his nose."

"Difficult, indeed, to imagine. A valley for a mountain! It's as if we went to bed to−night with the town at the foot of the hills, and rose to−morrow to find it on the top of them. There's nothing more important to a man's face than his nose. Appearances absolutely demand it. The uses of a nose, indeed, are really less important than its presence."

"I can't agree with you there, Warham; a sneeze "

"Is a joy, Ben, a luxury; but a nose is necessity. What show could a man make without a nose?"

"Rather what a show he would make of himself. A monstrous show!"

"You're right. Besides, the Pope's loss would be greater than that of most ordinary men."

"Much, much! Let us take the dimensions, Pope. Three inches from base to apex from root to the same point "

"Four at least the dromedary's hump alone calls for two."

And in the spirit of unmeasured fun, the person who is called Ben by his companion, arming himself with a string, was actually about to subject the proboscis of the Pope to rule and line, when the eyes of the latter, which had really exhibited some consternation before, were suddenly illuminated. He caught up the paper of supposed snuff which Ben had incautiously laid down upon the table and read the label upon it.

"Ah! villains!" he exclaimed, "at your old tricks. I should have known it. But I'll pay you," and starting up he proceeded to fling the yellow powder over the merry−makers. This lead to a general scramble, over chairs and tables from one room to another. The office rang with shouts and laughter the cries of confusion and exultation, and the tumbling of furniture. The atmosphere was filled with the floating particles of the medicine, and while the commotion was at its height, the party were joined unexpectedly by a fourth person who suddenly made his appearance from the street.

"Ha, Beauchampe! that you; you are come in time. Grapple the Pope there from behind, or he will suffocate us with Jesuit's bark."

"And a proper fate for such Jesuits as ye are," exclaimed the Pope, who, however, ceased the horse−play the moment that the name of the new−comer was mentioned. He turned round and confronted him as he spoke with a countenance in which dislike and apprehension were singularly mingled and very clearly expressed.

"Mr. Lowe, I am very glad to see you here," said Beauchampe respectfully but modestly, "it saves me the necessity of calling upon you."

"Calling upon me, sir? For what?"

"To apologize for my rudeness to you last night. I was not conscious of it; but some friends this morning tell me that I was rude."

"That you were, sir! You pulled my nose! You did!"

"I am sorry for it."

"No man's nose should be pulled, Mr. Beauchampe, without an object. If you had pulled my nose with an intention, it might have been excused; but to pull it without design is, it appears to me, decidedly inexcusable."

"Decidedly, decidedly!" was the united exclamation of the two friends.

"I am very sorry, indeed, Mr. Lowe, it was, sir, a very unwarrantable liberty, if I did such a thing, and I know not how to excuse it."

"It is not to be excused," said the Pope, or Lowe, which was his proper name; whose indignation seemed to increase in due proportion with the meekness and humility of the young man. "A nose," he continued, "a nose isa thing perhaps quite as sacred as any other in a man's possession."

"Quite!" said the jesters with one breath.

"No man, as I have said before, should pull the nose of another, unless he had some distinct purpose in view. Now, sir, had you any such purpose?"

"Not that I can now recollect."

"Let me assist you, Beauchampe. You had a purpose. You declared it at the time. The purpose was even a benevolent one; nay, something more than benevolent. The corkscrew had been mislaid, and you undertook to show to the Pope remember, the presiding officer of the society that a cork might be drawn without any other instrument than the ordinary thumb and forefinger of a free white man. You illustrated the principle on the Pope's proboscis, and so effectually, that every body was convinced, not only that the cork might be drawn in this way from every bottle, but that the same mode would be equally effectual in drawing any nose from any face. If this

was not a purpose, and a laudable one, then I am no judge of the matter."

"But, Sharpe, my dear fellow," said Lowe, "you overlook the fact that Beauchampe has already admitted that he had no purpose."

"Beauchampe is no witness in his own case, nor is it asked whether he has a purpose now, but whether he had one when the deed was done."

"It was a drunken purpose then, colonel," said Beauchampe gravely.

"Drunk or sober, it matters not," said the other "it was not less a purpose, and I say a good one. The act was one pro bono publico; and I moreover contend that you did not pull the nose of our friend except in his official capacity. You pulled the nose, not of Daniel Lowe, Esq., but of the Supreme Pontiff of our microcosm; and I really think that the Pope does wrong to remember the event in his condition as a mere man. I am not sure that he does not violate that rule, 17th section, 7th clause, of the 'ordinance, for the better preservation of the individuality of the fraternals,' which provides that 'all persons, members who shall betray the discoveries, new truths, and modern inventions, the progress of discovery and proselytism; the processes deemed essential to be employed;all remember the section, clause and penalty."

"Pshaw, how can you make out that I violate the clause. What have I betrayed that should be secret?"

"The new mode of extracting a cork from a bottle which our new member, Beauchampe, displayed last evening to the great edification of every fraternal present."

"But it was no cork! My nose "

"Symbolically, it was a cork, and your nose had no right to any resentments. But come, let us take the back room again and resume our seats, when we can discuss the matter more at leisure."

The motion was seconded and the dusty particles of Jesuit's bark having subsided from the atmosphere of the adjoining room, the parties drew chairs around the table as before with a great appearance of comparative satisfaction.

CHAPTER VIII.

The name of Beauchampe, of which our readers have heard nothing until this period, though it confers its name on our story, renders it necessary that we should devote a few moments in particular to him by whom it is borne. He was a young man, not more than twenty−one, tall and of very handsome person. His eye was bright and his whole face full of intelligence. His manners and features equally denoted the modesty and the ingenuousness of youth. There was a gentleness in his deportment, however, which, though natural enough to his nature when in repose, was not its characteristic at other periods. He was of excitable constitution, passionate and full of enthusiasm; and when aroused, not possessed of any powers of self−government or restraint. At present, and sitting with the rest about the table, his features were not only subdued and quiet, but they wore an air of profound humility and self−dissatisfaction which was sufficiently evident to all.

"Our new member," said one of the party, "does not seem to have altogether got over the pains of initiation.Eh, Beauchampe! How is it? Does the head ache still. Are the nerves still disordered?"

"No, colonel, but I feel inexpressibly mean and sheepish. I am very sorry you persuaded me to join your club."

"Persuade! It was not possible to avoid it. Every new graduate at the bar, to be recognised, must go through the initiate. Your regrets and repentance are treasonable."

"I feel them nevertheless. I must have been a savage and a beast if what I am told be true. I never was drunk before in my life, and club or no club, if I can help it, never will be drunk again. Indeed, I cannot even now understand it. I drank no great deal of wine."

"No, indeed, precious little no more than would dash the brandy. You may thank Ben there for his adroitness in mingling the liquors."

"I do thank him!" said the youth with increased gravity, and a glance which effectually contradicted his words, addressed to the offender. That worthy did not seem much annoyed however.

"It was the demdest funny initiation I did ever see! Ha! ha! ha! I say, Pope, how is your reverence's nose?"

"Let my nose alone, you grinning, big−whiskered, little creature."

"Noses are sacred," said Sharpe.

"To be pulled only with a purpose, Warham."

"Symbolically," pursued the first.

"By way of showing how corks are to be drawn."

"Oh! d n you for a pair of blue devils;" exclaimed Lowe, starting to his feet and shaking his fist at the offenders.

"What are you off, Pope?" demanded Sharpe.

"Yes, I am. There's no satisfaction in staying with you."

"Call at Filbert's on your way, be sure."

"For what, I want to know?"

"Why, for his professional opinion. The worst sign you know is that numbness "

"Coldness."

"Insensibility to Scotch snuff."

"And remember, though your nose was pulled officially, may yet be personally injured. The official pullingsimply acquits the offender; the liability of the nose is not lessened by the legalization of the act of pulling."

"The devil take you for a pair of puppies," cried the victim with a queer expression of joint fun and vexation on his face. "Of course, Mr. Beauchampe," he said, "turning to the young man; of course I don't believe what these dogs say about my nose having suffered any vital injury; but I must tell you, sir, that you hurt me very much last night; and I feel the pain this morning."

"I am truly sorry, Mr. Lowe, for what I have done. Truly, sincerely sorry. I assure you, sir, that your pain of body is nothing to that which I suffer in mind from having exposed myself as I fear I did."

"You did expose yourself and me too, sir. I trust you will never do so again. I advise you, sir, never do so again, not unless you have a serious and sufficient motive. Don't let these fellows gull you with the idea that it was any justification for such an act that corks might be drawn from bottles in such a manner. Corks are not noses. Nobody can reasonably confound them. The shape, colour, every thing is different. There is nothing in the feel of the two to make one fancy a likeness. You are young, sir, and liable to be abused. Take the advice of an older man. Look into this matter for yourself, and you will agree with me not only that there is no likeness between a nose and a cork, but that, even admitting that your plan of drawing a cork from a bottle by the thumb and forefinger is a good one, it would be impossible to teach the process by exercising them upon a nose in the same manner. These young men are making fun of you, Mr. Beauchampe; they are, believe me!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the offenders. "Very good, your reverence."

"He! he! he! you puppies. Do you think I mind your cackling!" and shaking his fist at the company, Mr. Lowe took his departure, involuntarily stroking with increased affection the nasal eminence which had furnished occasion for so much misplaced merriment.

"Well, Beauchampe," said one of the companions, "you still seem grave about this business, but you should not. If even a man may forget himself and be mad for a night, after the fashion of old Anacreon, it is surely thenight of that day when he is admitted to the temple when he takes his degree, and passes into the brotherhood of the bar."

"Nay, on such a day least of all."

"Pshaw, you were never born for a Puritan. Old Thurston, your parson teacher, has perverted you from your better nature. You are a fellow for fun and flash, high frolic, and the complete abandonment of blood. You look at this matter too seriously. Do I not tell you I that have led you through all the thorny paths of legal knowledge do I not tell you that your offence is venial. 'A good sherris−sack hath a twofold operation in it.' "

"Beauchampe found it fourfold," said the bush−whiskered gentleman "that is, fourth proof; and he showed proofs enough of it. By Gad! never did a man play such pleasant deviltries with his neighbour's members. The nose−pulling was only a small part of his operations. It was certainly a most lovely initiation."

"At least it's all over, Mr. Coalter; and as matters have turned out, nothing more need be said on the subject; but were it otherwise, I assure you that your practice upon my wine would be a dangerous experiment for you. I speak to you by way of warning, and not with the view to quarrel. I presume you meant nothing more than a jest?"

"Dem the bit more," said the other, half dissatisfied with himself at the concession, yet more than half convinced of the propriety of making it. "Dem the bit more. Sharpe will tell you that it's a trick of the game a customary trick must be done by somebody, and was done by me, only because I like to see a demmed fine initiation such as yours was, my boy. But, good morning, Beauchampe good morning, Sharpe I see you have business to do some d d political business, I suppose; and so I leave you. I'm no politician, but I see that Judge Tompkins is in the field against your friend Desha. Eh! don't you think I can guess the rest, Warham eh?"

"Sagacious fellow!" said Sharpe as the other disappeared; "and, in this particular, not far from the mark. Tompkins is in the field against Desha, and will run him a tight race. I too must go into the field, Beauchampe. The party requires it, and though I have some reasons not to wish it just at this time, yet the matter is scarcely avoidable. I shall want every assistance, and I shall expect you to take the stump for me."

"Whatever I can do I will."

"You can do much. You do not know your own abilities on the stump. You will do famous things yet; and this is the time to try yourself. The success of a man in our country depends on the first figure. You are just admitted; something is expected of you. There can be no better opportunity to begin."

"I am ready and willing."

"Scarcely, mon ami. You are going to Simpson. You will get with sisters and mamma, and waste the daylight. Believe me this is no time to play at mammets. We want every man. We will need them all."

"You shall find me ready. I shall not stay long at Simpson. But do not think that I will commit myself for Desha. I prefer Tompkins."

"Well, but you will do nothing on that subject. You do not mean to come out for Tompkins?"

"No! I only tell you I will do nothing on the subject of the gubernatorial canvass. You are for the assembly. I will turn out in your behalf. But who is your opponent?"

"One Calvert William Calvert. Said to be a smart fellow. I never saw him but he is spoken of as no mean person. He writes well. His letter to the people of lies on the desk there. Put it in your pocket and read it at your leisure. It is well done quite artful but rather prosing and puritanical."

Beauchampe took up the pamphlet, passed his eyes over the page, and placed it without remark in his pocket.

"Barnabas," continued Sharpe, "who has seen this fellow Calvert, says he's not to be despised. He's a mere country lawyer, however, who is not known out of his own precinct. In taking the field now, he makes a miscalculation. I shall beat him very decidedly. But he has friends at work, who are able, and mine must not sleep. Do I understand you as promising to take the field against him?"

"If he is so clever, he will need a stronger opponent. Why not do it yourself?"

"Surely, I will. I long for nothing better. But I cannot be every where, and he and his friends are every where busy. I will seek him in his stronghold, and grapplewith him tooth and nail; but there will be auxiliary combatants, and you must be ready to take up the cudgel at the same time with some other antagonist. When do you leave town?"

"To−day within the hour."

"So soon! Why I looked to have you to dinner. Mrs. Sharpe expects you."

"I am sorry to deprive myself of the pleasure of doing justice to her good things; but I wrote my sisters and they will expect me."

"Pshaw! what of that! The disappointment of a day only. You will be the more welcome from the delay."

"They will apprehend some misfortune perhaps, my rejection, and I would spare them the mortification if not the fear. You must make my compliments and excuse to Mrs. S."

"You will be a boy, Beauchampe. Let the girls wait a day, and dine with me. You will meet some good fellows, and get a glimpse into the field of war, see how we open the campaign, and so forth."

"Temptations, surely, not to be despised; but I confess to my boyhood in one respect, and will prove my manhood in another. I am able to resist your temptations so much for my manhood. My boyhood makes me keep word with my sisters, and the shame be on my head."

"Shame, indeed; but where shall we meet?"

"At Bowling Green when you please."

"Enough then on that head. I will write you when you are wanted. I confess to a strong desire, apart from my own interests, to see you on the stump; and if I can arrange it so, I will have you break ground against Calvert."

"But that is not so easy. What is there against him?"

"You will find out from his pamphlet. Nothing more easy. He is obscure, that is certain. Little known among the people. Why? For a good reason he is a haughty aristocrat a man who only knows them when he wants their votes!"

"Is that the case?"

"Simple fellow! we must make it appear so. It may be or not, what matter? That he is shy, and reserved, and unknown, is certain. It's just as likely he is so, because of his pride, as any thing else. Perhaps he's a fellowof delicate feelings! This is better for us, if you can make it appear so. People don't like fellows of very delicate feelings. That alone would be conclusive against him. If we could persuade him to wear silk gloves, now, it would be only necessary to point them out on the canvass, to turn the stomachs of the electors, and their votes with their stomachs. They would throw him up instantly."

Beauchampe shook his head. The other interpreted the motion incorrectly.

"What! you do not believe it. Never doubt. The fact is certain. Such would be the case. Did you ever hear the story of Barnabas in his first campaign?"

"No! not that I recollect."

"He was stumping it through your own county of Simpson. There were two candidates against him. One of them stood no chance. That was certain. The other, however, was generally considered to be quite as strong if not stronger than Barnabas. Now Barnabas, in those days, was something of a dandy. He wore fine clothes, a long tail blue, a steeple crowned beaver, and silk gloves. Old Ben Jones, his uncle, saw him going out on the canvass in this unseasonable trim told him he was a d d fool, that the very coat and gloves and hat would lose him the election. 'Come in with me,' said the old buck. He did so, and Jones rigged him out in a suit of buckskin breeches: gave him an old slouch tied with a piece of twine; made him put on a common homespun roundabout, and sent him on the campaign with these accoutrements."

"A mortifying exchange to Barnabas."

"Not a bit. The fellow was so eager for election that he'd have gone without clothes at all, sooner than have missed a vote. But one thing the old man did not remember the silk gloves, and Barnabas had nearly reached the muster ground, before he recollected that he had them on his hands. He took 'em off instantly and thrust 'em into his pocket. When he reached the ground, he soon discovered the wisdom of old Jones' proceedings. He was introduced to his chief opponent, and never was there a more rough−and−tumble looking ruffian under the sun. Barnabas swears that he had not washed his face and hands for a week. His coat was out at the elbows, and though made of cloth originally both blue and good, it was evidently not made for the present wearer. His

breecheswere common homespun, and his shoes of yellow belly, were gaping on both feet. He had on stockings, however. Barnabas looked and felt quite genteel alongside of him; but he felt his danger also. He saw that the appearance of the fellow was very much in his favour. There was already a crowd around him; and when he talked, his words were of that rough staple which is supposed to indicate the true staple of popular independence. As there was nothing much in favour or against any of the candidates, unless it was that one of them not Barnabas was suspected of horse stealing, all that the speakers could do was to prove their own republicanism, and the aristocracy of the opponent. Appearances would help or dissipate this charge, and Barnabas saw, shabby as he was, that his rival was still shabbier. A bright thought took him that night. Fumbling in his pockets while they were drinking at the hotel, he felt his silk gloves. What does he do but going to his room he takes out his pocket inkstand and pen, and marks in large letters the initials of his opponent upon them. This done, he watches his chance, and the next morning when they were about to go forth to the place of gathering, he slips the gloves very slyly into the other fellow's pocket. The thing worked admirably. In the midst of the speech, Joel Peguay for that was his rival's name endeavouring to pull out a ragged cotton pocket−handkerchief, drew out the gloves which fell behind him on the ground. Barnabas was on the watch, and pointing the eyes of the assembly to the tokens of aristocracy, exclaimed

" 'This, gentlemen, is a proof of the sort of democracy which Joel Peguay practises.'

"A universal shout mixed with hisses arose. Peguay looked round, and when he was told what was the matter, answered with sufficient promptness, and a look of extraordinary exultation.

" 'Fellow citizens ain't this only another proof of the truth of what I'm a telling you, for look you, them nasty fine things come out of this coat pocket, did they?'

" 'Yes, yes! we saw them drop, Joel,' was the cry from fifty voices.

" 'Very good,' said Joel, nowise discomfited, 'and the coat was borrowed for this same occasion, from Tom Meadows. I hain't a decent coat of my own, my friends, tocome before you none but a round jacket, and that's tore down in the back, and so, you see, I begged Tom Meadows for the loan of his'n, and reckon the gloves must be his'n too, since they fell out of the pocket.'

"This explanation called for a triumphant shout from the friends of Peguay, and the affair promised to redound still more in favour of the speaker, when Barnabas, shaking his head gravely, and picking up the gloves, which he held from him as if they had been saturated in the dews of the bohon upas, drew the eyes of those immediately at hand to the letters which they bore.

" 'I am sorry,' said he, 'to interrupt the gentleman; but there is certainly some mistake here. These gloves are marked J. P., which stands for Joel Peguay and not Tom Meadows. See for yourselves, gentlemen you all can read, I know here is J. P. I'm not much of a reader, being too poor to have much of an education, but I know pretty much what you all do, that if these gloves belonged to Tom Meadows, they would have been marked T. M. the T for Tom, and the M for Meadows. I don't mean to say that they are not Tom's; but I do say that it's very strange that Tom Meadows should write his name Joel Peguay. I say it's strange, gentlemen very strange that's all!'

"And that was enough. There was no more shouting from the friends of Peguay. He was completely confounded. He denied and disputed of course, but the proofs were too strong, and Barnabas had done his part of the business with great skill and adroitness. Joel Peguay descended from the stump swearing vengeance against Meadows, who, he took for granted, had contrived the exhibition secretly, only to defeat him. No doubt a fierce feud followed between the parties, but Barnabas was elected by a triumphant vote."

"And do you really think, Colonel," said Beauchampe, "that this silly proceeding had any effect in producing the result?"

"Silly, indeed! by my soul such silly things, Master Beauchampe, have upset empires. The tumbling of an old maid's cap has done more mischief. I can tell you, from my own experience, that a small matter like this has turned the scale in many a popular election. Barnabasbelieves to this day, that he owes his success entirely to that little ruse de guerre."

"I know not how to believe it."

"Because you know not yet that little, strange, mousing, tiger−like, capricious, obstinate, foolish animal, whom we call man. When you know him more, you will wonder less."

"Perhaps so," said Beauchampe. "At all events, I can only say, that while I will turn out for you and do all I can to secure your election as in duty bound, I will endeavour to urge your claims on other grounds."

"As you please, my good fellow. Convince them that I am a patriot and a prophet, and the best man for them, and I care nothing by what process it is done. And if you can lay bare the corresponding deficiencies of mine opponent this fellow Calvert it is a part of the same policy, to be sure."

"But not so obviously," replied the other, "for as yet, you remember, we know nothing of him, and cannot accordingly pronounce upon his deficiencies."

"You forget his aristocracy!"

"Ah! that was conjectural, you know."

"Granted," said the other, "but what more do you want. A plausible conjecture is the very sort of argument in a popular election."

"But scarcely an honorable one!"

"Honourable! poh! poh! poh! Old Thurston has seriously diseased you, Beauchampe. We must undertake your treatment for this weakness this boyish weakness. It is a boyish weakness, Beauchampe."

"Perhaps so, but it makes my strength."

"It will always keep you feeble certainly keep you down in the political world."

The young man smiled. The other, speaking hastily, continued

"But this need not be discussed at present. Enough that you will take the field, and be ready at my summons. Turn the state of parties in your mind, and that will give you matter enough for the stump. Read that letter of Calvert, I doubt not it will give you more than sufficient material. From a hasty glance I see that he distrusts the people; that, as a stern democrat, you can resent happily. I leave that point to you. You will regard that opinion as a falsehood I think it worse, a mistake. It is to this same people that he addresses his claims. How far his opinion is an impertinence, may be seen in his appeal to the very judgment which he decries. This, to my mind, is conclusive against his own. But this must not make us remiss. I will write to you when the time comes, and at intervals, should there be any thing new to communicate. But you had better stay dinner. Seriously, my wife expects you."

"Excuse me to her, but I must go. I so long to see my sisters, and they will be on the lookout for me. I have already written them."

With a few words more, and the young lawyer separated from his late legal preceptor. When he was gone, the latter stroked his chin complacently as he soliloquized

"He will do to break ground with this fellow, Calvert. He is ardent, soon roused; and if I am to judge of Calvert from his letter, he is a stubborn colt whose heels are very apt to annoy any injudicious assailant. Ten to one, that with his fiery nature, Beauchampe finds cause of quarrel in any homely truth. They may fight, and this hurts me nothing. At least Beauchampe may be a very good foil for the first strokes of this new enemy. Barnabas says he is to be feared. If so he must be grappled with fearlessly. There is no hope else. At all events I will see by his issue with Beauchampe of what stuff he is made. Something in that. And yet, is all so sure with this boy? He has his whims, is sometimes suspicious obstinate as a mule when roused, and at least he must be managed cautiously very cautiously!"

We leave the office of Colonel Warham P. Sharpe for a while, to attend the progress of the young man of whom he was speaking.

CHAPTER IX.

Beauchampe was on his way to the maternal mansion. We have already endeavoured to afford the reader some idea of the character of this person. It does not needthat we should dilate more at large on the abstract constituents of his nature. We may infer that his mind was good, from the anxiety which his late teacher displayed to have it in requisition in his behalf, during the political campaign which was at hand. The estimate of his temperament, by the same person will also be sufficient for us. That he was of high, dignified bearing and honourable purpose, we may also conclude from the share which he took in the preceding dialogue. Of his judgment, however, doubts may be entertained. With something more than the ardour of youth, Beauchampe had all of its impatience. He was of that fiery mood, when aroused, which too effectually blinds the possessor to the strict course of propriety. His natural good sense was but too often baffled by this impetuosity of his temper, and though in the brief scenes in which he has been suffered to appear, we have beheld nothing in his deportment which was not becomingly modest and deliberate, we are constrained to confess that the characteristic of much deliberation is not natural to him, and was induced in the present instance by a sense of his late elevation to a new and exacting profession the fact that he was in the presence of his late teacher; and that he had, the night before participated, however unconsciously, in a debauch, of the performances of which he was really most heartily ashamed. His manner has therefore been subdued, but only for a while. We shall see him before long under very different aspects; betraying all the ardour and impetuosity of his disposition, and, as is usual in such cases, not always in that way which is most favourable to the shows of judgment.

Beauchampe was the second son of a stanch Kentucky farmer. He had received quite as good an education as the resources of the country at that time could afford. This education was not very remarkable it is true, but with the advantage of a lively nature and retentive memory, it brought into early exercise all the qualities of his really excellent intellect. He became a good English speaker, and a tolerable Latin scholar. He read with avidity, and studied with industry; and, at the age of twenty−one, was admitted to the practice of law in the courts of the state. This probation over, with the natural feeling of a heart which the world has not yet utterlyweaned from the affections and dependencies of its youth, he was hurrying home to his mother and sisters, to receive their congratulations, and share with them the pride and delight which such an occasion of his return would naturally inspire. Hitherto, his mother and sisters have had all his affections. The blind deity has never disturbed his repose, diverted his eyes from these objects of his regard, or interfered with his mental cogitations. Dreams of ambition were in his mind, but not yet with sufficient strength or warmth as to subdue the colours of that domestic love which the kindnesses of a beloved mother, and the attachments of dear sisters, had impressed upon his heart. He

had his images of beauty, perhaps, along with his images of glory, but they were rather the creations of a lively fancy, in moments of mental abstraction, than any more real impressions upon the unwritten tablets of his soul. These were still fair and smooth. His life had not been touched by many griefs or annoyances. His trials had been few, his mortifications brief. He was not yet conscious of any wants which would induce feelings of care and anxiety; and with a spirit gradually growing lighter and more elastic, as the number of miles rapidly diminished beneath the feet of his horse, he forgot that he was alone in his journeyings, a light heart, and a lively fancy brought him pleasant companions enough, that beguiled the time, and cheered the tediousness of his journey. The youth was thinking of his home, and what a thought is that in the bosom of youth. The old cottage shrunk up in snug littleness among the venerable guardian trees, and the green grass plat, and the half blind house dog, and a thousand objects besides, forced themselves through the medium of his memory upon his delighted imagination. Then he beheld his sisters hurrying out to meet him, Jane running for dear life, half mad, and shouting back to Mary, the more grave sister, who slowly followed. Jane shrieking with laughter, and Mary with not a word, but only her extended hand and her tears!

Strange! that even at such a moment as this, while these were the satisfying images in his mind, there should intrude another which should either expel these utterly, or should persuade him that they were not enough to satisfy his mind or confer happiness upon his heart. Why,when, in his dreaming fancy, these dear sisters appeared so lovely and were so fond, why should another form, itself a fancy, arise in the midst, which should make him heedless and forgetful of all others, and fixed only on it! The eye of the youth grew sadder as he gazed and felt. He no longer spurred his steed impatiently along the path, but forgetful in an instant of his progress, he mused upon the heart's ideal, which a passing fancy had presented, and all the bright sweet domestic forms vanished from his sight. The feeling of Beauchampe was natural enough. He felt it to be so. It was an instinct which every heart of any sensibility must feel in progress of time; even though the living object be yet wanting to the sight, upon which the imagination may expend its own colours in seeking to establish the identity between the sought and the found. But was it not late for him to feel this instinct. Why had he not felt it before? Why, just at that moment, just when his fancy had invoked around him all the images which had ever brought him happiness before, forms which had supplied all his previous wants smiles and tones which had left nothing which he could desire why, just then, should that foreign instinct arise and expel, as with a single glance, the whole family of joys known to his youthful heart. Expelling them, indeed, but only to awaken him to the conviction of superior joys and possessions far more valuable. It was an instinct, indeed; and never was youthful mind so completely diverted, in a single instant, from the consideration of a long succession of dear thoughts, to that of one, now dearer perhaps than all, but which had never made one of his thoughts before. He now remembered that, of all his schoolmates and youthful associates, there had not been one, who had not professed, a passionate flame for some smiling damsel in his neighbourhood. Among his brother students at law, that they should love was quite as certain as that they should have frequent attacks of the passion, and of course, on each occasion, for some different object. He alone had gone unscathed. He alone had run the gauntlet of smiles and glances, bright eyes and lovely cheeks, without detriment. The thought had never disturbed him then, when he was surrounded by beauty; why should it now, when none was nigh him, and when but a small distance from hismother's farm he had every reason to think only of that and the dear relatives which there awaited him. There was an instinct in it.

At that moment, he was roused from his reveries by a pistol shot which sounded in the wood a little distance before him. The circumstance was a singular one. The wood was very close and somewhat extensive. He knew the spot very well. It was scarcely more than a mile from his mother's cottage. He knew of no one in the neighbourhood who practised pistol shooting; but on this head he was not capable to judge. He had been absent from his home for two years. There might there must have been changes. At all events no mischief seemed to be afoot. There was but one shot. He himself was safe, and he rode forward, relieved somewhat of his reveries, at a trifling increase of speed. The road led him round the wood in which the shot had been heard, making a sweep like a crescent, in order to avoid some rugged inequalities of the land. As he followed its windings he was startled to see, just before him, a female, well dressed, tall, and of a carriage unusually firm and majestic. Under her arm she carried a small bundle wrapped up in a dark silk pocket−handkerchief. She crossed the road hastily, and soon buried herself out of sight in the woods opposite. She gave him but a single glance in passing, but this glance

enabled him to distinguish features of peculiar brilliancy and beauty. The moment after, she was gone from sight, and it seemed as if the pathway grew suddenly dark. Her sudden appearance and rapid transition was like that of a gleam of summer lightning. Involuntarily he spurred his horse forward, and his eyes peered keenly into the wood which she had entered. He could still see the white glimmer of her garments. He stopped, like one bewildered, to watch. At one moment he felt like dismounting and darting in pursuit of her. But such an impertinence might receive the rebuke which it merited. She did not seem to need any service, and on no other pretence could he have pursued. He grew more and more bewildered while he gazed. This vision was so strange and startling, and so singularly in unison with the fancies which had just before possessed his mind. That his heart should present him with an ideal form, and that, a moment after, a form of beauty should appear, so unexpectedly, in sounusual a place, was at least a very strange coincidence. Nothing could be more natural than that the fancy of the young man should find these two forms identical. It is an easy matter for the ardent nature to deceive itself. But here another subject of doubt presented itself to the mind of Beauchampe. Was this last vision more certainly real than the former? It was no longer to be seen. Had he seen it except in his mind's eye, where the former bright ideal had been called up? So sudden had been the appearance, so rapid the transition, that he turned from the spot now doubting its reality. Slowly he rode away, musing strangely, and we may add sadly often looking back, and growing more and more bewildered as he mused, until relieved and diverted by the more natural feelings of the son and brother as the prospect opening before his eyes, he beheld the farmstead of his mother. In the door−way of the old cottage stood the venerable woman, while the two girls were approaching, precisely as his fancy had shown them, the one bounding and crying aloud, the other moving slowly, and with eyes which were already moist with tears. They had seen him before he had sufficiently awakened from his reveries to behold them.

"Ah, Jane dear Mary!" were the words of the youth, throwing himself from the horse and severally clasping them in his arms. The former laughed, sang, danced and capered. The latter clung to the neck of her brother, sobbing as heartily as if they were about to separate.

"Why, what's Mary crying for, I wonder?" said the giddy girl.

"Because my heart's so full; I must cry," murmured the other. Taking an arm of each in his own, he led them to the old lady whose crowning embrace was bestowed with the warmth of one who clasps and confesses the presence of her idol. We pass over the first ebullitions of domestic love. Most people can imagine these. It is enough to say that ours is a family of love. They have been piously brought up. Mrs. Beauchampe is a woman of equal benignity and intelligence. They have their own little world of joy in and among themselves. The daughters are single−hearted and gentle, and no small vanities and petty strifes interfere to diminish the confidence in one, and another, and themselves, which brings to them the hourly enjoyment of the all−in−all content. It will not behard to fancy the happiness of the household in the restoration of its tall and accomplished son. Tall and handsome, and so kind, and so intelligent, and just now made a lawyer too. Jane was half beside herself, and Mary's tears were constantly renewed as they looked at the manly brother, and thought of these things.

"But why did you ride so slow, Orville?" demanded Jane, as she sat upon his knee and patted his cheek. Mary was playing with his hair from behind. "You came at a snail's pace and didn't seem to see any body, and there was I hallooing to make you hear and all for nothing."

"Don't worry Orville with your questions, Jane," said the more sedate Mary. "He was tired perhaps,"

"Or his heart was too full also," said Jane interrupting her mischievously. "But it's not either of these I'm sure, Orville, for I know horseback don't tire you, and I'm sure your heart's not so very full, for you hav'n't shed a tear yet. No! no! it's something else, for you not only rode slow, but you kept looking behind you all the while, as if you were expecting somebody. Now who were you looking for; tell me, tell Jane, dear brother."

"Now you hit it, Jane the reason I rode slowly and looked behind me mind me, I rode pretty fast until I came almost in sight of home was because I did expect to see some one coming behind me, though I had not much

cause to expect it either."

"Who was it!"

"That's the question. Perhaps you can tell me;" and, with these words, the young man proceeded to relate the circumstance already described of the sudden advent of that bright vision which had so singularly taken the place, in our hero's mind, of his heart's ideal.

"It must be Miss Cooke, mother," said the girls with one breath.

"And who is Miss Cooke?"

"Oh! that's the mystery. She's a sort of queen, I'm thinking," said Jane, "or she wants you to think her one which is more likely."

"Jane, Jane," said Mary, who was the younger sister, in reproachful accents.

"Well, what am I saying, but what's the truth? Don'tshe carry herself like a queen? Isn't she as proud and stately, as if she was better than any body else?"

"If she's a queen, it's a tragedy queen," said the graver sister. "I don't deny that she's very stately, but then she's also very unhappy."

"I don't believe in her unhappiness at all. I can't think any person so very unhappy who carries herself so proudly."

"Pride itself may be a cause of unhappiness, Jane," said the mother.

"Yes, mamma, but are we to sympathize with it, I want to know."

"Perhaps! it is not less to be pitied because the owner has no such notion. But your brother is waiting to hear something of Miss Cooke, and instead of telling him who she is, you're telling him what she is."

"And no better way, perhaps," said the brother; "but do you tell me, Mary; Jane is quite too much given to scandal."

"Oh! brother," said Jane.

"Too true, Jane; but go on Mary, and let us have a key to this mystery. Who is Miss Cooke?"

"She's a young lady "

"Very pretty?"

"Very! she came here about two years ago just after you went from Parson Thurston to study law she and her mother, and they took the old place of Farmer Davis. They came from some other part of Simpson, so I have heard, and bought this place from widow Davis. They have a few servants, and are comfortably fixed, and Mrs. Cooke is quite a chatty body, very silly in some things, but fond of going about among the neighbours. Her daughter, who is named Anna, though I once heard the old lady call her Margaret "

"Margaret Anna, perhaps she may have two names," said the brother.

"Very likely! but the daughter is not sociable. On the contrary, she rather avoids every body. You do not often see her when you go there, and she has never been here but once, and that shortly after her first arrival. As Jane says, she is not only shy, but stately. Jane thinks it pride, but I do not agree with her. I rather think that it is owing to a natural dignity of mind, and to manners formed under other circumstances; for she never smiles, and there is such a deep look of sadness from her eyes, that I can't help believing her to be very unhappy. I sometimes think that she has probably been disappointed in love."

"Yes, Mary thinks the strangest things about her. She says she's sure that she's been engaged, and that her lover has played her false and deserted her."

"Oh, Jane, you mistake; I said I thought he might have been killed in a duel, or "

"Or that he deserted her; for that matter, Mary, you've been having a hundred conceits about her ever since she came here."

"She is pretty, you say, Mary?" asked the young man, who, by this time had ejected Jane from his knee, and transferred her younger sister to the same place.

"Pretty she is beautiful."

"I can't see it for my part," said Jane, "with her solemn visage, and great dark eyes that seem always sharp like daggers ready to run you through."

"She is beautiful, brother, very beautiful, but Jane don't like her because she thinks her proud. She's as beautiful in her face, as she is noble in her figure. Her stateliness, indeed, arises, I think, from the symmetry and perfect proportion of her person; for when she moves, she does not seem to be at all conscious that she is stately. Her movements are very natural, as if she had practised them all her life. And they say, brother, that she's very smart."

"Who says, sister," cried Jane "who but old Mrs. Fisher, and only because she saw her fixing a bushel of books upon the shelves at her first coming."

"No, Jane, Mr. Crump told me that he spoke to her, and that he had never believed a woman could be so sensible till then."

"That shows he's a poor judge. Who'd take old Crump's opinion about a woman's sense? I'm sure I wouldn't."

"But Miss Cooke is very sensible, brother. Jane does dislike her so!"

"Well, supposing she is sensible, it's only what sheought to be by this time. She's old enough to have the sense of two young women at least."

"Old!" exclaimed Beauchampe. "The lady I saw was not old, certainly."

The suggestion seemed to give the young man some annoyance, which the gentlehearted Mary hastened to remove.

"She is not old, Orville; Jane how can you say so? You know that Miss Cooke can hardly be over twenty−one, or two, even if she's that."

"Well, and ain't that old. You, Mary, are sixteen only, and I'm but seventeen and three months. But I'm certain she's twenty−five if she's a day."

The subject is one fruitful of discussion where ladies are concerned. Beauchampe having experience of the two sisters, quietly sat and listened; and by the use of a moderate degree of patience, soon contrived to learn all that could be known of that neighbour who, it appears, had occasioned quite as great a sensation in the bosoms of the sisters, though of a very different sort, as her momentary presence had inspired in his own. The two girls, representing extremes, were just the persons to give him a reasonable idea of the real facts in the case of the person under discussion. It may be unnecessary to add, that the result was, to increase the mystery, and heighten the curiosity which the young man now felt in its solution.

CHAPTER X.

When the first sensations following the return of our hero to his home and family had somewhat subsided, the enthusiastic and excitable nature of the former naturally led him to dwell upon the image of that strange lady, whose sudden appearance seemed to harmonize so singularly with the ideal of his waking dream. The very morning after his arrival, he sallied forth at an early hour, with his gun in hand, ostensibly with a view to birding, but really to catch some glimpse of the mysterious lady. For this purpose, as all the neighbourhood and neighbouringcounty was familiar, he traversed the hundred routes to and from the farmstead of old Davis, which she now occupied, and wasted some precious hours, in which neither his heart nor his gun found game, in exploring the deep wood from whence the pistol−shot, the day before, had first challenged his attention. But no bright vision blessed his search that day. He found nothing to interest his mind or satisfy his curiosity, unless it were a tree which he discovered barked with bullets, where some person had evidently been exercising, and, assuming the instrument to have been a pistol, with a singular degree of success. The discovery did not call for the thought of a single moment; and contenting himself with the conjecture that some young rifleman was thus "teaching the young idea how to shoot," he turned off, and, with some weariness and more disappointment, made his way, birdless, to his cottage. But the disappointment rather increased than lessened his curiosity, and before two days had passed, he had acquired boldness enough to advance so nearly to the dwelling of Miss Cooke, as, sheltered beneath some friendly shade−trees, to see the passers by the window, and, on one or more occasions, to catch a glimpse of the one object for whom all these pains were taken. These glimpses, it may be said, served rather to inflame than to satisfy his curiosity. He saw enough to convince him that Mary was right, and Jane wrong. That he was not deceived in his first impression of her exceeding loveliness that she was beautiful beyond any comparison that he could make; of a rare, rich, and excelling beauty; and slowly he returned from his wanderings to muse upon the means by which he should arrive at a more intimate knowledge of the fair one, who was represented to be as inaccessible as she was fair like one of those unhappy damsels of whom we read in old romances, locked up in barred and gloomy towers, lofty and well guarded, whose charms, if they were the incentives to chivalry and daring, were quite as often the cruel occasion of bloody strife and most unfortunate adventure. The surpassing beauty of our heroine, so strangely coupled with her sternness of deportment and loneliness of habit, naturally enough brought into activity the wild imagination and fervent temperament of our young lawyer. By these means her beauty was heigtened, and the mystery which enveloped her made the parent of newer sources of attraction. Before three days had passed, his sisters had discovered that his thought was running only on their fair, strange neighbour, and at length, baffled in his efforts to encounter the mysterious lady in his rambles, he was fain to declare himself more openly at home, and to insist that his sisters should call upon Miss Cooke and her mother, and invite them to tea. This was done accordingly, but with only partial success. Mrs. Cooke came but not the daughter, who sent an excuse. Beauchampe paid his court to the old lady, whom he found very garrulous and very feeble−minded; but though she spoke with great freedom on almost every subject, he remarked that she shrunk suddenly into silence whenever reference was made to her daughter. On this point every thing tended to increase the mystery, and of course the interest. He attended the mother home that night, in the hope to be permitted to see the daughter; but though, when invited to enter, he did so, he found the tête−à−tête with the old lady a half hour which curiosity readily gave to dulness unrelieved by the presence of the one object for whom he sought. But a well−filled bookcase which met his eyes in the hall, suggested to him a mode of approach in future of which he did not scruple to avail himself. He complimented the old lady on the extent of her literary possessions. Such a collection was not usual at that time among the country−houses of that region. He

spoke of his passion for books, and how much he would be pleased to be permitted to obtain such as he wanted from the collection before him. The old lady replied that they were her daughter's, who was also passionately fond of books — that she valued her collection very highly — they were almost her only friends — but she had no doubt that Mr. Beauchampe would readily receive her permission to take any that he desired for perusal. Beauchampe expressed his gratitude, but judiciously declined to make his selection that night. The permission necessarily furnished the sanction for a second visit, for which he accordingly prepared himself. He suffered a day, however, to pass — a forbearance that called for the exercise of no small degree of fortitude — before repeating his visit. The second morning, however, he did so. He saw the young lady, for a brief instant, at the window, while making his approaches. He was admitted, was received by the mother, treated with great kindness, and spent a full hour, — how we say not — in company with the venerable and voluble dame. She conferred upon him the permission of her daughter to use any book in the collection, but the daughter herself did not appear. He mustered courage enough to ask for her, but the inquiry was civilly evaded. He was finally compelled, after lingering to the last, and hoping against hope, to take his departure without attaining the real object of his visit. He selected a volume, however, not that he cared to read it, but simply because the necessity of returning it would afford him the occasion and excuse for another visit.

The proverb tells us that grass never grows beneath the footsteps of love. It is seldom suffered to grow beneath those of curiosity. Our hero either read, or pretended to have read, the borrowed volume, in a very short space of time. The next morning found him with it beneath his arm, and on his way to the cottage of the Cookes. The grave looks of his mother, and the sly looks of his sisters, were all lost upon him; and, pluming himself somewhat upon the adroitness which disguised the real purpose of his visits, he flattered himself that he should still attain the object which he sought, without betraying the interest which he felt. Of course he himself did not suspect the real motives by which he was governed. That a secret passion stirring in his breast had any thing to do with that interest which he felt to know the strange lady, was by no means obvious to his own mind. Whatever may have been the motive by which his conduct was influenced, it did not promise to be followed by any of the results which he desired. His second morning call was not more fortunate than the first. Approaching, he saw the outline of Miss Cooke's person at an upper window, but she instantly disappeared, and he was received below, and wholly entertained, by the good old mother.

It may readily be imagined, that with a fervent, passionate nature, such as Beauchampe's, this very baffling of his desires, was calculated to stimulate and strengthen them. He was a man equally of strong impulses and indomitable will. The necessary creature of such qualitiesof mind is a Puritan tenacity of purpose — a persevering energy which ceases, finally, to sleep in the work of conquest, or, at least, converts even its sleeping hours into tasks of thought and wild vague dreams of modes and operations by which the work of conquest is to be carried on. The momentary glimpses of the damsel's person, which the ardent youth was permitted to obtain, still kept alive in his mind the strong impression which her beauty had originally made. We do not insinuate that this exhibition was designed by the lady herself for any such object. Such might be the imputation — nay, was, in after days, by some of her charitable neighbours, — but we have every reason for thinking otherwise. We believe that she was originally quite sincere in her desire to avoid the sight, and discourage the visits of strangers. Whether this was also the desire of the mother is not so very certain. We should suppose, on the contrary, that the course of her daughter was one that afforded little real satisfaction to her. If the daughter remained inflexible, the good mother soon convinced Beauchampe that she was not; and, saving the one topic, — the daughter herself, — there was none upon which good Mrs. Cooke did not expatiate to her visited with the assured freedoms of a friend of a thousand years. Any approach to this subject, however, effectually silenced her. Not, it would seem, because she herself felt any repugnance to the subject — for Beauchampe could not fail to perceive that her eyes brightened whenever the other was referred to; — but her voice was hurried when she replied on such occasions, and her glance stealthily turned to the entrance, as if she dreaded lest the sound should summon other ears to the apartment.

The curiosity of Beauchampe was farther stimulated by a general examination of the contents of the library. The selection was such, as in regions where books are more in requisition, and seem more in place, would testify

considerably in behalf of the judgment and good taste of the possessor. They were all English books, it is true, but they were genuine classics of the best days of British literature, including the more recent writers. There were additional proofs in such as he took home with him, of the equal taste and industry of their reader. The fine passages were scored marginally with pencil lines, andan occasional note in the same manner, indicated the acquaintance of the commentator with the best standards of criticism. Beauchampe made another observation, however, which had the effect of leaving it still doubtful whether these notes were made by the present owner. They were all in a female hand. He found that a former name had been carefully obliterated in every volume, that of Miss Cooke being written in its stead. Though doubtful, therefore, whether to ascribe to her the excellent criticism and fine taste which thus displayed itself over the pages which he read, this doubt by no means lessened his anxiety to judge for himself of the attainments of their possessor; and fortune we may assume thus much at length helped him to the interview which he sought.

The mother, one day, with nice judgment, fell opportunely sick. It is easier to suspect that she willed this event than to suppose the daughter guilty of duplicity. It necessarily favoured the design of Beauchampe. He made his morning visit, which had now become periodical, was ushered into the parlour, where, after a few moments, he was informed that Mrs. Cooke was not visible. She pleaded indisposition. Miss Cooke, however, had instructed the servant to say to Mr. Beauchampe that he was at liberty to use the library as before. By this time the eager nature of Beauchampe was excited to the highest pitch of anxiety. So many delays, such baffling, had deprived his judgment of that deliberate action without which the boundaries of convention are very soon overpassed. A direct message from the mysterious lady, was a step gained. It had the effect of still farther unseating his judgment, and, without scruple, he boldly despatched a message by the servant, soliciting permission to see Miss Cooke. An answer was immediately returned in which she declined seeing him. He renewed the request with the additional suggestion that he had a communication to make. This necessarily produced the desired effect. In a few minutes she descended to the parlour.

If Beauchampe had been fascinated before, he was certainly not yet prepared for the commanding character of that beauty which now stood before him. He rose, trembling and abashed, his cheeks suffused with blushes, but his eyes, though dazzled, were full of the eager admirationwhich he felt. She was simply clad, in white. Her person, tall and symmetrical, was erect and dignified. Her face was that of matured loveliness, shaded, not impaired, by sadness, and made even more elevated and commanding by the expression of intense pain which seemed to mingle with the fire of her eyes, giving a sort of subdued fierceness to her glance, which daunted quite as much as it dazzled him. Perhaps a something of severity in her look added to his confusion. He stammered confusedly; the courage which had prompted him to seek the interview, failed utterly to provide him with the intellectual readiness by which it was to be carried on. But the feminine instinct came to his relief. The lady seated herself, motioning her visiter to do the same.

"Sit down, sir, if you please. My mother presumes that you are anxious to know how she is. She instructs me to thank you for your courtesy, and to say that her indisposition is not serious. She trusts in another day to be quite restored."

By this time Beauchampe had recovered something of his confidence.

"It gives me pleasure, Miss Cooke, to hear this. I did fear that your mother was seriously suffering. But I can not do you and myself the injustice to admit that I came simply to see her. No! Miss Cooke, an anxiety to see you in person, and to acknowledge the kindness which has given me the freedom of your library, were among the objects of my visit."

The lady became instantly grave.

"I thank you, sir, for your compliment, but I have long since abandoned society. My habits are reserved. I prefer solitude. My tastes and feelings equally require it. I am governed so far by these tastes and feelings, which have

now become habits, that it will not suit me to recognise any new acquaintance. My books are freely at your service, whenever you wish them. Permit me, sir, to wish you good morning."

She rose to depart. Beauchampe eagerly started to his feet.

"Stay, Miss Cooke. Do not leave me thus. Hear me but for a moment."

She resumed her seat with a calm, inflexible demeanour, as if, assured of her strength at any moment to depart,she had no apprehensions on the subject of her detention. The blush again suffused the cheeks of Beauchampe, and the rigid silence which his companion observed, as if awaiting his utterance, suddenly increased his difficulties in this respect. But the ice once broken, his impetuous temper was resolved that it should not freeze again.

"I know, Miss Cooke," he observed, "after what you have just said, that I have no right any longer to trespass upon you, but I dare not do otherwise I dare not depart I am the slave of a passion which has brought me, and which keeps me here."

"I must not listen to you, Mr. Beauchampe," she replied, rising, as if to leave the room.

"Forgive me!" he exclaimed, gently detaining her "forgive me, but you must."

"Must!" her eyes flashed brighter fires.

"I implore the privilege to use the word, but in no offensive sense. Nay, Miss Cooke, I release you I will not seek to detain you. You are at liberty, with my lips only do I implore you to remain."

The proud woman examined the face of the passionate youth with some slight curiosity. To this, however, he was insensible.

"You are aware, Mr. Beauchampe," she remarked, indifferently, "that your conduct is somewhat unusual."

"Yes, perhaps so. I believe it. Nay, were I to think, Miss Cooke, I should perhaps, under ordinary circumstances, agree to pronounce it unjustifiable. But, believe me, it is meant to be respectful."

She interrupted him:

"Unless I thought so, sir, I could not be detained here a moment longer."

"Surely, surely, Miss Cooke, you cannot doubt my respect, my "

"I do not, sir."

"Ah! but you are so cold so repulsive, Miss Cooke."

"Perhaps I had better leave you, Mr. Beauchampe. It will be better for both of us. You know nothing of me, I nothing of you."

"You mistake, Miss Cooke, in assuming that I know nothing of you."

"Ha! sir!" she answered, rising to her feet, her face glowing like scarlet, while a blue vein, like a chord, dividedthe high white forehead in the midst. "What mean you, what know you?"

"Much! I know already that you are alone among women alone in beauty in intellect!"

He paused. He marked a sudden and speaking change upon her features which struck him as more singular than the last. The flush had departed from her cheeks, the blue vein had suddenly sunk from sight a complete pallor overspread her face, and with a slight tremor over her frame, she sunk upon the seat from which she had arisen. He sprang forward, and was at once beside her upon his knees. He caught her hand in his own.

"You are sick you are ill!" he exclaimed.

"No! I am better now!" she answered in low tones.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed, "I feared you had spasms I dreaded I had offended you. You are still so pale, Miss Cooke so very pale!" and he again started to his feet as if to call for assistance. She arrested him.

"Do not alarm yourself," she said with more firmness. "I am subject to such attacks, and they form a sufficient reason, Mr. Beauchampe, why I should not distress strangers with them. Suffer me now to retire."

"Bear with me yet awhile!" he exclaimed, "I will try not to alarm or to annoy you. You ask me what I know of you! nothing, perhaps, were I to answer according to the fashion of the world; every thing, if I answer according to the dictates of my heart."

"It is unprofitable knowledge, Mr. Beauchampe."

"Do not say so, I implore you. I know that I am a rash and foolish young man, but I mean not to offend nay, my purpose is to declare the admiration which I feel."

"I must not hear you, Mr. Beauchampe. I must leave you. As I said before, you are welcome to the use of my books."

"Ah! Miss Cooke, it is you, and not your books which have brought me to your dwelling. Suffer me to see you when I come. Suffer me to know you to make myself known to bring my sisters; to conduct you to them. They will all be so glad to see and know you."

She shook her head mournfully, while a sad smile rested upon her lips as she replied

"Mr. Beauchampe," she said, "I will not affect to misunderstandyou; but I must repeat, as I have said to you before, I have done with society. I am in fact done with the world."

"Done with the world! Oh! what a thought! You, Miss Cooke, you so able to do all with it!"

"You cannot flatter me, Mr. Beauchampe. The world can be nothing to me. I am nothing to it. To wear out life in loneliness, forgot, forgetting, is the utmost of my hopes from the world. Spare me more. It is not well, it will not be desirable, that any intimacy should exist between me and your sisters."

"Oh! why not? they are so gentle, so pure!"

"Ah! no more, sir, I implore you;" her brow had suddenly become clouded, and she rose. "Leave me now, sir, I must leave you. I must hear you no longer."

Her voice was firm. Her features had suddenly put on their former inflexibility of expression. The passionate youth at once discovered that the moment for moving her determination was past, and every effort now to detain

her would prejudice his cause.

"You will leave me, Miss Cooke you will drive me from you, yet let me hope "

"Hope nothing from me, Mr. Beauchampe. I would not have you hope fruitlessly."

"The wish itself assures me that I cannot."

"You mistake, sir you deceive yourself!" she replied with sterner accents.

"At least let me not be denied your presence. Let me see you. I am not in the world, nor of it, Miss Cooke. Let me sometimes meet you here, and if I am forbid to speak of other things, let me at least speak and hear you speak of these old masters at whose feet I perceive you have been no idle student."

"Mr. Beauchampe, I can promise nothing. To consent to receive and meet you would be to violate many an internal resolve."

"But why this dreary resolution?"

"Why! but ask not, sir. No more from me now. You knew not, sir, and you meant not, but you have wakened in my mind this morning many a painful and dreary thought, which you cannot dissipate. I say this to excuse myself for what might seem rudeness. I do not wish to excite your curiosity. I tell you, sir, but thetruth, when I tell you that I am cut off from the world it matters not how, nor why. It is so, and the less I see of it the better. When you know this, you will understand why it is that I should prefer not to see you."

"Ah! but not why I should not seek to see you. No, Miss Cooke, your dreary destiny does not lessen my willingness to soothe to share it."

"That can never be."

"Do not say so. If you knew my heart "

"Keep its secrets, Mr. Beauchampe. Enough, sir, that I know my own. That, sir, has but one prayer, and that is for peace, but one passion, and that, sir, "

"Is speak, say, Miss Cooke, tell me what this passion is? Relieve me; but tell me not that you love another. Not that, any thing but that."

"Love!" she exclaimed scornfully "love! no, sir, I do not love. Happily, I am free from any such weakness that weakness of my sex!"

"Call it not a weakness, dear Miss Cooke, but a strength a strength of the heart, not peculiar to your sex, but the source of what is lofty and ennobling in the heart of man."

"Ay, he has a precious stock of it, no doubt; but no more of this, Mr. Beauchampe. I have my passion, perhaps, but surely love makes no part of it."

"What then?"

"Hate!"

"Hate! ha! can it be that you hate, Miss Cooke?"

"Ay, sir, it is possible. Hate is my passion, not the only one, since it produces another bearing its own likeness."

"And that? "

"Is revenge! Ask yourself, with these passions reigning in my heart, whether there is room for any thing more for any other! There is not, and you may not deceive yourself with the vain hope to plant any feebler passion in a spot which bears such poisonous weeds."

Thus speaking she left the room, and, astounded by her vehemence, and by the strange though imperfect revelation which she had made, Beauchampe found himself alone!

CHAPTER XI.

Had the words of the lady fallen from the lips of an oracle, they could not have more completely fastened themselves on the ears of our hero. Her sublime beauty as she spoke those wild accents was that of one inspired. Her eye flashed with fires of a supernatural brightness. Her brow was lifted, and her hand smote upon her heart, when she declared what fierce passions were its possessors, as if they themselves were impelling the blow, and the heart was that of some mortal enemy. Beauchampe was as completely paralysed as if he had suffered an electric stroke. He would have arrested her departure, but his words and action were equally slow. He had lost the power of hands and voice, and when he was able to speak she had gone. Confused, bewildered, and mortified, he left the house; and sad and silent he pursued his way along the homeward paths. Before he had gone far he was saluted with the laughter of merry voices, and his sisters were at his side. What a contrast was that which instantly challenged the attention of his mind, between the girlish, almost childish and characterless damsels beside him, and the intense, soul−speaking woman he had left! Howi mpertinent seemed the levity of Jane how insipid the softness and milky sadness of the gentlehearted Mary! The reflections of the brother were in no ways favourable to the sisters, but he gave no utterance to the involuntary thoughts.

"Why, the Queen of Sheba has struck you dumb, brother Orville;" said the playful Jane "you have seen her to−day, I'm certain. That's the way she always comes over one. She has had on her cloudy cap to−day for your especial benefit."

"But have you seen her, brother?" asked the more timid Mary.

"To be sure he has don't you see? nothing less could make Orville look on us, as old Burke the schoolmasterused to look on him when he put the nouns and verbs out of countenance. He has seen her to be sure, and she came out clothed in thunder, I reckon."

"Jane, you vex Orville. But you did see her, brother?"

"Yes, Mary, Jane is right."

"Didn't I tell you? I could see it the moment I set eyes on him."

"And don't you think her very beautiful, brother?"

"Very beautiful, Mary."

"Yes! a sort of thunderstorm beauty, I grant you," said Jane "dark and dismal with such keen flashes of

lightning as to dazzle one's eyes and terrify one's heart."

"Not a bad description, Jane;" said the brother.

"To be sure not. Don't I know her? Why, Lord love you, the first time we were together I felt all crumpled up, body and soul. My soul indeed was like a little mouse looking every where for a hole to creep into and be out of the way of danger; and I fancied she was a great tigress of a mouser, with her eyes following the mouse every which way, amusing herself with my terrors, and ready to spring upon me and end them the moment she got tired of the sport. I assure you, I didn't feel secure a single moment while I was with her. I expected to be gobbled up at a moment's warning."

"How you run on, Jane, and so unreasonably," said the gentle Mary. "Now, brother, I think all this description very unlike Anna Cooke. That she's sad, usually, and gloomy sometimes, I'm willing to admit; but she was very kind and gentle in what she had to say to me, and I believe would have been much more so, if Jane hadn't continually came about us making a great laughter. That she is very smart, I'm certain, and that she is very beautiful every body with half an eye must see."

"I don't, and I've both eyes, and pretty keen ones too."

"Well, girls," said Beauchampe, "I intend that you shall have a good opportunity to form a correct opinion of Miss Cooke her talents and her beauty. I intend to carry you both to visit her to−morrow."

"Oh, don't, don't, brother, I beg you she 'll eat me up, the great mouser. I sha'n't be a moderate mouthful for her anger."

And the mischevious Jane darted from his side, and lifted up her hand with a manner of affected deprecation.

Mary rebuked her as was usual on such occasions, and her rebuke was somewhat seconded by one which was more effectual. The brother betrayed some little displeasure as well in words as in looks, and poor Jane contrived to make the amende by repressing some portion of that lively temerity of temper which is not always innocuous in its pleasantries. In this way they proceeded to the cottage where, in private, the young man contrived to let his mother know how much he was charmed with the mysterious lady, but not how much of his admiration he had revealed. On this head, indeed, he was as little capable as any body else of telling the whole truth. He knew not in fact what he had said. He had felt the impulse to say many things, and in his conscience felt that he might have said them; but of the precise nature of his confessions he knew nothing. Something, indeed, he might infer from what he recollected of the language of Anna Cooke to himself. He could easily comprehend that the freedom with which she declared her feelings must have been induced in great degree by the revelation of his own; but as he had not right and, by the way, as little wish to betray her secrets, so he naturally spared himself the mortification of telling his own. Thus matters stood with him. His mother listened gravely. She could see in the faltering tongue and flushed face of her son much more of the actual state of his feelings than his words declared. She was not satisfied that her son should fall in love with Miss Cooke; not that she had any thing against that young lady she had none of the idle prejudices of her eldest daughter but that young lady did not impress her favourably. Mrs. Beauchampe was a very pious lady, and the feeling of society is so nearly allied to that of pure religion, that when she found Anna Cooke deficient in the one tendency, she naturally suspected her equal lack of the other. But, in the next place, if the old lady had her objections to the young one, she, at the same time, was too fond of her son, to resist his wishes very long or very urgently. She contented herself with suggesting some grounds of objection which the ardency and eloquence of the latter found but little difficulty in overcoming. At all events it was arranged that Beauchampe should take hissisters the next day to visit his fair, and, so far, tyrannical enslaver.

From this visit Beauchampe, though without knowing exactly why, had considerable expectations. At least he did not despair of seeing the young lady. The old one politely kept sick, much, it may be added, to the annoyance of her daughter. The day came, and breakfast was scarcely over before the impetuous youth began to exhibit his anxiety. But the sisters had to make their toilet, and something, he fancied, was due to his own. A country girl has her own ideas of finery, and the difference of taste aside, the only other differences between herself and the city maiden, are differences in degree. The toilet is the altar where vanity not only makes her preparations but says her prayers. We care not to ask whether love be the image that stands above it or not. Perhaps there are few calculations of the young female heart, in which love does not enter as an inevitable constituent. Certainly, few of her thoughts are altogether satisfactory, if they bear not his figures in the woof. Beauchampe's sisters fairly put his patience to the test; and strange to say, his favourite sister, Mary, was much the most laggard in her proceedings. She certainly had never before made such an unnecessary fuss about her pretty little person. At length, however, all were made ready. The party sallied forth, reached the house of Mrs. Cooke, were admitted, and after a brief delay, the daughter entered the room, to a very quick march beaten by the heart of our ardent hero. But, though this accompaniment was so very quick, the entrance of Anna Cooke was calm, slow and dignified as usual. She received the party very kindly; and her efforts to please them while they stayed, seemed as natural and unconstrained as if the business of pleasing had been a habit of her life. Jane's apprehensions of being eaten up soon subsided, and the gentle Mary had the satisfaction of bringing about, by some inadvertent remark of her own, an animating conversation between her brother and the lovely hostess. We say animated conversation, but it must not be supposed that it was a lively one. The animation of the parties arose from their mutual earnestness of character. The sanguine temperament thus readily throws itself into the breach, and identifies itself with the most passing occasions. It was in this way that Beauchampefound himself engaged in a brief and pleasant discussion of one of those topics arising from books, in which the parties may engage with warmth, yet without endangering the harmony of the conference; even as a wild strain of music, from the rolling, rising organ, or the barbaric drum and saracenic trumpet, will make the heart thrill and throb again, with a sentiment of awe which yet it would be very loth not to have awakened. Beauchampe was perfectly ravished, the more particularly as he did not fail to see that Miss Cooke was evidently not insensible to the spirit and intelligence which he displayed in his share of the dialogue. The presence of the sisters, fortunately, had the effect of controlling the brother in the utterance of those passionate and personal feelings which had been forced, as it were, from his lips the day previous. Love was unspoken by either, and yet, most certainly, love was the only thought of one and, possibly, of both. But love is the most adroit of logicians. He argues his case upon the data and criteria of a thousand far less offensive topics. Religion, law, politics; art, science, philosophy; all subjects he will discuss as if he had no other purpose than to adjust their moot points and settle their vexing contrarieties. The only misfortune is that when he is done nay, while he is going on, one is apt to forget the subject in the orator. Special pleader that he is, in what a specialty all his labours terminate! When Anna Cooke and Orville Beauchampe separated that day, what of the argument did they remember. Each readily remembered that the speaker was most eloquent. Beauchampe could tell you that the fair debater was never so beautiful in person, so high and commanding in intellect before; and when Anna Cooke was alone, she found herself continually recalling to her mind's eye, the bright aspect and beaming eyes of the enthusiastic young lawyer. So earnest, so seemingly unconscious of himself as he poured forth the overflowing treasures of a warm heart, and a really well stored and vigorous intellect. She saw too, already, how deeply she had impressed herself upon his fancy. Beauchampe's heart had no disguises. Strange feelings rose into her own. Strange, terrible thoughts filled her mind; and the vague musings of her wild and scarcely coherent spirit, formed themselves into words upon her tongue.

"Is not this an avenger!" she muttered. "Is not this an avenger sent from heaven! I have striven in vain. I am fettered. It is denied to me to pursue and sacrifice the victim. Oh! surely woman is the image of all feebleness. These garments are its badges; and sanction obstruction and invite injustice. As I am, thus and here, what hope is there that vengeance can be mine. The conquest of this enthusiastic youth will afford me the freedom that I crave, the agent that I need, the sacrifice for which only I dream and pray. With him the victim may be sought and found wherever he hides himself, and this crushed heart shall once more rise in triumph this trampled pride be uplifted the pangs of this defrauded and lacerated bosom be soothed by the sacrifice of blood! And why should it not be so? Why? Do I live for any other passion? Do I entertain any other image in my soul? What is love, to

me, and fear, and hope, and joy, the world without and the world within what but a dark abode in which there is but one light one star, red and wild, a planet rising fiery at the birth of hate, only to set in blood, in the sacrifice of its victim. Here is one comes to me bearing the knife. He is mine, so declare his looks he loves me, so equally speak his words and actions. Shall I not use his love for my hate? What is his love to me? His love ha! ha! ha! His love indeed, the love of a young ambitious lawyer. Is it not rather the perfection of vengeance that I should employ one of the tribe for the destruction of another!

"But no, no! why should I involve this boy in my fate. Why should I make him my instrument in this wild purpose. He is not of the same brood though of that brotherhood. This youth is noble. He is too ardent, too impetuous for a deliberate design of evil. His soul is generous. He feels, he feels! he, at least, is no masked, no cold blooded traitor, serpent−like, crawling into the open and warm heart to beguile and sting. No, no! I must not wrong him thus. He must be spared this doom. I must brood over it alone, and let the fates work it as they may. Though, were he but half less ardent could I suspect him of a baseness, I should whet the dagger, and swear him to its use. Yes, at any altar, for that sacrifice, though that altar be the very one on which I was the sacrifice though it bear the name of love, and held above it his cruel and treacherous image!"

Such were the frequent meditations of the passionate and proud woman. Her mother prompted these not unfrequently without intending it. She, with the sagacity of an ancient dealer, soon discovered the sort of coin which Beauchampe was disposed to bring with him into Love's crowded market place. She readily detected in the unsophisticated manners of Beauchampe, the proper material on which it would be easy for her daughter to work. The intense, inflamable, impetuous nature was such as a single glance of those dark, bright eyes, a single sentence from that mellow, yet piercing, silvery, yet deep−toned voice, might light up with inextinguishable flame, might prompt with irresistable impulses. Of course, the old lady had no knowledge of the one absorbing passion which had became a mania in the breast of her daughter. Her calculations went no farther than to secure a son−in−law; but of this the daughter had no thought, only as it might be necessary to effect other objects. Her purpose was to find an avenger, if any thing; and even for this object, we have seen from her spoken meditations, she was yet too generous to seek for such an agent in one so unselfish, so true−hearted as Beauchampe had appeared. But the rough−hewing of events was not to be left either to mother, or daughter, however resolved and earnest might be the will which they severally or mutually exercised. The strongest of us, in the most earnest periods of our lives, move very much as the winds blow. It may hurt our vanity, but will do our real interests no harm to declare, that individual man is after all only a sort of moral vane on the world's housetop. If you find him stationary for any length of time be sure it is less from principle than rust.

CHAPTER XII.

So far, the pursuit of Beauchampe had seemingly been unproductive; but perseverance, where passion is the impelling power, will sooner or later work its way to the object which it seeks. We pass over numerous small detailswhich were yet important in bringing about our conclusion; and reach the period when the young lawyer was at length admitted to the house of Miss Cooke, as a friend of the family. Love, you are to understand, gentle reader, was an interdicted subject. But when would love stay interdicted? Can you tell? Not easily, I reckon. It did not stay so in this case. Time wrought favourably for Beauchampe; enabled him to show his resources of mind and character. Anna Cooke found him both abler in intellect, and gentler in disposition than she at first fancied him. It is one effort of love, to excite the sensibilities into the most commanding activity; to subdue the sharpnesses of character, even as it subdues the asperities of accent; to throw a softness into the eyes; a tenderness into the utterance, and, above all, so suddenly and certainly to lift the mind, that even the vulgar nature under its influence becomes modified, and the ignorant mind receives at least such an increase of intelligence as enables it to conceal its own deficiencies. Neither vulgar nor ignorant, Beauchampe was yet full of those salient points of character and manner, which betray the want of that refining attrition of a metropolis, which perhaps no other course of education can well supply. But love carries with it that instinct of good taste, that refinement becomes inevitable the moment it is put in exercise; and without his own consciousness, though it did not escape hers, our

hero, under the eyes of his mistress, underwent a rapid transition of character, from the rough, sturdy rustic, confident in his independence, and ignorant of more attractive qualities of behaviour, to the subdued, unostentatious gentleman, solicitous always of the sensibilities of those whom he addressed, and nicely considerate of that utterance, and those manners, which he now felt had never before been justly taught the beauties of forbearance. His improvement in this course of tuition was rapid. A few weeks made the most surprising changes in his deportment. His features and this fact is not unimportant to the psychologist, for it is as dear to all moral analysis, as it is of unquestionable result his very features became spiritualized, in the wonderful progress which the spiritual nature was making in his soul. Anna Cooke was not insensible to this change. Nay, she was not insensible to his devotedness. But how could she requite it? We have seen her reflections. They underwent no change.Nay, they grew stronger, by a natural tendency, as her interest in the young man increased. She resolved that he should not be sacrificed, and this resolve was the necessary parent of another. She could never give encouragement to the object of her present lover. She could never be his wife. No! she already felt too much interested in the youth, to use her own energetic language, uttered in midnight soliloquy "to dishonour him with her hand!" She was not conscious of the sigh which fell from her lips when this determination was spoken. She was not conscious, nor consequently apprehensive, of the progress which a new passion was making in her heart. That sigh had its signification, but that, though it fell from her own lips, was inaudible to her own ears.

Labouring under this unconsciousness with regard to her own feelings, it was perhaps not so great a stretch of magnanimity on her part to resolve that Beauchampe should not be permitted to serve her brooding hatred or to share in her secret sorrows. Such was her determination. One day he grew more warm in his approaches. Circumstances favoured his object, and the topics which they had discussed on previous occasions insensibly encouraged this. Suppressing his eagerness of manner, putting as much curb as he could on the impatient utterance which was only too habitual to him, where his feelings were excited, he strove, in the most deliberate form of address, to declare his passion, and to solicit her hand.

"Mr. Beauchampe," she said firmly "I thank you. I am grateful for this proof of your regard and attachment; and, in regretting it, I implore you not to suspect me of caprice, or a wanton desire to exercise the power which your unhappy preference confers on me. Nor am I insensible to your claims. Were it possible, sir, that I could ever marry, I know no one to whom I would sooner entrust my affections than to you. But there is an insuperable bar between us not to be broken not to be overpassed. Never! never! never!"

"Do not speak thus, dearest Miss Cooke. Spare me this utterance. What is the bar this insuperable bar, not to be broken, not to be overpassed. Trust me, it can be broken, it can be passed. What are the obstructions that true love cannot remove?"

"Not these! not these! It is impossible, sir. I do not deceive myself I would not deceive you but I assureyou, Mr. Beauchampe, that the truth I declare is no less solemn than certain. I can never listen to your prayer I can never become your wife; no! nor the wife of any man! The bar which thus isolates me from mankind, is, I solemnly tell you, impassable, and cannot be broken."

"Suffer me to strive it is not in me that your objections arise?"

"No! but "

"Then suffer me to try and overcome this difficulty remove this bar."

"It will be in vain, sir you would strive in vain."

"Not so! declare it say in what it consists, and believe me, if such talents as are mine, such toils as man can devote, with such a reward awaiting him as that which my success would secure for me, can effect an object, I

must succeed. Speak to me freely, Miss Cooke. Show me this bar, this obstacle "

"Never! never! There, at once, the difficulty rises. I cannot, dare not reveal it. Ask no more, I entreat you; I should have foreseen this, and commanded it otherwise. I have suffered your attentions too long, Mr. Beauchampe, for your own sake let me forbid them now. They can never come to good. They can have no fruits. Here, before heaven, which I invoke to hear me, I can never be "

"Stay! do not speak it!" he exclaimed passionately catching her uplifted hand, and silencing, by his louder accent, the word upon her lips. "Stay, Miss Cooke! be not too hasty be not rash in this decision. I implore you for your sake and mine. Hear me calmly resume your seat but for a few moments. I will strive to be calm; but only hear me."

He led her to a seat which she resumed with that air of recovered dignity and stern composure which shows a mind made up and resolute. He was terribly agitated in spite of all his efforts at composure. His eyes trembled and his lips quivered, and the movements of his frame were almost convulsive. But he also was a man of strong will. But for his youth he had been as inflexible as herself. He recovered himself sufficiently to speak to her in tones surprisingly coherent, and with a degree of thoughtfulness, which showed how completely determined will could control the utterance even of extraordinary passion.

"Hear me, Miss Cooke. I can see that there is a mysteryabout you which I do not seek to penetrate. You have your secret. Let it be so still. I love you, deeply, passionately, as I never fancied it was possible for me or any man to love. This passion rends my frame, distracts my mind makes it doubtful if I could endure life in its denial. I have seen you only to worship you lost to me, I lose faith as well as hope. I no longer know my divinities I no longer care for life, present or future. Do not suppose I speak wildly. I believe all I say. It must be as I say it. Now, hear me; to avoid this fate, I am willing to risk many evils dangers that might affright the ordinary man under the ordinary feelings of man. You spoke the other day of having but a single passion which was not love! "

"Hate!" she interrupted him to say.

"Hate, it was, and that gave birth to another not unlike it."

"Revenge! yes! Revenge!" such was her second interruption. He proceeded.

"I understand something of this. You have been wronged. You have an enemy. I will seek him. I will be your champion die for you if need be only tell me that you will be mine."

"Will you, indeed, do this?"

She rose, approached him, laid her hand on his arm, and looked into his eyes with a keen, fixed, fixing and fascinating glance like that of a serpent. Her tones were very low, very audible, but how impressive. They sunk not into his ear, but into his heart, and a cold thrill followed them there. Before he could reply, however, she receeded from him, sunk again into her seat, and covered her face in her hands. He approached her. She waved him off.

"Leave me, Mr. Beauchampe leave me now and forever. I cannot hear you. I will not. I need not your help. You cannot revenge me."

"I will! I can! Your enemy shall be mine I will pursue him to the ends of the earth. But give me his name."

"No! you shall not," she said with apparent calmness. "Thus I reject your offer your double offer. I will not wrong your generosity your love, Beauchampe, by a compliance with your prayer. Leave me now, and O! come not to me again. I would rather not see you. I pity you deeply, sincerely but, no more. Leave me now leave me for ever."

He sunk on his knee beside her. He clasped her hand and carried it passionately to his lips. She rose, and withdrew it from his grasp.

"Rise, Beauchampe," she said in subdued but firm accents. "Let it lessen your disappointment to know that if I could ever be the wife of any man, you should have the preference over all. I believe your soul to be noble. I do not believe you would be guilty of a baseness. Believing this I will not abuse your generosity. You are young. You speak with the ardour of youth; and with the same ardour, you feel for the moment the disappointment of youth. The same glow of feeling will enable you to overcome them. You will forget me very soon. Let me entreat you for your own sake to do so. Henceforward I will assist you in the effort. I will not see you again."

A burst of passionate deprecation and appeal answered this solemn assurance, but did not affect her decision. He rose, again endeavoured to grasp and detain her hand, but she broke away with less dignity of movement than usual, and had not the eyes of the youth been blinded by his own weaknesses, he might have seen the big tear in hers, which she fled precipitately only to conceal.

CHAPTER XIII.

From this period Miss Cooke studiously withheld her presence from the eyes of her infatuated lover. In vain did he return day after day to her dwelling. His only reception was accorded by the mother, whose garrulity was considerably lessened in the feeling of disappointment which the course of her daughter necessarily inspired in her mind. She had had her own plans, which, as she knew the firmness of her daughter's character, she could not but be convinced were effectually baffled. To her Beauchampe declared himself, but from her he received no encouragement except that which was contained in her own consent, which, as he had already discovered, did not by any means imply that of the one object whose consent was every thing. The old woman pleaded in secret the passion of the young man, but she pleaded fruitlessly. Her petition became modified into one soliciting only her daughter's consent to receive him as before; and to induce this consent the more readily, Beauchampe pledged himself not to renew the subject of love. But Anna Cooke now knew the value of such pledges. She also knew, by this time, the danger to herself of again meeting with one whose talents and worth she had already learned to admire. The feeling of prudence grew stronger as her impressions in his favour were increased. This contradiction of character is not of common occurrence. But the position of Anna Cooke was not only a painful but a peculiar one. To suffer her affections to become involved with Beauchampe was only to increase her difficulties and mortifications. She felt that it would be dishonorable to accept him as a husband without revealing her secret, and that revealed, it would be very doubtful whether he would be so willing to take her as his wife. This was a dilemma which she naturally feared to encounter. We do not say, that she did not also share in those feelings of disappointment and denial under which Beauchampe so greatly suffered. The sadness increased upon her countenance, and softened its customary severity. She felt the darker passions of her mind flickering like some sinking candleflame, and growing daily more feeble under the antagonist feeling of another of very different character. The dream of hate and vengeance which for five years had been, however baneful to her heart, a source of strength to her frame, grew nightly less vivid, and less powerful over her imagination; and hopeless as she was of love, she trembled lest the other passions which, however strangely, had yielded her solace for so long a time, should abandon her also. For such a nature as that of Anna Cooke, some strong food was necessary. There must be some way to exercise and employ those deep desires and earnest spiritings of her mind, which else would madden and destroy her. It became necessary to recall her hates, to renew her vows and prayers of vengeance, to concentrate her thoughts anew on the bloody sacrifice which she had so long meditated in secret. But this was no easy task. The image of Beauchampe came between her eyes and that of the one victim whose destruction alone

she sought. Thenoble, generous, devoted countenance of the one, half obliterated the wily, treacherous visage of the other. The perpetual pleadings of the mother contributed to present this obstacle to her mind. To escape from this latter annoyance, and, if possible, evade the impression, which, in softening her feelings, had obliterated some of her hates, she renewed a practice which she had for some time neglected. She might be seen every morning stealing from the cottage and taking her way to the cover of the adjacent forests. Here, hidden from all eyes, she buried herself in the religious solitude. What feelings filled her heart, what fancies vexed her mind, what striving forms of love and hate, conflicted in her fancy, we may perhaps conjecture; but there, alone, save with the images of her thought, she wasted the vacant hours; drawing her soul's strength from that bitter weed of hate, the worst moral poison which the immortal soul could ever cherish.

With Beauchampe the sorrow was not less, and there was less to strengthen; but that little was not of so dangerous a quality. He felt the pang of denial, but the bitterness of hate had never yet blighted the young, green leaves of his youthful affections. He was unhappy, but not desperate. Still he could not but see, in the course taken by Anna Cooke, a character of strength and inflexibility, which rendered all prospects of future success, which looked to her, extremely doubtful. There had been no relaxing in her rigour. The mother, whose own sympathy with his cause was sufficiently obvious, had shown its hopelessness, even when she most encouraged him to persevere. Perseverance had taught him the rest of a hard lesson and the young lover, in his first love, now trembled to find himself alone!

Alone! and such a loneliness. The affections of mother and sisters no longer offered solace or companionship to his heart. They no longer spoke to his affections. Their words fell upon his ears only to startle and annoy; their gentle smiles were only so many gleams of cold, mocking moonlight scattered along the dreary seas of passion in his soul. He felt that he could not live after this fashion, for he had still a hope a hope just sufficiently large to keep him doubtful. Anna Cooke had declared that her scruples were not to him. The bar which severed her from him was that which severed her from man. Butfor that such was her own assurance "he should be preferred to all others whom she knew."

That bar! What was it? Beauchampe was not sufficiently experienced in the history of the passions, to conjecture what that obstacle might be. He fancied, at the utmost, that her affections might have been slighted; he knew but chiefly from books which are not always correct in such matters that women did not usually forgive such an offence. Betrothed, she might have been deserted perhaps with insult and this, he readily thought, might amply justify the fierce spirit of vengeance which she breathed. Or, it might be that she had been born to fortune, and had been wronged and robbed, by some wily villain, of her possessions. Something of this, he fancied he had gathered from the garrulous details of the mother. But even were these conjectures true, still there was nothing in them to establish such a barrier as Anna Cooke insisted on, between his passion and herself. Blinded as he was by his preference, and, in his own simple innocence of heart, overlooking the only reasonable mode by which such a mystery could be solved, the truly wretched youth became hourly more so. Failing to find his way to her presence, he resorted to that process of pen, ink and paper, which Heloïse insists was designed by Heaven expressly for the use of such wretches as Beauchampe and herself, and his soul poured itself forth upon his sheet with all the burning effluence of the most untameable affection. Page after page grew beneath his hands every line a keen arrow from the bended bow of passion, and shot directly at the heart. To borrow the phraseology of the old Spanish teachers of the estilo culto, if his tears wet the paper, the heat of his words dried it as soon. Beauchampe spoke from his soul and it penetrated to hers. But though she felt and suffered, she was unmoved. Her reply was firm and characteristic.

"Noble young man, leave me and be happy. Depart from this place; seek me, see me, think of me, no more! Why should you share a destiny like mine? Obey your own. It calls you elsewhere. If it is just to you, it will be lofty and honourable; if not, at least it will spare you any participation in one so dreary as is mine. Go, I implore you, and cease to endure the anguish which youstill inflict. Go, forget me and be happy. Yet, if not, take with you as the saddest consolation I can give, the assurance that you leave behind you a greater suffering than you bear away. If, as you tell me, the arrow rankles in your heart, believe me there is an ever−burning fire which encircles mine. I

have not even the resource of the scorpion, not, at least, until, my 'desperate fang' has done its work on another brain than my own. Then, indeed, the remedy were easy; at all events where life depends upon resolution, one can count its allotted minutes in the articulations of a drowsy pulse. Once more, noble young man, I thank you; once more I implore you to depart. I will not send you my blessings I will not endanger your safety by a prayer of mine. Yet I could pray for you, Beauchampe. I believe you worthy of the blessings, and perhaps you would not be injured by the prayer of one so desolate as I."

This letter, so far from baffling his ardour, was calculated to increase it. He hurried once more to the dwelling of Mrs. Cooke; but only to meet a repulse.

"Tell him, I cannot and will not see him!" was the inflexible reply; and the mother was not insensible to the struggle which shook the majestic soul and form of the speaker in uttering these few words. In a paroxysm of passion, most like frenzy, Beauchampe darted from the dwelling. That day he rambled in the woods, scarcely conscious of his course, quite unconscious of any object. The next, taking his gun with him by way of apology, he passed in the same manner. And thus for two days more. Somewhat more composed by this time, his violent mood gave way to one of a more contemplative character; but the shadows of the forest were even more congenial to the disconsolate than the desperate. They afforded him the only protection and companionship which he sought in either of his moods. Here he wandered, giving himself up to the dreary conviction which swells every young man's heart, when first loving, he seems to love in vain, that the sun of hope was set for him for ever; and henceforth, earth was little more than a place of tombs the solemn cypress, and the Druid mistletoe, its most fitting decorations; while, under each of its deceptive flowers, care, and pain, and agony, lay harboured in the forms of gnat, and wasp, and viper, ready to dart forth upon any thoughtless hand that stoops to pluck the beauty of which they might fitly be held the bane.

But, it was not Beauchampe's destiny, as Anna Cooke had fancied, to escape from hers. In vain had she striven to save him from it. He was one not to be saved. Mark the event. To escape him perhaps dreading that her strength might fail, at some moment, to resist his prayer to see and speak with her; and tired of her mother's constant pleading in behalf of her suitor she fled from the house, and, as we have seen, stole away, day by day, to lonely places, dark, gloomy, and tangled, such as the wounded deer might seek out, in his last agonies, in which to die in secret. We have seen already what has been the habit of Beauchampe in this respect. His woodland musings had not been without profit. Assured now of the hopelessness of his pursuit from the stern and undeviating resolution which the lady of his love had shown, at every attempt which he made to overcome her determination; he, at length, with a heavy heart, concluded to adopt her counsel and to fly from a scene in which disappointment had humbled him, and where all his most acute feelings were kept in a state of most painful irritation. But, before this, he again addressed her by letter. His words were brief.

"I shall soon leave this place. I shall obey you. Yet, let me see you once more. Vouchsafe me one look upon which my heart may brood in its banishment. Let me see that dear image let me hear that voice that voice of such sweet sorrow. Do not deny me this prayer. Do not; for in leaving you, dearest, but most relentless woman, I would not carry with me at the last moment, to disturb the holier impression which you have made upon my soul, a feeling of the injustice of yours. With a heart hopeless and in the dust, I implore you. Do not reject my prayer. Do not deny me let me once more behold you, and I will be then better prepared to rush away to the crowded haunts of life, or it may be the more crowded haunts of death. Life and death! ah! how naturally the words come together. You have rendered their signification little in my ears. You, you only. Yet I ask you not now to reverse the doom. Is not my prayer sufficientlyhumble? I ask you not to spare, not to spare, not to save; only to soothe the pangs of that departure which you command, and which seems little less than death to me. On my knees, I implore you. Let me see you but once once more let me once more hear your voice, though I hear nothing after."

To this, the answer was immediate, but the determination was unchanged. It said:

"I may seem cruel, but I am kind to you. Oh! believe me. It will console me under greater suffering than any I can inflict, to think that you do believe me. I am a woman of wo born to it with no escape from my destiny. The sense of happiness, neverthelesss, is very strong within me. Were it not impossible that I could do you wrong, I could appreciate the generous love you proffer me. I feel that I could do it justice. But terror and death attend my steps, and influence the fortunes of all who share in mine. I would save you from these, and worse! You need not to be told that there are worse foes to the proud, fond heart, than either death or terror. Fancy what these may be, and fly from me as from one whose touch is contagion whose breath is bondage whose conditions of communion are pangs, and trials, and shame! Do not think I speak wildly. No, Beauchampe, you little dream with what painful inflexibility I bend myself to the task of saying thus much. Spare me and yourself any further utterance. Go, and be happy. You are yet young, very young. Perhaps you know not that I am older than you. Not much, yet how much. Oh! I have so crowded moments with events feelings, the events of the heart that I am grown suddenly old. Old in youth. I am like the tree you sometimes meet flourishing, green at the top while in the heart sits death and decay, and, perhaps, gloomier tenants beside. These I cannot escape, I cannot survive. But you have only one struggle before you. You have suffered one disappointment. It will disturb you for a while, but not distress you long. You will find love where you do not seek it happiness, which you could never find with me. Go, Beauchampe, for your sake, I deny your prayer. I will not see you. Donot upbraid me in your soul, nor by your lips. Alas! you know not how hard is the struggle which I have to say so much. You know not from what a bondage this struggle saves you. My words shall not call you back. No looks of mine shall beguile you. Be you free, Beauchampe! free and happy! If you could but guess the temptation which I overcome the vital uses which your love could be to me, and which I reject, you would thank me oh! how fervently and bless me would I could say, how justly! Farewell! Let it be for ever, Beauchampe! Farewell! farewell for ever!"

CHAPTER XIV.

Beauchampe sat, sad and silent, in a corner of one low chamber in his mother's cottage. The family were all present. There was an expression in every face that sympathized with his own. All were sad and gloomy. A painful reserve, so strange hitherto in that little family of love, oppressed the spirits of all. They were aware of the little success which followed his course of wooing. They, perhaps, did not regret the loss so much as the disappointment of one whom they so much loved. With the exception of little Mary Beauchampe, Anna Cooke had not taken captive the fancy of either of the ladies. Jane positively feared and disliked her, with the natural hostility which a person of light mind always entertains for one of intensity and character. Mrs. Beauchampe's objections were of another kind; but she had seen too little of their object, and was too willing to promote her son's wishes, to attach much importance to them. She had derived them rather from the casual criticisms of persons en passant, than from any thing which she herself had seen. It would have been no hard matter for Beauchampe, had he been successful in his suit, to reconcile all the parties to his marriage. That he was unhappy in his refusal, made them so; and the feeling was the more painful as the event had made Beauchampe determine to depart on the ensuing day. He felt the necessity of doing so. Active life, the strifes of the politician, the triumphsof the forum, were at hand, offering him alternatives, if not atonements. In the whirl of successive performance, and in scenes that demand promptitude of action, he felt that he could alone dissipate the spell, or at least endure its weight with dignity, which the charms of Anna Cooke had imposed upon him. It may be supposed that the distress of the little family made the scene dull. Much was said, and much was in the language of complaint. Poor Mary wept with a keen sense of disappointment, more like that of her brother than any one. Jane muttered her upbraidings of the "scornful, high−headed, frowsy Indian Queen, who was too conceited to see that Orville was ten thousand times too good a match for such as she;" while Mrs. Beauchampe, with the usual afflicting philosophy of age which has survived passion, discoursed largely on the very encouraging text which counsels us to draw our consolation from our very hopelessness. Pretty counsel, with a vengeance! Beauchampe thought it so.

The torturous process to which these occasional remarks and venerable counsels subjected him, drove him forth at

an early hour after dinner. Once more he traversed the woods in moody meditation. He inly resolved that he should see them the last time. With this resolve he determined to pay a personal visit to the spot where, at his coming, he had obtained the first sight of the woman, who, from that moment, had filled his sight entirely. He followed the sinuous course of the woods, slowly, moodily, chewing the cud of sad and bitter thought alone. His passion was in its subdued phase. There is a moment of recoil in the excited heart, when the feelings long for repose. There is a sense of exhaustion a dread of further strife and excitement, the very thought of which makes us shudder; and the one conviction over all which fills the mind, is that we could willingly lay ourselves down in the shady places, none near, and sleep sleep the long sleep, in which there are no such tortures and tumults. Such were the feelings of Beauchampe, and thus languid, from this recoil, in the overcharged sensibilities, he went slowly forward, with a movement that denoted quite as much feebleness as grief. He was already buried in the thick woods he fancied himself alone when, suddenly, he heard a pistol shot. He started, witha sudden recollection of a like sound, which had attracted his ears on his first approach to the same neighbourhood. The coincidence was at least a strange one. He now determined to find out the practitioner. He paused for a few moments, and looked about him. He was not exactly sure of the quarter whence the sound proceeded; but he moved forward cautiously and at a venture. Suddenly, he paused! He discovered, at a distance, the person of the very woman whom he had been so long seeking; she, whose obduracy denied him even the boon of a last look and farewell accent. His first impulse was to rush forward. A second and different impulse was forced on him by what he saw. To his astonished eyes she bore in her hands a pistol. He watched her while she loaded if. He saw her level it at a tree, and pull the trigger with unhesitating hand. The bark flew on every side, betraying, by the truth of her aim, at a considerable distance, the constancy of her practice.

Beauchampe could contain himself no longer. He now rushed forward. A faint cry escaped her as she beheld him. She dropped the pistol by her side, clasped and covered her face with her hands and staggered back a few paces. But before Beauchampe reached her, she had recovered, and picking up the pistol, she came forward. Her eye sparkled with an expression which showed something like resentment. Her voice was abrupt and sharp.

"You rush on your fate!" she exclaimed. "Why, Beauchampe, do you thus pursue me, and risk your own destruction?"

"At your hand, it is welcome!" he exclaimed, mistaking her meaning.

"I mean not that!" she replied.

"But you inflict it!"

"No! no!" impatiently. "I do not. I have prayed against it would spare you that and every risk; but you will it otherwise! You rush on your fate, and if you dare, Beauchampe mark me! If you dare it is at your option. Heretofore, I have striven for you and against myself; but you have forced yourself upon my privacy you have sought to fathom my secrets, and it is now necessary that you should bear the penalty of forbidden knowledge!"

"Have I not supplicated you for these penalties? Ah! what pain inflicted by your hand would not be pleasure!"

"You love me? I believe you, Beauchampe, but the secret of my soul, is the deathblow to your love. Ah! spare me, even now I would have you spare me. Go leave me for ever; put no faith into a mystery, which must shock you to hear, shame me to speak, and leads, if it drives you not hence with the speed of terror leads you to sorrow and certain strife, and possibly the cruelest doom."

"Speak! I brave all! I am your bondsman your slave declare the service let me break down these barriers which divide us."

He caught her hand passionately in his as he spoke, and pressed it to his lips. She did not withdraw it.

"Beauchampe!" she said, with solemnity, fixing her dark, deep−glancing eyes upon his face "Beauchampe! I will not swear you! You shall hear the truth, and still be free. Know then that you clasp a dishonoured hand!"

The terrible words were spoken. The effect was instantaneous. He dropped the hand which he had grasped. A burning flush crimsoned the face of the woman; an instant after it was succeeded by the paleness of death.

"I knew it!" she exclaimed, bitterly, and with cruel keenness of utterance. "I knew that it would come to this. God! this is thy creature, man! In his selfishness he destroys, in his selfishness he shames us. He pries into our hearts to declare their weakness to point out their spots, to say, see how I can triumph over, and trample upon!"

"Anna!" exclaimed Beauchampe in husky accents, "speak not thus think not thus give me but a moment's time for thought. I was not prepared for this."

The young man looked like one in a dream. A ghastly expression marked his eyes. His lips were parted, the muscles of his mouth were convulsed.

"Nay, sir, it needs not. Your curiosity is satisfied. There is nothing more."

"Yes!" he exclaimed, "there is!"

"There is!" she answered promptly. "To clasp the dishonoured hand and take from its grasp the instrumentof its vengeance. In few words, Beauchampe, this hand can only be yours, under one condition. Dishonoured though it is, I tell you, sir, never yet did woman subject man to more terrible conditions as the price of her love."

"I take the hand!" he said "ere the condition is spoken."

"No, Beauchampe, that cannot be. You shall never say that I deceived you. As I shall insist on the fulfilment of the condition, so it is but fair that you be not hooded when you pledge yourself to its performance."

She withdrew the hand, which he offered to take, from his contact.

"This dishonoured hand is pledged to vengeance on him who blackened it with shame. Hence its practice with the weapon of death. Hence the almost daily practice of the last five years. Here, in these woods, I pursue a sort of devotion, where Hate is the deity Vengeance the officiating priest. I have consecrated my life to this one object. He who takes my hand must adopt my pledge must devote himself also to the work of vengeance!"

He seized it, and took the weapon from its grasp, with the pistol lifted to heaven, he exclaimed

"The oath! I am ready!"

Tears gushed from her eyes. She spoke in subdued accents.

"Five long years have I toiled with this delusive dream of vengeance! But what can woman do? Where can she seek, how find her victim? Think you, Orville Beauchampe, that if I could have met my enemy, I would have challenged the aid of man to do this work of retribution? In my own soul was the strength there is no feminine feebleness of nerve in this eye and arm! I should have shot and struck ah! Christ!"

She sunk to the ground with a spasm, which was the natural effect of such passions working on such a temperament. The desperate youth knelt down beside her in an agony of equal passion and apprehension. He drew her to his breast, he glued his lips to her cheeks, scarcely conscious that she was lifeless all the while. Her swoon however was momentary only. She recovered even while he was playing the madman in his

fondness.Refusing his assistance and pushing him from her, she staggered up, exclaiming, in piercing, trembling accents:

"What have I done what have I said?"

"Given me happiness, dearest," he replied, attempting to take her hand.

"No, Beauchampe," she answered, "let me understand myself before I seek to understand you. I am scarcely able though!" and as she spoke, she pressed her hands upon her eyes with an expression of pain.

"You are still sick!" he observed apprehensively.

"I am in pain, Beauchampe, not sick. I am used to these spasms. Do not let them alarm you. They are not deadly, and if they were, I should not consider them dangerous. I know not well what I have said to you, Beauchampe, before this pain; but as I never have these attacks unless the agony of mind becomes too intense for one to bear and live, I conclude that I have told you all. You know my secret my shame!"

"I know that you are the noblest hearted woman that ever lived!" he exclaimed rapturously.

"Do not mock me, Beauchampe," she answered mildly. "Speak not in language of such extravagance. You cannot speak too soberly for my ears, you cannot think too soberly for your own good. You have heard my secret. You have forced me to declare my shame! You had no right to this secret. Was it not enough that I told you that the barrier was impassable between us? Did I not swear it solemnly?"

"It is not impassable."

"It is!"

"No!" he exclaimed with looks and accents equally decisive "this is no barrier. You have been wronged your confidence has been abused. That I understand. I care not to know more. I believe you to be all that is pure and honourable now; and, in this faith, I am all yours. In this faith I pray you to be mine."

"Beauchampe! this is not all! Mere love, though it be such as yours simple faith, though so generous and confiding these do not suffice. The food is sweet but it has little nutriment. My soul is already familiar with higher stimulants. It needs them it cannot do without them. I do not ask the man who makes me his wife, to believe only that I can be true to him and will! I demand something more than a confidence like this, Beauchampe; my husband must avenge my dishonour. This is the condition of my hand. Dishonoured as it is, it has a heavy price. He must devote his life to the work of retribution. To this he must swear himself."

"I am already sworn to it. The moment which revealed your wrong, bound me only as your avenger. You shall only point to your enemy "

"Ah! Beauchampe, could I have done so, I should have needed not to stain your hands with his blood. But he eludes my sight. I hear no where of him. He is as if he had never been."

"His name!" said Beauchampe.

"You shall know all," she replied, motioning him to a seat beside her on the trunk of a fallen tree. "You shall know all, Beauchampe; from first to last. It is due to you that nothing should be withheld."

"Spare yourself, dearest;" said Beauchampe tenderly. "Tell me nothing, I implore you, but the name of your enemy, and what may be necessary for the work of vengeance."

"I will tell you all. It is my pride that I should not spare myself. It is due to my present self to show that I am not blind to the weaknesses of my former nature. It is due to what I am to convince you that I can never again be what I have been. Oh! Beauchampe, I have meditated often and sadly since I have known you, the necessity of making this revelation. At our first meeting my heart said to myself, 'the love by which I was betrayed, has at length sent me an avenger!' I saw it in your instant glances in the generous earnestness of your looks and tones in the fervent expression of your eye in the frank impetuous nature of your soul! But I said to myself, 'I will deny myself this avenger. I will reject the instinct that tells me he is sent as one. Why should I involve this noble young man in a fate so desperate and sad as mine? It shall not be!' With this resolve I strove against you. Nay, Beauchampe, I confess to you farther, that, even when my will strove most against you, my heart was most earnest in your favour. With my increasing regard for you, grew my reluctance to involve you in my doom. The conflict was close and trying; and then, when the strife in my mind was greatest, I meditated what I should reveal to you. I went overthat long and cruel memory in the deep silence of these woods in the deeper silence of midnight in my chamber; I could not escape from the stern necessity which compelled the remembrance of those moments of bitterness and shame. By frequent recall they have been revived in all their burning freshness; every art of the traitor the blind steps by which I fell the miserable mockeries which deluded me; and the shame which, like a lurid cloud, dusk and fiery, has ever since hung before my eyes. All this I can relate, his crime and my folly, nor omit one fraction which is necessary to the truth."

"But why tell all this, dearest. Let it be forgotten, let all be forgotten except the name of the villain whom it is allotted me to destroy."

"Forgotten! It cannot be forgotten. Nay, more, it is a duty to remember it, that the vengeance may not sleep. Beauchampe, I have lived for years on this one thought. By recalling these bitter memories that thought was fed. Do not persuade me to forget them. You know not how much of life depends on the sustenance which thought derives from this copious but polluted fountain. Deprive me of this sustenance and I perish. Deny me to declare all, and I can speak nothing. I cannot curb my nature when I will; and where would you gather the fuel of anger should I barely say to you that one Alfred Stevens, an artful stranger from a distant city, found me a simple vain child among the hills, and practising on my vanity, overcame my strength. This would serve but little in rousing that fierce fire of hate within you which sometimes, even in my own bosom, burns quite too faintly to be effectual. No, no! you shall witness the progress of the criminal. You shall see how he spun his web around my path my soul! by what mousing cunning he contrived to pull down a wing whose feeblest fancy, in those unconscious days, was above the mountains and striving ever for the clouds. You shall see the daily record of its spasms, which my misery has made. To feel my struggle, you must share in it from the first."

He took her hand in his, and prepared to listen.

"You will feel my hand tremble," said she; "the flush may suffuse my cheek; for oh! do not suppose I tell this tale willingly. No! I cannot help but tell it. An instinct, which I dare not disobey, commands me; and truly, whenI think of the instinct that told me you would come, made you known to me as the avenger when you did come, and has forced you thus upon my secret, as it were, I almost feel a holy sentiment in the compulsion which makes me tell you all. It feels like a solemn duty. It must be so! A power beyond my own has willed it the same power is beside us, Beauchampe I feel it even now. He will know that I speak nothing but the truth! He will endow me with strength to tell it all."

CHAPTER XV.

The story was told. The proud−spirited woman, moved, as she fancied, by some supernatural influence, did not

spare herself. There was no glozing artifice of suggestion to soften the darker colours, to conceal the real characteristics of her heart; its follies, or faults, or foibles. When she had finished, Beauchampe clasped her in his arms. He felt that his passion had undergone increase. He was no longer master of himself. Her superior will had already made its presence felt in every impulse of his soul!

What a change had been effected in a few hours. Beauchampe returned to his mother and sisters, a newly excited man. We do not call him happy. We would not misuse that word, as we fear it is too frequently misused. But, if a man in a pleasant delirium may be considered happy, then he was! But happiness is scarcely consistent with an intense passion, excited sleeplessly in the quest of a single object. Beauchampe had won the woman whom he sought. In her, he had not deceived himself. She was the woman among a thousand, which he thought her from the first. But, though he exulted, his mind wandered, and his eyes were fixed and heavy. There was yet a dark and threatening cloud in his otherwise bright atmosphere. Was that cloud a presentiment? Was it the dark sign of that fierce condition of hate which had been prescribed by love? Could love prescribe such condition? Was it possible for that meeksentiment so holy, so certainly from heaven, so celestial an element in the economy of heaven was it possible for such a sentiment, so openly to toil in behalf of its most deadly antipathy? Love labouring for hate! It well might bring a cloud into the moral atmosphere of Beauchampe's soul, when he thought of these conditions.

And yet Anna Cooke had really learned to love Beauchampe. There is nothing contradictory or strange in this. We have painted badly, unless the reader is prepared for such a seeming caprice in her character as this. She is, whatever may be her boast, scarcely wiser than when she was sixteen. All enthusiasm and earnestness, she was all confidence then. She is so still. Her impressions are sudden and decided. She sees that Beauchampe is generous and noble−minded. She has discerned the loyalty of his character and the liberality of his disposition. She finds him intellectual. His frankness wins upon her his unqualified devotion does the rest. She sees in him the agent of that wild passion which had kept goading her without profit before; and Love, in reality, avails himself of a very simple artifice to affect his purposes. It is Love that insinuates to her here comes your avenger; and, deceived by him, she obeys one passion when, at the time, she really fancies she is toiling in behalf of its antagonist.

See the further argument, felt, not expressed of this wily logician! He suggests to her that it is scarcely possible that Beauchampe will ever be called upon to fulfil his fearful pledges. For where is the betrayer? For five years had the name been unspoken in the ears of his victim. For five years he had eluded all traces of herself and friends. He was gone, as if he had not been; and the presumption was strong that he was of some very distant region that he would be very careful to avoid that neighbourhood, hereafter, in which his crime had been committed; and as, in equal probability, the lot was cast which made this limited scene the whole world of Beauchampe's future life, so it followed that they would never meet that the trial to which she had sworn him, would never be exacted; and, subdued by time, and the absence of the usual excitements, the pang would be softened in her heart, the recollection would gradually fade from her memory, and life would once more be a progress of comparativepeace, and probably of innocent enjoyment. It is an adroit, and not an infrequent policy of Love, to make his approaches under the cover of a flag, which none is so pleased to trample under foot as he. He knows the usual practices of war, and has no conscientious scruples in the employment of an ordinary ruse. The drift of his policy was not seen by the mind of Anna Cooke; but it was, though less obvious than some of her instincts, not the less an instinct. Nay, more certainly an instinct; for it was of the emotions, while those of which she had spoken to Beauchampe were nothing more than the suggestions of monomania. Her imagination, brooding ever on the same topic, was always on the watch to convert all objects into its agents; and never more ready than when Love, coming forward with his suggestions, lent that seeming aid to his enemy which was really intended for his overthrow. It was only when she became the wife of Beauchampe that she became aware of the true nature of those feelings which had brought about her marriage. It was after the tie was indissolubly knit after he had pressed his lips to hers with a husband's kiss, that she was made conscious of the danger to herself from the performance of the conditions to which he was pledged. The fear of his danger first taught her that it was love, and not the mere passion for revenge which had wrought within her from the moment when she

first met him. The moment she reflected upon the risk of life to which he was sworn, that moment awakened in her bosom the full appreciation of his worth. Then, instead of urging upon him the subject of his oath, she shuddered but to think upon it; and, in her prayers for she suddenly had learned to pray she implored that the trial might be spared him, to which, previously, her whole soul had entirely been surrendered. But she prayed in vain, possibly because she had learned to pray so lately. Ah! how easy would be all lessons of good, how easy of attainment and of retention, did we only learn to pray sufficiently soon. The habit of prayer is so sure to induce humility, and humility is, after all, and before all, one of the most certain sources of that divine strength, arising from love and justice, which sustains the otherwise falling and fearful world of our grovelling humanity. The wife of Beauchampe prayed beside him while he slept. Sheprayed for mercy. She prayed against that fatal oath. Far better such was her thought that the criminal should escape for ever than that his hands should carry the dagger of the avenger. She now, for the first time, recognised the solemn force, the terrible emphasis in the divine assurance "Vengeance is mine!" saith the Lord. She was now willing that the Lord should exercise his sovereign right.

They were man and wife. The bond was fastened for good and evil; and, in the novel joy of his situation, Beauchampe lost sight of days, and weeks, and months. Happiness soon makes the mind idle, and it was necessary that our hero should be awakened from his dream of delight. Law and politics were alike forgotten. He could have mused away life, nor been conscious of its passage, there amid groves of unbroken shade, with the one companion. Her voice was the sweetness of its birds, her speech was the divine philosophy which would not have been unworthy of utterance among the oaks of Dodona. Her soul, aroused by the sympathy of an ear which she wished to please, never poured forth richer strains of eloquence and song. Surely they were not unhappy then!

One day a letter was put into Beauchampe's hands. He read it with a cloudy brow.

"No bad news, Beauchampe?" was the remark of his wife.

"Yes, I am to leave you for awhile. Read that."

He handed her the letter as he spoke. She read as follows:

"Dear Beauchampe.

"The campaign has opened with considerable vigour, and the sooner you come to the rescue the better. This fellow, Calvert, is said to be doing execution. At he carried all before him. He will meet the people at Bowling Green on the 7th. You must contrive to meet us there; or, shall I take you in my way down? Barnabas comes with me insists that we shall need every help, and has really contrived to make me a little apprehensive that we have been remiss, from too much confidence. This man, Calvert, is said to be a giant. Barnabas thinks him one of the most popular orators we haveever had. He has a fine voice, excellent manners, is very fluent, and has his argument at his finger ends. I cannot think that I have any reason to fear him whenever I can meet with him in person. But this, just now, is the difficulty. The difference between a young lawyer in little practice, and one with his hands full, is something important. Should I not join you on the 6th, you had better go on to the Green. He will be there by that time. I will meet you there certainly by the 8th; though I shall make an effort to take the stump on the 7th, if I can. Should I fail, however, as is possible, you must be there to take it for me, and maintain it till I come. Barnabas and myself will then relieve you, and finish the game.

"Why do we not hear from you? Whisker−Ben said at Club last night that he had heard some rumour that you were married or about to be married. We take it for granted, however, that the invention is his own. Barnabas flatly denied it, and even the Pope, (his nose by the way is thoroughly recovered) expressed his opinion that you were 'no such ass.' Of course, he suffered neither his own, nor my wife, to hear this complimentary opinion. One thing, however, was agreed upon among us, viz: that you were just the man, not only to do a foolish thing, but an

impolitic one, and a vote was carried, nem. con., in which it was resolved to inform you that, in 'the opinion of this Club, marriage is a valuable consideration.' A word to the wise, You know the proverb. Barnabas spoke to this subject. Whisker−Ben, too, was quite eloquent. 'What,' said he, 'are the moral possessions of a woman? I answer, bank notes, bonds, sound stocks, and other choses in action. Her physical possessions, I count to be lands and negroes, beauty, a good voice, His distinction was recognised as the true one by every body but Zauerkraout, who now wears the red hat in place of Finnikin. He thinks that negroes should be counted among the moral possessions, or, at least, as of a mixed character, moral and physical. I will not trouble you with more of the debate than the summary. An inquiry was made into your qualities, and the chances before you, and you were then rated, and found to be worth seventy−five thousand dollars, the interest of which, at seven per cent., being near four thousand dollars, it was resolved that you be counselled notto marry any woman whose income is less. A certificate of so much stock in the Club will be despatched you to assist in any future operations; as a friend to yourself, not less than to the Club, let me exhort you to give heed to its counsels. 'Marriage is a valuable consideration.' Marry no woman whose income is not quite as good as your own. As a lawyer in tolerable practice, you may fairly estimate your capital at thirty or forty thousand dollars. If you have a pretty woman near you, before you look at her again, see what she's worth; and lose sight of her as soon as you can, unless she brings in a capital to the concern, equal to your own. Be as little of a boy in these matters as possible. In no other, I think, are you likely to be a boy! Adieu! If you do not see me on the 6th, start for the Green by the 7th. I shall surely be there by the 8th. Barnabas sends his blessing, nor does the Pope withhold his. He evidently thinks less unfavourably, since his nose has been pronounced out of danger.

Lovingly yours, W. P. Sharpe. "J. O. Beauchampe, Esq."

The wife read the letter slowly. Its contents struck her strangely. It had a tone of utterance like that of one whom she had been accustomed to hear. The contents of it were nothing. The meaning was obvious enough. Of the parties she knew nothing. But there was the sentiment of the writer which, like the key−note in music, pervaded the performance; not necessarily a part of its material, yet giving a character of its own to the whole. That key−note was not an elevated one. She looked up. Her husband had been observing her countenance. A slight suffusion touched her cheek as her eyes met his.

"Who is Mr. W. P. Sharpe," said she, "who counsels so boldly, and I may add so selfishly?"

"He is the gentleman with whom I studied law one of our best lawyers, a great politician and very distinguished man. He is now up for the assembly, and, as you see, thinks that I can promote his election by my eloquence. What think you, Anna?"

"I think you have eloquence, Beauchampe I should think you would become a very popular one. You haveboldness, which is one great essential. You have a lively imagination and free command of language, and your general enthusiasm would at least make you a very earnest advocate. There would be something in the cause the occasion no doubt, and "

She stopped.

"Go on;" said he "what would you say?"

"That I should doubt very much whether the occasion here," lifting up the letter "would be sufficient to stimulate you to do justice to yourself."

The youth looked grave. She noticed the expression, and with more solicitude than usual, continued

"I think I know you, Beauchampe. It is no disparagement to you to say I something wonder how such people as are here described should have been associates of yours."

"Strictly speaking they are not;" he replied, with something of a blush upon his face. "I know but very little of them. But you are to understand that there is exaggeration which is perhaps the only idea of fun that our people seem to have in the design and objects of this club. It is a lawyers' society, and Col. Sharpe insisted, the day that I graduated, that I must become a member. I attached no importance to the matter either one way or the other, and readily consented. I confess to you, Anna, that what I beheld, the only night when I did attend their orgies, made me resolve, even before seeing you, to forswear the fraternity. We do not sympathize, as you may imagine. But no more does the writer of this letter. Col. Sharpe is willing to relax a little from serious labours, and he takes this mode as being just as good as any other. These people are scarcely more than creatures for his amusement."

The wife looked grave but said no more, and Beauchampe sat down to write an answer. This answer as may be supposed, confirmed the story of Whisker−Ben, legitimated all the apprehensions of the club, and assured the writer of the letter that his counsels of "moral prudence" had come too late. He had not only wedded, but wedded without any reference to the possessions, such as had been described as moral at least by the philosophers of the fraternity.

"My wife," said the letter of the writer, "has beautyand youth, and intellect beauty beyond comparison and a grace and spirit about her genius that seem to me equally so. Beyond these, and her noble heart, I am not sure that she has any possessions. I believe she is poor; but really, until you suggested the topic, I never once thought of it. To me, I assure you, however heretical the confession may seem, I care not a straw for fortune. Indeed, I shall be the better pleased to discover that my wife brings me nothing but herself."

The letter closed with the assurance of the writer that he should punctually attend at the gathering, and do his best to maintain the cause and combat of his friend.

"Is this Col. Sharpe so very much your friend, Beauchampe?" demanded his wife when he had read to her a portion of his letter.

"He has been friendly has treated me with attention as his pupil has not spared his compliments, and is what is called a fine gentleman. I cannot say that he is a character whom I unreservedly admire. He is a man of loose principles lacks faith is pleased in showing his scepticism on subjects which would better justify veneration; and, of the higher sort of friendships which implies a loyalty almost akin to devotion, he is utterly incapable. Seeking this loyalty in my friend, I should not seek him. But for ordinary uses for social purposes, as a good companion, an intelligent authority, Col. Sharpe would always be desirable. You will like him I think. He is well read, very fluent, and though he does not believe in the ideals of the heart and fancy, he reads poetry as if he wrote it. You who do write it, Anna, will think better of him when you hear him read it."

"Do you know his wife, Beauchampe?"

"No, strange to say, I do not. I have seen her; she is pretty, but it is said they do not live happily together."

"How many stories there are of people who do not live happily together; and if true, what a strange thing it is, that such should be the case. Yet, no doubt, they fancied, at the first, that they loved one another; unless, Beauchampe, they were counselled by some such club as yours. If so, there could be no difficulty in understanding it all."

"But with those, Anna, who reject the advice of the club?"

"Can it ever be so with them, Beauchampe? I think not. It seems to me as if I should never be satisfied to change what is for what might be. Are you not content, beauchampe?"

"Am I not? Believe me it makes my heart tremble to think of the brief separation which this election business calls for. Sharpe little knows what a sacrifice I make to serve him."

"And if I read this letter of his aright, he would laugh you to scorn for the confession."

"No! that he should not."

"You would not see it, Beauchampe. You are perhaps too necessary to this man. But who is Mr. Calvert is he an elderly man? I once knew a very worthy old gentleman of that name. He too had been a lawyer and was a man of talents."

"This is a very young man, I believe; not much older than myself. He does not practice in our counties and I have never seen him. Judge Tompkins brings him forward. You see what Sharpe says is said of him. It will do me no discredit to grapple with him, even should he fling me."

"Somehow I think well of him already," said the wife. "I would you were with him, Beauchampe, rather than against him. Somehow, I do not incline to this Col. Sharpe. I wish you were not his ally."

"What a prejudice. But you will think better of the colonel when you see him. I shall probably bring him home with me!"

The wife said nothing more, but there was a secret feeling at her heart that rendered this assurance an irksome one. Somehow, she wished that Beauchampe might not bring this person to his house. Her impression which was certainly derived from his letter was an unfavourable one. She fancied, after awhile, that her objection was only the natural reluctance to see strangers, of one who had so long secluded herself from the sight of all; and thus she rested, until Beauchampe was about to take his departure to attend the gathering at Bowling Green, and then the same feeling found utterance again.

"Do not bring home any friends, Beauchampe. I am not fit, not willing to see them. Remember how long I have been shut in from the world. Force me not into it.Now we have security, husband I dread change of any kind as if it were death. Strange faces will only give me pain. Do not bring any?"

"What! not Col. Sharpe! I care to bring no other. I could scarcely get off from bringing him. At least I must ask him, Anna; and, I confess to you, I shall not be displeased if he does decline. The probability is he will, for his hands are full."

She turned in from the gate, saying nothing farther on this subject, but feeling an internal hope, which she could not repress, that this would be the case. Nay, somehow, she felt as if she would prefer that Beauchampe would bring any other friend than this. How prescient is the soul that loves and fears. Talk of your mesmerism as you will, there are some divine instincts in our nature which are as apprehensive of the coming event, as if they were already a part of it. It is as if they see the lightning−flash which informs the event; long before the thunder−peal which, like the voice of fame, comes slowly to declare that all is over.

CHAPTER XVI.

Were we at the beginning of our journey, instead of being so far advanced on our way, it would be a pleasant mode of wasting an hour, to descant on the shows and practices of a popular gathering in our forest country. The picture is a strange, if not a startling one. Its more prominent aspects must, however, be imagined by the reader. We have now no time for mere description. The more decidedly narrative parts of our story are finished. As we tend to the denouëment, the action necessarily becomes more rapid and more dramatic. The supernumeraries cease to thrust in their lanthern−long images upon us. There is no place for meditative philosophers; and none are suffered to appear except those who do and suffer, with the few subordinates which the exigency of the case demands, for disposing the draperies decently, and letting down the curtain.

Were it otherwise were not this disposition of the parts and parties inevitable, it would give us pleasure to give a camera obscura representation of the figures, coming and going, who mingle and dance around the great political cauldron, during the canvass of a closely contested election.

"Black spirits and white,

Red spirits and gray;

Mingle, mingle, mingle,

You that mingle may."

And various indeed was the assortment of spirits that assembled to hear liquid argument and drink it too, on the present occasion. Fancy the crowd, the commotion, the sharp jest and the wild laughter, most accommodating of all possible readers, and spare us the necessity of dilating upon it. We will serve you some such scene, with all its lights and shadows, on some other more fitting occasion.

Something, however, is to be shown. You are to suppose a crowd of several hundred persons, shrewd, sensible people enough, after their fashion rough−handed men of the woods, good at the plough and wagon, masters of the axe, tree−quellers and hog−killers, a stout race, rugged it may be, but not always rude hospitable, free−handed ignorant of delicacies, but born with a strong conviction that much is to be known, much acquired that they are the born inheritors of much, rights, privileges, liberties sacred possessions which require looking after, and are not to be entrusted to every hand. Often deceived, they are necessarily jealous on this subject; and growing a little wiser with every political loss, they come to their patrimony with an hourly increasing knowledge of its value, and its peculiar characteristics. Not much learning have they, but, in lieu of it, they can tell "hawk from handsaw" in all stages of the wind; which is a wisdom that you learned man is not often master of. You may cheat them once, nay twice, or thrice, for they are frank and confiding; but you cannot always cheat them; and one thing is certain that they can extract the uses from a politician and then fling him away, as sagaciously as theurchin, who deals in like manner with the orange sack which he has sucked. Talk of politicians ruling the American people! Lord love you! where do you find these great rulers after five years? Sucked, squeezed, thrown by, an atom in the dung−heap. Precious few of these men of popular dimensions, survive their own clamour. Even while they shout upon their petty eminences, the world has hurried on and left them; and there they stand open−mouthed and wondering! Waking at length, they ask, like the shipwrecked traveller on the shore, "Where am I? Where is my people?" My people. Ha! ha! ha! There is something worse than mockery in that shout. It is my people that speaks, but the voice is changed. It is now thy people. The sceptre has departed. Ephraim is no longer an idol among them. They have other gods; and the late exalted politician freezing, on his narrow eminence, grows dumb for ever, stiff stone eyed, like the sphinx, brooding in her sinking sands, saying, as it were, "Ask me nothing of what I was, for now see you not that I am nothing!"

Precious little of such a fate dreams he, the high−cheeked, sunburnt orator, that now rallies the stout peasantry at Bowling Green. He thinks not so much of perpetual fame as of perpetual office. He has a faith in office which shall last him much longer than that which he professes to have in the people. He hath not so much faith in them as in their gifts. But he fancies not not he that the shouts which now respond to his utterance shall even refuse response to his summons. He assumes a saving exception in his own case, which shall make him sure in the very places where his predecessors failed. He hath an unctuous way with him which makes his faith confident; and his voice thunders and his eye lightens; and he rains precious drops among them, which might be eloquence, if it were not balderdash!

"Who is this man!" quoth our young hero, Beauchampe, as he listened to the muddy torrent, which, like some turbid river, having overflowed its banks, comes down, rending and raging, a thick flood of slime and foam, bringing along with it the refuse of nauseous places, and low flats, and swampy bottoms, and offal stalls! The

youth was bewildered. The eloquent man was so sure of his ground and auditors seemed so confident in his strength so little like a doubting giant that it was long before Beauchampe could discover that he was a mere wind−bag, a bloated vessel of impure air that, becoming fixed air through a natural process, at length explodes and breaks forth with a violence duly proportioned to its noisomeness.

"This cannot be the man, Calvert!" soliloquized our hero. It was not. But, when the wind−bag was exhausted which, by a merciful Providence, was at length the case then rose another; and then did Beauchamp note the vast difference, even before the latter spoke, which was at once evident between the two.

"This must be he!" he murmured to himself. He was not mistaken. The crowd was hushed. The stillness, after those clamours which preceded it, was awful; but was it not encouraging? No such stillness had accompanied the torrent−rushing of those beldame ideas and bull−dog words which had come from the previous speaker. Here was attention curiosity the natural curiosity of an audience about to listen to a new speaker, and already favourably impressed by his manner and appearance. Both were pleasing and impressive. In person he was tall and well made his features denoted one still in the green and gristle of his youth not more than twenty−five summers had darkened into brown the light flaxen hair upon his forehead. His eyes were bright and clear, but there was a grave sweetness, or rather a sweet, mild gravity in his face, which seemed the effect of some severe disappointment or sorrow. This, without impairing youth, had imparted dignity. His manner was unostentatious and natural, but very graceful. He bowed when he first rose before the assembly, then, for a few moments, remained silent, while his eye seemed to explore the whole of that moral circuit which his thoughts were to penetrate. He begun, and Beauchampe was now all attention. His voice was at first very low, but very clear and distinct. His exordium consisted of some general principles which the subjects he proposed to discuss were intended to illustrate, to confine, and, at the same time, to receive their own illustration, by the application of the same texts. In all this there was an ease of utterance, a familiarity with all the forms of analysis, a readiness in moral conjecture, a freedom of comparison, a promptness of suggestion, which betrayed a mind not only excellent by nature but admirablydrilled by the severest exercise of will and art. We do not care to note his arguments or the particular subjects which they were intended to elucidate. These were purely local in their character, and were nowise remarkable, excepting as, in their employment, the speaker showed himself every where capable of rising to the height of those principles by which it was governed. This habit of mind enabled him to simplify his topic to the understanding of his audience to disentangle the mysteries which the dull brains, and rabid tongue of the previous speaker had involved in a seemingly inextricable mass; and to unveil, feature by feature, the perfect image of that leading idea which he had set out to establish. In showing that Mr. Calvert argued his case, it is not to be understood, however, that he was merely argumentative. The main points of difficulty discussed, he rose, as he proceeded, into occasional flights of eloquence, which told with the more effect, as they were made purely subordinate to the business of his speech. Beauchampe discovered, with wonder and admiration, the happy art which had so arranged it; and from wonder and admiration he sunk to apprehension, when, considering the equal skill of the debater and the beauty of his declamation, he all at once recollected, towards the close, that it was allotted to him to take up the cudgels and maintain the conflict for his friend.

But this was not a moment to feel fear. Beauchampe was a man of courage. His talent was active, his mood fiery his imagination very prompt and energetic. He, too, was meant to be an orator; but he had gone through no such school of preparation as that of the man whom he was to answer. But this did not discourage him. If he lacked the exquisite finish of manner, and the logical relation of part with part, which distinguished the address of his opponent, he had an irresistible impulse of expression. Easily excited himself, he found little difficulty in exciting those whom he addressed. If Calvert was the noble stud of the middle ages, caparisoned in scale armour, and practised to wheel and bound, and rear, and recoil, as the necessities of the fight required; then was Beauchampe the light Arabian courser, who, if he may not combat on equal terms with his opponent, at least, by his agility and unremitting attack, keeps him busy at all points in the work of defence. If he gives himself no repose, he leaves his enemynone. Now here, now there, with the rapidity of lightning, he fatigues his heavily armed foe by the frequency of his evolutions; he himself being less encumbered by weight and armour, and being at the same time, more easily refreshed for a renewal of the fight. Such was the nature of their combat which

lasted, at intervals, throughout the day. Beauchampe had made his debut with considerable eclat. His heart was bounding with the excitement of the conflict. The friends of Col. Sharpe were in ecstasies. They had been dashed by the superior eloquence of the new assailant. They feared and felt the impression which Calvert had made; and, expecting nothing from so young a beginner as Beauchampe, they naturally exaggerated the character of his speech, when they found it so far to exceed their expectations. The compliments which he received were not confined to the friends of Col. Sharpe. The opposition confessed his excellence, and Calvert himself was the first, when it was over, to come forward, make his acquaintance and offer his congratulations.

Col. Sharpe arrived that night. As soon as this fact was ascertained, Beauchampe prepared to return home. Sharpe had brought with him two friends, both lawyers, men of some parts, who rendered any further assistance from himself unnecessary. The resolution of the new bridegroom so soon to leave the field, provoked the merriment of the veterans.

"And so you are really married? And what sort of a wife have you got, Beauchampe?" demanded Sharpe.

"You can readily guess," said Barnabas, "when you find him so eager to get home without waiting to see the end of the business here."

"Is she young and handsome, Beauchampe?"

"And what are her moral possessions, as defined by Whisker−Ben?" was the demand of Barnabas.

The tone of these remarks and inquiries was excessively annoying to Beauchampe. There was something like gross irreverence in it. It seemed as if his sensibilities suffered a stab with every syllable which he was called upon to answer. Besides, it was only when examined in reference to the age, appearance and name of his wife, that he became vividly impressed with the painful consciousness of what must be concealed in her history. The burningblush on his cheeks, when he replied to his companions, only served to subject his unnecessary modesty to the usual sarcasms which are common in such cases.

"And you will go?" said Sharpe.

"I promised my wife to return as soon as you came, and she will expect me."

"I must see that wife of yours who has so much power over you. Is she so very handsome, Beauchampe?"

"I think so."

"And what did you say was her name before marriage?" was the farther inquiry.

He was answered, though with some hesitation.

"Cooke, Cooke! You say in your letter that she's wonderfully smart! But, Barnabas we must judge for ourselves, both the beauty and the wit. Hey, boy! are we not a committee on that subject?"

"To be sure we are; for that matter, Beauchampe could only marry with our consent. He will have to be very civil in showing us the lady, to persuade us to sanction this premature affair."

"Do you hear, Beauchampe?"

"I do not fear. When you have seen her, the consent will not be withheld, I'm sure."

"You believe in your princess, then?"

"Fervently!"

"You are very young, Beauchampe very young! But we were all young, Barnabas, and have paid the penalties of youth. An age of unbelief for a youth of faith. Thirty years of scepticism for some three months' intoxication. But how soon that gristle of credulity hardens into callousness! How long do you give Beauchampe before he gains his freedom?"

"That," said Barnabas, "will depend very much on how much he sees of wife, children and friends. If he were now to set off alone and take a voyage to Canton, the probability is he would be quite as much a victim until he got back. Three weeks at home would probably give him a more decided taste for the Canton voyage, and he would take a second, and stay abroad longer. Beyond that there is no need to look; the story always ends in the same way. I never knew a tale which had so little variety."

There was more of this dialogue which we do not care to record. The moral atmosphere was not grateful to thetastes of the young man. Sharpe saw that, and changed the subject.

"You have made good fight to−day so they tell me. I knew you would. But you should keep it up. Take my word, another day here would be the making of you. One speech proves nothing if it produces no more."

"I shall only be in the way," said Beauchampe. "You have Barnabas and Mercer."

"Good men and true, but the more the merrier. How know I whom they will bring into the field?"

"They will scarcely get one superior to Calvert."

"So you like him then?"

"I do very much. He will give you a hard fight."

"Will he, then?" said Col. Sharpe, with some appearance of pique "well! we shall see Heaven send the hour as soon as may be."

"Be wary," said Beauchampe, "for I assure you he is a perfect master of his weapon. I have seldom even fancied a more adroit or able speaker."

"Do I not tell you you are young, Beauchampe?"

"Young or old, take my counsel as a matter of prudence, and be wary. He will certainly prove to you the necessity of looking through your armoury."

"By my faith but I should like to see this champion who has so intoxicated you. You have made me curious, and I must see him to−night. Where does he lodge?"

"At the Red Heifer."

"Shall we go to him, or send for him? What say you, Barnabas?"

"Oh, go to him, be sure. It will have a good effect. It will show as if you were not proud."

"And did not fear him! Come, Beauchampe, if you will not stay and do battle for us any longer, pen a billet of introduction to this famous orator. Say to him, that your friends Messieurs Sharpe and Barnabas, of whom you may say the prettiest things with safety, will come over this evening to test the hospitality of the Red Heifer. Be sure to state that it is your new wife that hurries you off, or the conceited fellow may fancy that he has made you sick with his drubbing. Ho! Sutton landlord! what ho! there!"

The person summoned made his appearance.

"Ha! Sutton! How are you, my old boy hav'n'tseen you since the last flood, and what's to be done down here? What are you going to do? Is it court or country party here Tompkins or Desha?"

"Well, kurnel, there's no telling to a certainty, till the votes is in the box and counted; but I reckon all goes right, jist now, as you'd like to find it."

"Very good, and you think Beauchampe did well to−day?"

"Mighty onexpected well. He'll be a screamer yet, I tell you."

"There's a promise of fame for you, Beauchampe, which ought to make you stay a day longer. Think now of becoming a screamer! You said a screamer, Sutton, old fellow, didn't you?"

"Screamer's the word, kurnel; and 'twon't be much wanting to make him one. He did talk the boldest now, I tell you, considerin' what he had to work ag'in."

"What! is this Mr. Calvert a screamer too?"

"Raal grit, kurnel, no mistake. Talks like a book."

"And so, I suppose," said Sharpe, in the manner of a man who knows his strength and expects it to be acknowledged, "and so I suppose you look for me to come out in all my strength? You will require me to talk like two books?"

"Jist so, kurnel, the people's a−looking for it; and it's an even bet with some that you can't do better than this strange chap, Calvert."

"But there are enough to take up such a bet? Are there not, old fellow?"

"Well, I reckon there are; but you know how a nag has to work when the odds are even."

"Ay, ay! we must see this fellow, that's clear. We must measure his height, breadth, and strength before−hand. No harm to look at one's enemy the night before fighting him, Sutton, is there?"

"None in natur', kurnel. It's a sort o' right one has to feel the heft of the chap that wants to fling him."

"Even so, old boy so get us pen, ink, and paper here, while Beauchampe writes him a sort of friendly challenge. I say, Sutton the Red Heifer is against us, is she?"

"I reckon it's the Red Heifer's husband, kurnel," said the landlord, as he placed the writing materials. "If'twas the Red Heifer herself, I'm thinking the vote would be clear t'other way."

"Ha! ha! you wicked dog!" exclaimed Sharpe, with a chuckle of perfect self−complacence, "I see you do not easily forget old times."

"No, no! kurnel, a good recollection of old times is a sort of Christian duty it sort o' keeps a man in memory of friends and inimies."

"But the Red Heifer was neither friend nor enemy of yours, Sutton?"

"No, kurnel, but the Heifer's husband had a notion that t'worn't any fault of mine that she worn't."

"Ah! you sad dog!" said Sharpe, flatteringly.

"A leetle like my customers, kurnel," responded the landlord, with a knowing leer.

"I would I could see her, though for a minute only."

"That's pretty onpossible. He's strict enough upon her now−a−days; never lets her out of sight, and watches every eye that looks to her part of the house. He'd be mighty suspicious of you if you went there."

"But he has no cause, Sutton!"

"Well, you say so, kurnel, and I'm not the man to say otherwise; but he thinks very different, I can tell you. He ain't the man to show his teeth; but mark me, his eye won't leave you from the time you come, to the time you quit."

"We'll note him, Sutton. Ready, Beauchampe?"

The youth answered by handing the note to the landlord, by whom it was instantly despatched according to its direction. A few moments only had elapsed, when an answer was received, acknowledging the compliment, and requesting to see the friends of Mr. Beauchampe at their earliest leisure.

"This is well," said Sharpe. "I confess my impatience to behold this formidable antagonist. Bestir yourself, Barnabas, with that toddy, over which you seem to have been saying the devil's prayers for the last half hour. Be sure and bring a hatful of your segars along with you. The 'Red Lion,' I suspect, will yield us nothing half so good. Ho! Beauchampe! are you sleeping?"

A slap on the shoulder aroused Beauchampe from something like a waking dream; and he started to his feetwith a bewildered look. He had been thinking of his wife and of the cruel portions of her strange history, to which, as by an inevitable impulse, the equivocal dialogue between Sharpe and the landlord, seemed to carry him back.

"Dreaming of your wife, no doubt. Ha! ha! Beauchampe, how long will you be a boy?"

Why did those words annoy Beauchampe? Was there any thing sinister in their signification? Why did those tones of his friend's voice send a shudder through the youth's veins? Had he also his presentiments? We shall see. At all events, his dream, whatever may have been its character, was thoroughly broken. He turned to the landlord, and ordered his horse to be got instantly.

"You will go, then?" said Sharpe.

"Yes, you do not need me any longer."

"You are resolved, then, not to be a screamer! What a perverse nature! Here is fame, singing like the ducks of Mrs. Bond, 'Come and catch me;' and d l a bit he stirs for all their invitation. But he's young, Barnabas, and has a young wife not three weeks old. We must be indulgent, Barnabas. We must not be too strict in our examination."

"We were young ourselves once," said Barnabas, kindly looking to Beauchampe.

"But do not be precipitate, old fellow. Though mercifully inclined, it must be real beauty, and genuine wit, that shall save our brother. Our certificate will depend on that. Beauchampe, look to see us to dinner day after to−morrow."

"I shall expect you," said Beauchampe, faintly, as, bidding them farewell, he left the room.

"Ha! ha! ha! Poor fellow!" said Sharpe. "His treasures make him sad. He is just now as anxious and apprehensive as an old miser of seventy."

"Egad, he little dreams, just now, how valuable the club will be to him a few months hence," said Barnabas.

"Every thing to him. Let us drink 'The Club,' Barnabas." And they filled, and bowed to each other, Hob−a−nob.

"The club!"

"The Pope!"

"And the Pope's wife!"

"No go, that!" said Sharpe. "Antiques are masculine only. She's dead to us. She's too old."

"What say you to this wife of Beauchampe, then?"

"We won't drink her until we see her; though I rather suspect she must be pretty, for he has an eye in his head. But what a d d fool to leap so hurriedly, without once looking after the consideration. That was a woful error! only to be excused by her superexcellence. We shall see in season; though, curse me, if I do not fancy he'd rather see the devil than either of us. He's jealous already. Did you observe how faintly he said good−night, and how coldly he gave his invitation? But we'll like his wife the better for it, Barnabas. When the husband's jealous, the wife's fair game. Thus saith the proverb."

"And a wholesome one! But, did we drink? I'm not sure that we have not forgotten it." And the speaker explored the bottom of the pitcher, and knew not exactly which had deceived him, his memory or his palate.

CHAPTER XVII.

In one of the apartments of the "Red Heifer," two persons were sitting about this time. One of these was the orator, whose successes that day had been the theme of every tongue. The other was a man well stricken in years, of commanding form, and venerable and intellectual aspect. His hair was long and white; while his cheeks were yet smooth and even rosy, as if they spoke for a well−satisfied conscience and gentle heart in their proprietor. The eyes of the old man were settled upon the young one. There was a paternal exultation in their glance, which sufficiently declared the interest which he felt in the fortunes and triumphs of his companion. The eyes of the youth were fixed with something of inquiry upon the note of Beauchampe which he still turned with his fingers. There was something of doubt and misgiving in the expression of his face; which his companion noted to ask,

"Is there nothing in that note, William, besides what you have read? It seems to disturb you."

"Nothing, sir; nor can I say that it disturbs me exactly. Perhaps every young beginner feels the same disquieting sort of excitement when he is about to meet his antagonist for the first time. You are aware, sir, that this gentleman, Colonel Sharpe, is the Coryphæus of the opposition. He is the right−hand man of Desha, and has the reputation of being one of the ablest lawyers and most popular orators in the state."

"You need not fear him, my son," said the elder; "I am now sure of your strength. You will not fail you cannot. You have your mind at the control of your will; and it needs only that you should go and be sure of opposition. Had that power but been mine but it is useless now! I enjoy my own hoped for triumphs in the certainties of yours."

"So far, sir, as the will enables us to prove what we are and have in us, so far I think I may rely upon myself. But the mere will to perform is not always perhaps not often the power. This man, Sharpe, brings into the field more than ordinary talents. Hitherto, with the exception of this young man, Beauchampe, all my opponents have been very feeble men, mere dealers in rhodomontade of a very commonplace sort. Beauchampe, who is said to have been a pupil of Colonel Sharpe, was merely put forward to−day to speak against time. This fact alone shows the moderate estimate which they put upon his abilities; and yet what a surprising effect his speech produced what excitement, what enthusiasm! Besides, it was evidently unpremeditated; for it was throughout an answer to mine."

"But it was no answer: it was mere declamation."

"So it was, sir; but it was declamation that sounded very much like argument, and had the effect of argument. It is no small proof of a speaker's ability, when he can enter without premeditation upon a subject a subject too which is decidedly against him, and so discuss it so suppress the unfavourable, and so emphasize the favourable parts of his cause, as to produce such an impression. Now, if this be the pupil of Colonel Sharpe, and so little esteemed as to be used simply to gain time, what have we to expect what to fear, from the presence of the master?"

"Fear nothing, William! nay, whatever you may say here, in cool deliberative moments, you cannot fear when you are there! That I know. When you stand before the people, and every voice is hushed in expectation, a different spirit takes possession of your bosom. Nothing then can daunt you. I have seen the proofs too often of what I say; and I now tell you that it is in your power to handle this Col. Sharpe with quite as much ease and success as you have handled all the rest. Do not brood upon it with such a mind, my son do not encourage these doubts. To be an orator you must no more be liable to fear than a soldier going into battle."

"Somehow, sir, there are certain names which disturb me I have met with men whose looks had the same effect. They seem to exercise the power of a spell upon my mind and frame."

"But you burst from it?"

"Yes, but with great effort."

"It matters nothing. The difficulty is easily accounted for, as well as the spell by which you were bound. That spell was in your own ardency of imagination. Persons of your temperament, for ever on the leap, are for ever liable to recoil. Have you never advanced impetuously to grasp the hand of one who has been named to you, and then almost shrunk away from his grasp, as soon as you have beheld his face? He was a phlegmatic, perhaps; and your warm nature recoiled with a feeling of natural antipathy from the repelling coldness of his. The man who pours forth his feelings under enthusiastic impulses is particularly liable to this frigid influence. A deliberate matter of fact question, at such a moment the simplification into baldness of the subject of his own inquiry, by

the lips of a cynic will quench his ardour, and make him shrink within his shell, as a spirit of good may be supposed to recoil from the approach of a spirit of evil. Now, you have just enough of this enthusiasm to be sensible ordinarily to this influence. You acknowledge it only on ordinary occasions, however. At first, I feared its general effect upon you. I dreaded lest it should enfeeble you; but I soon discovered that you had a will, which, in the moment of necessity, could overcome it quite. As I saidbefore, when you are once before the crowd, and they wait in silence for your utterance, you are wholly a man! I have no fears for you, William I believe in no spells none, at least, which need to trouble you. I know that you have no reason to fear, and I know that you will not fear when the time comes. Let me predict for you a more complete triumph to−morrow than any which has happened yet."

"You overrate me, sir. All I shall endeavour to do will be to keep what ground I may have already won. I must not hope to make any new conquests in the teeth of so able a foe."

"That is enough. To maintain your conquests is the next thing to making them; and is usually a conquest by itself. But you will do more you cannot help it. You have the argument with you, and that is half the battle. Nay, it is all the battle to a mind so enthusiastic as yours in the cause of truth. The truth confers a strange power upon its advocate. Nay, I believe it is from the truth alone that we gather the last powers of eloquence. I believe in the realness of no eloquence unless it comes from the sincerity of the orator. To make me believe, the speaker must himself believe."

"Or seem to do so."

"I think I should detect the seeming. Nay, after a little while, the people themselves detect it, and the orator sinks accordingly. This is the fate of many of our men who begin popularly. With politics, for a profession, no man can be honest or consistent long. He must soon trade on borrowed capital. He soon deals in assignats and false papers. He endorses the paper of other men, sooner than not issue; and in doing business at all hazards, he soon incurs the last bankruptcy! Political bankruptcy is of all sorts the worst. There is some chance of regaining caste, where it is lost by dishonesty but never where it follows from a blunder. The knave is certainly one thing, but the blunderer may be both. The fool and knave united are incorrigible. Such a combination is too monstrous for popular patience. And how many do we see of this description. I do not think there is in any profession under the sun such numerous examples of this combination. Every day shows us persons who toil for power and place with principles sufficiently flexible to suitany condition of things; and yet they fail, and expose themselves. This is the wonder that, unfettered as they make themselves at the beginning, they should still become bondsmen, and so, convict. They seem to lack only one faculty of the knave and that the most necessary art."

"Their very rejection of law enslaves them. That is the reason. They set out in a chain, which increases with every movement which seems momently to multiply its own links and hourly increase its weight. Falsehood is such a chain. You cannot convict a true man, for the simple reason that his feet are unimpeded from the first. A step in error is a step backward, which requires two forward before you can regain what is lost. How few have the courage for this. It is so much easier to keep on so difficult to turn! This chain the heavy weight which error is for ever doomed to carry produces a stiffness of the limbs a monstrous awkwardness an inflexibility, which exposes its burdens whenever it is checked, compelled to leap aside, or attempt any sudden change of movement. This was the great difficulty of this young man, Beauchampe, in the discussion to−day: he scarcely knew it himself, because, to a young man of ingenuity, the difficulties of the argument on the wrong side, are themselves provocatives to error. By exercising ingenuity, they appeal flatteringly to one's sense of talent; and, in proportion as he may succeed in plausibly relieving himself from these difficulties of the subject, in the same proportion will he gradually identify himself with the side he now espouses. His mind will gradually adopt the point of view to which its own subtleties conduct it; and, in this way, will it become fettered, possibly to the latest moment of existence. There is nothing more important to the popular orator than to have truth for his ally when he first takes the field. Success, under such auspices, will commend her to his love, and the bias, once established, his faith is perpetual."

"True, William, but you would make this alliance accidental. It must be the result of choice to be worth any thing. We must love truth, and seek her, or she does not become our ally."

"I wish it were possible to convince our young beginners every where, not only that truth is the best ally, butthe only one that, in the long run, can possibly conduct us to permanent success."

"This is not so much the point, I think, as to enable them to detect the true from the false. Very few young men are able to do this before thirty. Hence the error of forcing them into public life before that period. You will seldom meet with a very young person who will deliberately choose the false in preference to the true, from a selfish motive. They are beguiled into error by those who are older. It is precisely in politics as in morals. The unsuspecting youth, through the management of some cold, cunning debauchee, into whose hands he falls, finds himself in the embrace of a harlot, at the very moment when he most dreams of beatific love. The inner nature, not yet practised to defend itself, becomes the prey of the outer; and strong indeed must be the native energies which can finally recover the lost ground, and expel the invader from his place of vantage."

"The case is shown in that of this young man, Beauchampe. It is evidently a matter of no moment to him on which side he enlists himself just now. There is no truth involved in it, to his eyes. It is a game of skill carried on between two parties; and his choice is determined simply by that with which he has been familiar. He is used by Sharpe, who is an older man, and possessed of more experience, to promote an end. He little dreams that, in doing so, he is incurring a moral obligation to maintain the same conflict through his whole career."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a little deformed man, the landlord of the "Red Heifer," who announced Col. Sharpe and his friend, Mr. Barnabas; and, at the same time, a crowd, consisting of some ten or twenty of the substantial yeomen of the neighbourhood, who had been apprised of the meditated visit, and who longed to be present at a meeting which they fancied would result in a keen encounter of wit between the rival orators, followed the visiters. The two gentlemen rose to receive the guests of the younger. William Calvert felt a rising emotion at his heart, the sure sign of intense ambition, coupled with those natural doubts of its own strength and securities, which, it will have been seen in the previous dialogue, it was the labour of the elder gentleman to discourage. The huge beefy−looking landlord of the oppositionhouse bustled forward, having the arm of Col. Sharpe within his. The little deformed master of the Red Heifer stationing himself beside Calvert, confronted him, with an air which signified much more of defiance than satisfaction. Mr. Barnabas advanced towards the elder Calvert; and the crowd followed and bustled round to witness the encounter of the intellectual giants. The parties approached. Col. Sharpe, detaching himself from the arm of the landlord, extended his hand to his opponent, and at the same moment, declared his name. Already the hand of William Calvert was extended, when the light fell upon the face of his visiter. He recoiled, drew himself up to his fullest height, and exclaimed, with a voice of equal surprise and scorn

"You, sir you, Col. Sharpe you!"

Sharpe started back the audience was confounded.

"I am Col. Sharpe!" exclaimed that gentleman. "What mean you, sir do I not see Mr. Calvert?"

"I cannot know you, sir," was the stern reply of Calvert expressed in hoarse and choking accents, his whole heart swelling with indignation, and his cheek flushed with almost insuppressible rage.

"What do you mean, my son?" said old Calvert in a whisper, drawing close to the young man. "What is this? Who is he?"

Sharpe himself, with his friend, now came forward, and, with rising accents, demanded an explanation.

"Why, sir, do you say that you cannot know my friend?" said Barnabas.

"Because I know him too well already!"

"Ha!" exclaimed Sharpe "know me!"

"Yes! as a villain! a base, dishonest villain!"

Sharpe sprang upon him, but with a single grasp Calvert flung him aside with a degree of strength which amply showed that he might well scorn such an assailant. Sharpe staggered among the crowd, but did not fall, and, recovering himself, he was about to renew the assault when Barnabas interposed.

"Stay, Sharpe, this is not the way."

"It is not you are right. See to it!"

"Mr. Calvert, we must have an apology. The offence was public the atonement must be so also."

"Apology! you mistake me, sir perhaps, too, yousomewhat mistake your friend. He will scarcely need one I imagine, when he knows me."

"Who are you then, sir?"

"Let Col. Sharpe, if that be his name "

"That is his name, sir what should it be?"

"I know him by another. Look at me, Alfred Stevens for such I must still call you look at me, and behold one who is ready to avenge the dishonour of Margaret Cooper. Ha! villain! do you start? do you shrink? do you remember now the young preacher of Charlemont? the swindling, smooth−spoken rogue, who sought out the home of innocence to rob it of peace and innocence at a blow? Once, before this, we stood opposed in deadly strife. Do you think that I am less ready now. Then, your foul crime had not been consummated; would to God I had slain you then! But it is not too late for vengeance! apology, indeed! will you fight, Alfred Stevens? say are you as ready now as when the cloth of the preacher might have been a protection for cowardice. If you are, say to your friend here, that apology between us is a word of scorn and no meaning. Atonement blood only nothing less will suffice!"

Sharpe, staggered at the first address of the speaker, had now recovered himself. His countenance was deadly pale. His eyes wandered. He had been stunned by the suddenness of Calvert's revelations. But the eyes of the crowd were upon him. Murmurs of suspicion reached his ears. It was necessary that he should take decided ground. Your politician must not want audacity. Nay, in proportion to his diminished honesty, must be his increase of brass. To brazen it out was his policy; and by a strong effort, regaining his composure, he quietly exclaimed, looking round him as he spoke

"The man is certainly mad. I know not what he means."

"Liar! this will not serve you. You shall not escape me. You do not deceive me. You shall not deceive these people. Your words may deny the truth of what I say, but your pallid cheeks confess it. Your hoarse, choking accents, your down−looking eyes confess it. The lie that is spoken by your tongue is contradicted by all your other faculties. There is no man present who does not see that you tremble in your secret soul that I havespoken nothing but the truth, that you are the base villain, the destroyer of beauty and innocence, that I have

pronounced you."

"This is strange, very strange!" said Mr. Barnabas.

"The man is certainly mad," continued Sharpe, "or this is a political charge intended to destroy me. A poor, base trick, this of yours, Mr. Calvert. It will have no effect upon the people. They understand that sort of thing too well."

"They shall understand it better," said Calvert. "They shall have the whole history of your baseness. Political trick, indeed! We leave that business to you whose very life has been a lie. My friends "

"Stay, sir," said Barnabas. "There is a shorter way to settle this. My friend has wronged you, you say; he shall give you redress. There need be no more words between us."

"Ay, but there must. The redress of course; but the words shall be a matter of course, also. You shall hear my charge against this man renewed. I pronounce him a villain, who, under the name of Alfred Stevens, five years ago made his appearance in the village of Charlemont, and pretending to be a student of divinity obtained the confidence of the people; won the affections of a young lady of the place, dishonoured and deserted her. This is the charge I make against him, which will be sustained by this venerable man, and for the truth of which I invoke the all−witnessing Heaven. Alfred Stevens I defy you to deny this charge."

"It is all false as hell!" was the husky answer of the criminal.

"It is true as Heaven!" said Calvert, and his ass everation was now confirmed by that of the aged man by whom he was accompanied. Nor were the spectators unimpressed by the firm, unbending superiority of manner, possessed by Calvert, over that of Sharpe, who was wanting in his usual confidence, and who, possibly from the suddenness of the charge, and possibly from a guilty conscience, failed in that promptness and freedom of utterance, which in the case of his accuser was greatly increased by the feeling of scorn and indignation which was so suddenly reawakened in his bosom. The little landlord of the "Red Heifer," about this time made himselfparticularly busy in whispering around that it was precisely five years ago that Col. Sharpe had taken a trip to the south, with his uncle, and was absent two−thirds of the year. How much more the "Red Heifer" might have said for he had his own wrongs to stimulate his hostility and memory can only be conjectured; for he was suddenly silenced by the landlord of the opposition house, who threatened to wring his neck if he again thrust it forward in the business. But the hint of the little man had not fallen upon unheeding ears. There were some two or three persons who recalled the period of Sharpe's absence in the south, and found it to agree with Calvert's statements. The buzz became general among the crowd, but was silenced by the coolness of Barnabas.

"Mr. Calvert," said he, "you are evidently mistaken in your man. My friend denies your story as it concerns himself. We do not deny that some person looking like my friend may have practised upon your people; but that he is not the man he insists. There is yet time to withdraw from the awkward situation into which you have placed yourself. There is no shame in acknowledging an error. You are clearly in error you cannot persevere in it without injustice. Let me beg you, sir, for your own sake, to admit as much, and shake hands upon it."

"Shake hands, and with him! No, no, sir! This cannot be. I am in no error. I do not mistake my man. He is the very villain I have declared him. He must please himself as he may with the epithet."

"I am sorry you persist in this unhappy business, Mr. Calvert. My friend will withdraw for the present. May I see you privately within the hour."

"At any moment."

"I am very much obliged to you. I like promptness in such matters. But, once more, sir, it is not too late. These gentlemen will readily understand how you have confounded two persons who look something alike. But there is a shade of difference as you see in the chin, the forehead, perhaps, the colour of the eyes. Look closely, I pray you, for truly I should be sorry, for your own sake, to have you persist in your error."

Mr. Barnabas, in order to afford Calvert the desired opportunity of discerning the difference between the charged and the guilty party, took the light from the mantel and held it close to the face of Sharpe.

"Pshaw!" said the latter, somewhat impatiently "the fellow is a madman or a fool why do you trouble yourself further. Let him have what he wishes."

The voice of Calvert, at the same moment, disclaimed every doubt on the score of the criminal's identity.

"He is the man! I should know him by day and by night, among ten thousand!"

"You won't confess yourself mistaken, then?" said Barnabas "a mere confession of error an inaccuracy of vision! The smallest form of admission."

Calvert turned from him scornfully.

"Very well, sir if it must be so! good people, my friends, you bear us witness we have tried every effort to obtain peace. We are very pacific. But there is a point beyond which there is no forbearance. Integrity can keep no terms with slander. Not one among you but would fight if you were called Alfred Stevens. It is the name, as you hear, of a swindler; a seducer; a fellow destined for the high sessions of Judge Lynch. We shall hear of him under some other alias. We have assured the young gentleman here, that we are not Alfred Stevens, and prefer not to be called by a nickname; but he persists, and you know what is to follow. You can all retire to bed, therefore, with the gratifying conviction, that both gentlemen, being bound for it, and good Kentuckians, will be sure to do their duty when the time comes. Good night, gentlemen, and may you sleep to waken in the morning to hear some famous arguments. I sincerely trust that nothing will happen to prevent any of the speakers from attending; but life is the breath in our nostrils, and may go out with a sneeze. Of one thing I can assure you, that it will be no fault of mine if you do not hear the eloquence, at least, of Mr. Barnabas."

"Hurra for Barnabas! Hurra!" was the cry.

"Hurra for Barnabas!" the echo.

"Calvert for ever!" roared the trombone in the corner; and the several instruments followed for Sharpe, Calvert, and Barnabas, according to the sort of pipes and stops with which Providence had kindly blessed them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"I know that this is unavoidable. I know not well, my son, how you could have acted otherwise than you did, and yet the whole affair is very shocking."

Thus began the elder Calvert to the younger, when they again found themselves alone together.

"It is; but crime is shocking; and death is shocking; and a thousand events that, nevertheless, occur hourly in life. Our best philosophy, when they seem unavoidable, is to prepare for them as resolutely as we prepare for death."

"It may be death, my son," said the other with a shudder.

"And if it were, sir, I should gladly meet death that I might have the power of avenging. Oh God! when I think of her so beautiful, so proud, so bright so dear to me then so dear to me, even now, I feel how worthless to me are the triumphs, how little worth is life itself!"

And a passionate flood of tears concluded the words of the speaker.

"Give not way thus, my son. Be a man."

"Am I not? God! what have I not endured? What have I not overcome? Will you not suffer a moment's weakness not even when I think of her. Oh, Margaret, but for this serpent in our Eden what might we not have been. How might we have loved how happy might have passed these days which are now toil and hopelessness to me; which are shame and desolation to you! But for this serpent we had both been happy."

"No, my son! that would have been impossible. But the speculation is useless now!"

"Worse than useless!"

"Why brood upon it then?"

"For that very reason; as one broods over his loss, who does not value his gain. It is thus I think of her, and cease to think of these successes. What are they tome? Nothing! ah! what might they not have been had she been mine? Oh! my father, I think of her her beauty her genius, as of some fallen angel. I look upon this wretch as I should regard the fiend. The hoof is wanting, it is true, but the mark of the beast is in his face. It can surely be no crime to slay such a wretch, murder it cannot be!"

"You think not of yourself, William."

"Yes! he may kill me; but thinking of her, the fallen, and of him the beguiler, I have no fear of death I know not that I have a love of life I think only of the chance accorded me of avenging the cruel overthrow."

The re−entrance of Mr. Barnabas, interrupted the dialogue. He came to make the necessary arrangements.

"Very awkward business, Mr. Calvert too late now for adjustment. May I have the pleasure of knowing the name of your friend."

Calvert named Major Hawick, a young gentleman of his party; but the old man interfered

"I will act for you, William."

"You!" said the young man.

"You, old gentleman!" exclaimed Mr. Barnabas.

"Yes," replied old Calvert, with spirit, "shall I be more reluctant than you to serve my friend. This, sir, is my son by adoption. I love him as if he were my own. I love him better than life. Shall I leave him at the very time when life is perilled. No! no! I am sorry for this affair, but will stand by him to the last. Let us discuss the arrangements."

"You've seen service before, old gentleman," said Barnabas, looking the eulogium which he did not express.

"I, too, have been young," said the other.

"True blue, still," said Barnabas; "and though I'm sorry for the affair, yet, it gives me pleasure to deal with a gentleman of the right spirit. I trust that your son is a shot."

"He has nerve and eye!"

"Good things enough very necessary things, but a spice of practice does no harm. Now, Sharpe has a knack with a pistol that makes it curious to see him, if you be only a looker on."

"Let me stop you, young gentleman," said old Calvert; "when I was a young man, such a remark would have been held an impertinence."

"Egad!" said Barnabas, "you have me! Are we agreed then? Shall it be pistols?"

"Yes at sunrise to−morrow."

"Good!"

"Distance when we meet."

The place of meeting was soon agreed on, and the parties separated; Barnabas taking his leave by complimenting the "old gentleman," as a "first−rate man of business."

"Of course," said he, after he had reported to Sharpe the progress of the arrangements; "of course you were the said Stevens. I saw that the fellow's story was true at the first jump. It was so like you."

"How if I deny it?"

"I shouldn't believe you. 'Twas too natural. Besides, Whisker−Ben blew you long ago, though he could not tell the girl's name. Where's she now what's become of her?"

"That's the mystery I should give something handsome to find out; but you may guess, from the spirit this fellow has shown, that it wouldn't do for me to go back to Charlemont. She was a splendid woman!"

"Was she though? I reckon this fellow loved her. He must have done so. He looked all he said."

"He did! The wonder is equally great in his case. He was a sort of half−witted rustic in Charlemont Margaret despised him; he wanted to fight me before, on her account, and we were within an ace of it. His name was Hinkley to think that I should meet in him the now famous Calvert. Look you, Barnabas! the pistol is a way we had not thought of for laying our orator on his back."

"Will you do it?"

"I must! He leaves me no alternative. He will keep no terms no counsel. If he goes on to blab this business nay, he can prove it, you see he will play the devil with my chances."

"Wing him! That will be enough. The fellow has pluck; and for the sake of that brave old cock, his father, I'd like him to get off with breath enough to carry him father."

"No, d n him, let him pay the penalty of his impertinence! Who made him the champion of Margaret Cooper? Were he her husband now nay, had she even tolerated him, I think I should have let him off with some moderate hurt; but I owe him a grudge. You have not heard all, Barnabas!" the tone of the speaker was lowered

here, and a deep crimson flush suffused his face as he concluded the sentence "He struck me, Barnabas he laid a cowskin over my back!"

"The d l he did!"

"He did I must remember that!"

"So you must! So you must!"

"I will kill him, Barnabas! I am resolved on it! I feel the sting of that cowskin even now?"

"So you must, but somehow, d n the fellow, I'd like to get him off."

"Pshaw! you are getting old. Certainly you are getting blind. We have a thousand reasons for not letting him off. He's in our way he's a giant among the opposition the crack man they have set up against me. Even if I had not these personal causes of provocation do you not see how politic it would be to put him out of the field. It's he or me. If Desha succeeds, I am attorney−general; if Tompkins, Calvert! No! no! The more I think of it, the more necessary it becomes to kill him."

"But, what if he shoots?"

"That he does not he did not at least. You must, at all events, secure me my distance. I suppose you will have little difficulty in this respect. The old man will scarcely know any thing about these matters."

"You're mistaken he talks as if he had been at it all his life. I reckon he has fed on fire in his younger days. The choice, of course, is his."

"A little adroitness, Barnabas, will give us what we want. You can insinuate twelve paces."

"Yes, that can be done, but ten is more usual. Suppose he adopts ten?"

"That is what I expect. He will scarcely accept your suggestion. He will naturally suppose, from what you say, that I practise at twelve. This will, very probably, induce him to say ten, and then I have him on my own terms. I shall easily bottle him at that distance."

"And you will really commission the bullet? You will kill him?"

"Must!"

"Sleep on that resolution first, Sharpe!"

"It will do no good. It will not change me. This fellow was nothing to Margaret Cooper, and what right had he to interfere? Besides, you forget the cowskin."

"Oh! true, d n that cowskin! That's the worst part of the business."

"Good night, Barnabas," said Sharpe. "See that I do not oversleep myself."

"No fear. Good night! Good night! D n the fellow. Why did he use a cowskin? A hickory had not been so bad. Now will Sharpe kill him to a dead certainty. He's good for any button on Calvert's coat; and there he goes, yawning as naturally as if he had to meet, to−morrow morning, nothing worse than his hominy!"

CHAPTER XIX.

It was a something sad sight to see good old Mr. Calvert, till a late hour that night, brushing up the murderous weapons, adjusting bullets, and cutting out patches, with all the interested industry of a fire−eater. It was in vain that his son his adopted son, rather, for the reader should know by this time with whom he deals it was in vain that he implored him to forego an employment which really made him melancholy, not on his own, but the venerable old man's account. Old Calvert was principled against duelling, as he was principled against war; but he recognised the necessity in both cases of employing those modes by which, to prevent wrong, society insists upon avenging it. He would have preferred that William Calvert should not go into the field on account of Margaret Cooper; but, once invited, he recognised in all its excellence the good counsel of Polonius to his son.

"Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel: but being in,

Bear it that the opposer may beware of thee."

He at least was resolved that William should not gounprepared and unprovided, in the properest manner, to do mischief. In the hot days of his own youth, he had acquired some considerable knowledge of the weapon, and the laws, rather understood than expressed, which govern personal combat as it is, or was, practised in our country. His care was now given, not simply to the condition of the weapons, but the mind of the combatant. The modes by which the imagination is rendered obtuse the hardening of the nerves the exercise of the eye and arm could not be resorted to in the brief interval which remained before the appointed hour of conflict; and something was due to slumber, without which, all exercise and instruction would be only thrown away. But there was much that a judicious mind could do in acting upon the moral nature of the party; and the conversation of old Calvert was judiciously addressed to this point. The young man, who had by this time learned to know most of the habitual trains of thought by which his tutor was characterized, readily perceived his object.

"You mistake, my dear sir," he said, smiling, after the lapse of an hour, which had been consumed as above described "You mistake if you think I shall fail in nerve or coolness. Be sure, sir, I never felt half so determined in all my life. The remembrance of Margaret Cooper, the sense of former wrong the loathing hate which I entertain for this reptile exclude every feeling from my soul but one, and that is the deliberate determination to destroy him if I can."

"This very intensity, William, will shake your nerves. No man is more cool than he who obeys no single feeling. Single feelings become intense and agitating from the absence or absorption of all the rest."

"Feel my arm, sir," he said, extending the limb.

"It is firm, now, William; but if you do not sleep, will it be so in the morning?"

"Yes I have no fear of it."

"But you will go to sleep now? You see I have every thing ready."

"No! I cannot, sir. I must write. I have much to say, which, to leave unsaid, would be criminal. Do you retire. Hawick will soon be here, who will complete what you have been doing. He is expert at these matters, and will neglect nothing. I have penned him a noteto that effect. He will accompany us in the morning. Do you go to bed now. You cannot, at your time of life, do without sleep and not suffer. It cannot affect me; nay, if I did go to bed, it would be impossible, with these thoughts in my mind these feelings in my heart that I should close my

eyes. I should only toss and tumble, and become nervous from very uneasiness."

Having finished, the old man prepared to adopt the suggestion of the young one. He rose to retire, but the "good night" faltered on his lips. Young Calvert, who was walking to and fro, was struck by the accents. Suddenly turning he rushed to the venerable man, and fell upon his neck.

"Father! more than father to me!" exclaimed the youth "forgive me if I have offended you. I feel that I have often erred, but through weakness only, not wilfulness. You have succoured and strengthened you have taught, counselled, and preserved me. Bless me, and forgive me, my father, if in this I have gone against your wishes and will; if I have refused your paternal guidance. Believe me, I have but one regret at this moment, and it grows out of the pain which I feel that I inflict on you. But you will forgive you will bless me, my dear father, and should I survive this meeting, I will strive to atone to recompense you by the most fond service, for this one wilfulness!"

"God bless you, my son! God preserve you!" was the only reply which the old man could make. His heart seemed bursting with emotion, and sobs, which he vainly strove to repress, rose in his throat with a choking, suffocating rapidity. His tears fell upon the young man's shoulder while he passionately kissed his cheek.

"God will save you," he continued, as he broke away, and sobbing as he went from sight, his broken accents might still, for a few seconds, be heard in the reiteration of this one sentence of equal confidence and prayer.

"That is done! that is over!" said the youth, sinking into a seat beside the table where the writing materials were placed; his hands covered his face for a few moments, as if to shut from sight the image of the old man's agony. "That word of parting was my fear, good old man!" he continued, after the pause of a few moments "what a Spartan spirit does he possess! Surely he loves me quite as well as father ever loved son before. Yet, with what strength of resolution he prepares the weapon prepares to lose me perhaps for ever. I cannot doubt that the loss will be great to him. It will be the loss of all. His hope, and the predictions of his hope are all perilled by this; yet he complains not he has no reproaches! Surely, I have been too wanton too rash too precipitate in this business! What to me is Margaret Cooper! Her beauty, her talents, and that fair fame of which this reptile has for ever robbed her? She loved me not she hearkened not to my prayer of love to that love which cannot perish though the object of its devotion, like a star gone suddenly from a high place at night, has sunk for ever into darkness. I am not pledged to fight her battles, to repair her shame, to bruise the head of the reptile by which she was beguiled. Alas! I cannot reason after this cold fashion. Is it not because of this reptile that she is nothing to me and does not this make her defence every thing, heighten the passion of hate, and make bloody vengeance a most sacred virtue! It does it must. Alfred Stevens, I cannot choose but seek to take thy life. The imploring beauties of Margaret Cooper rise before me, and command me. I will try! So help me God, as I believe, that the sacrifice of the reptile that crawls to the family altar to leave its slime and venom, is a duty with man due to the holiest hopes and affections of man, and is praiseworthy in the sight of God! I cannot choose but believe this. God give me strength to make my desire performance!"

He raised the pistol, unconsciously, as he spoke. He pressed it to his forehead. He lifted it in the sight of Heaven, as if in this way, he solemnized his oath. The grasp of the weapon in his hand suggested a new train of emotion.

"I may fall I may perish! The hopes of this good old man my own hopes may all be set at nought. Can it be that in a few hours I shall be nothing? This voice be silent this arm cold, unconscious, upon this cold bosom. Strange, terrible fancy! I must not think of it. It makes me shudder! It is too late for thoughts like these. I must be a man now, a man only. The mere pang that is nothing. But he thrice a father, he will feel threefold pangs which shall be morelasting. Yet, even with him, they cannot endure long. Who else? My poor, poor mother!"

He paused, he drew the paper before him a tear fell upon the unwritten sheet, and he thrust it away.

"There is one other pain! One thought!" he murmured. "These high hopes these schemes of greatness these dreams of ambition stopped suddenly like rich flowers blooming late, cut down at midnight by the premature frost! Oh! if I perish now, how much will be left undone!"

Once more the youth started to his feet and paced the chamber. But he soon subdued the rebellious struggles of his more human nature. Quieted once more he sought to baffle thought by concentrating himself upon his tasks. Resuming his place at the table, he seized his pen. Letter after letter grew beneath his hands; and the faint gray light of the dawn peeped in at the windows before he had yet completed the numerous tasks which required his industry. A tap at the door drew his attention and he opened it to receive his friend, Major Hawick.

"You are ready," said Hawick "but you seem not to have slept. How's this? you promised me "

"But could not keep my promise. I had much to do, and felt that I could not sleep. I was too much excited."

"That is unfortunate!"

"It will do no harm. With my temperament I do things much better when excited than not. The less prepared, the better prepared."

"Where's the old gentleman?"

"He sleeps still. We will not disturb him. We will steal out quietly, and I trust every thing will be over before he wakens. I have left a note for him with these letters."

But few moments more did they delay. William Calvert remedied to a certain extent the fatigue of his night of unrest, by plunging his head into a basin of cold water. Their preparations were already made; and they issued forth without noise, and soon found themselves on the field. Their opponents appeared a few moments after.

"A pleasant morning, gentlemen," said Mr. Barnabas, "but how is it, I do not see my old friend here, eh? I had a fancy he would not miss it for the world."

A rustling among the bushes at a little distance at thismoment saved William Calvert from the necessity of answering the question. There was the old man himself.

"Ah, William," he said reproachfully "was this kind?"

"Truly, sir, it was meant to be so. I would have spared you this scene if possible."

"It was not kind, William, but you meant kindly. You did not know me, my son. Had I not been here with you in the moment of danger I should always have felt as if I had suffered shame."

The youth was touched, and turned aside to conceal his emotion. The friends of the parties approached in conference. The irregularity of Major Hawick's attendance being explained, and excused, under the circumstances, he remained as a mere spectator. The arrangements then being under consideration, Mr. Barnabas said casually, and seemingly with much indifference

"Well, I suppose, sir, we will set them at twelve paces!"

"Very singular that you should offer a suggestion on this subject;" was the reply of Mr. Calvert "this point is with us."

"Oh, surely, surely, but this being about the usual distance "

"It is not ours, sir," said the other coolly.

"What do you propose then?"

"Five paces, sir, back to back wheel and fire within the words one and two."

Col. Sharpe, who heard the words, started and grew suddenly pale.

"A most murderous distance, sir, indeed," said Mr. Barnabas gravely. "Are you serious, sir, do you really mean to insist on what you say?"

"Certainly, sir, if I ever jested at all, it should not be on such an occasion. These are our terms."

"We must submit, of course;" said the other, as he proceeded to place his principal. While doing this, Col. Sharpe was observed to speak with him somewhat earnestly. Mr. Barnabas immediately after, again advanced to Mr. Calvert and said

"In consenting to your right, sir, on the subject of distance, I must at the same time protest against it. Theconsequences, sir, must lie on your head only. I have no doubt that both parties will be blown to the devil!"

Hawick also approached and whispered the elder Calvert, in earnest expostulation against this arrangement.

"It is impossible for either to escape," he said; "they are both firm men, and both will fire with great quickness. The distance is very unusual, sir, and if the affair ends fatally the reproach will be great."

For a moment the old man hesitated and looked bewildered. His eye earnestly sought the form of William Calvert, who was calmly walking at a little distance. He was silent for a few seconds; but, suddenly recovering himself, he murmured, rather in soliloquy than in answer to his companion

"No, no! it must be so we must take this risk to avoid a greater. I see through these men there is no other way to baffle them."

He advanced to Mr. Barnabas.

"I see no reason to alter my arrangement. To a brave man, the nearer to the enemy the better."

"A good general principle, sir, but liable to abuse;" said Barnabas "but as you please. We toss for the word."

The word fell to Calvert. The parties were placed, back to back, with a space of some ten feet between space just enough for the grave of one. With the word, which was rather gasped than syllabled by the old man, William Calvert wheeled the first instant glance that showed him his enemy drew his fire, and was followed by that of his foe. In the first few moments after, standing himself, and seeing his enemy still stood, he fancied that no harm had been done. Already the words were on his lips to call for the other pistol, when he felt a sudden sickness and dizziness, his right thigh grew stiffened, and he lapsed away upon the earth, just as the old man drew nigh to his assistance.

The bullet had entered the fleshy part of his hip, and had lodged there, narrowly avoiding the bone. These particulars were afterwards ascertained. At first, however, the impression of the old man, and that of Major Hawick, was, that the wound was mortal. We will not seek to describe the mental agony of the former. It was now

that his conscience spoke in torturous self upbraidings; andthrowing himself beside the unconscious youth, he moaned as one who would not be comforted; until assured by the more closely observing Hawick, who, upon inspecting the wound, gave him assurance of better things.

Col. Sharpe was more fortunate. He was uninjured, but he had not escaped untouched. His escape, though more complete than that of Calvert, had been even yet more narrow; the bullet of the former actually barking his skull just above the ear, and slightly lacerating the skin over his organ of destructiveness. So narrow an escape made him very anxious to avoid a second experiment, which William Calvert, feebly striving to rise from the ground, readily offered himself for. But, while the youth spoke, his strength failed him, and he soon sunk away in utter unconsciousness. Thus ended an affair that promised to be more bloody in its results. Perhaps, it would have been, but for the arrangement which old Calvert insisted on. Had the ten paces been acceded, there is little doubt but that Sharpe, secure in his practice, would have inflicted a death−wound on his opponent. The alteration of distance, the necessity of wheeling to fire, and a proximity to his enemy so close as to leave skill but few if any advantages, served to disorder his aim, and impair his coolness. It was with no small degree of satisfaction that he departed, leaving his enemy hors de combat. We too, shall leave him, and follow the progress of the more fortunate party, assured as we are that the wound of our young hero, though serious, is not dangerous, and that he is in the hands of those who will refuse sleep to their eyelids so long as he needs that they should watch.

It will not materially affect the value of this narrative to omit all farther account of that political canvassing by which these parties were brought into a juxtaposition so fruitful of unexpected consequences. It will suffice to say that, with Calvert removed from the stump, Col. Sharpe remained master of it. His eloquence that day seemed far more potential indeed than on ordinary occasions. No doubt he tried his best, in order to do away with what Calvert had previously succeeded in doing; but there was an eclat about his morning's work which materially assisted the working of his eloquence. The proceedings of the previous night, and the duel which succeeded it, were pretty well bruited abroad in the space of a few hours;and when a man passes with success from the field of battle to the field of debate, and proves himself equally the master in both, vulgar wonder knows little stint and suffers little qualification from circumstances. Nay, the circumstances themselves are usually perverted to suit the results; and, in this case, the story, by the zeal of Sharpe's friends, so far from showing that the quarrel grew from the facts which did occasion it, was made to have a political origin entirely Sharpe being the champion of one, and Calvert of the other party. It may be readily conjectured, that Sharpe himself gave as much encouragement to this report as possible. Bold as he might be he was not altogether prepared to encounter the odium to which any notoriety given to the true state of the case would necessarily subject him. His partisans easily took their cue from him, and were willing to accept the affair, as a sign of promise in the political contest which was to ensue. We may add that it was no unhappy augury. The friends of Sharpe were triumphant, and Desha, one of those mauvaise sujets which a time of great moral ferment in a country throws upon the surface, like scum upon the waters when they are broken up by floods, and rush beyond their appointed boundaries was elevated, most unhappily, to the executive chair of the state.

Thus much is perhaps essential to what should be known of these matters in the progress of our story. How much of this result was due to the unfortunate termination of Calvert's affair with Sharpe, is difficult to determine. The friends of the former ascribed their defeat to his wounds, which disabled him from the prosecution of that canvass through the state which had been so profitably begun. They were baffled and dispirited. Their strong man was low; and gratified with successes already won, and confident of the future, Col. Sharp closed the night at Bowling Green by communicating to Beauchampe by letter, his purpose of visiting him, on his return route an honour which, strange enough to Beauchampe himself, did not afford him that degree of satisfaction which it seemed to him was only natural that it should.

CHAPTER XX.

Beauchampe and his wife sat together beside the open window. It was night a soft mellowing light fell upon the

trees and herbage, and the breeze mildly blew in pleasant gushes about the apartment. In the room was no light. Her hand was in his. Her manner was thoughtful, and, when she spoke, her words were low and subdued as if, in her abstract mood, it needed some effort of her lips to speak. Beauchampe himself was more moody than his wont. There is always, in the heart of one conscious of the recent possession of a new and strongly desired object, a feeling of uncertainty. Even the most sanguine temperament, feels, at times, unassured of its own blessings. Perhaps, such feelings of doubt and incertitude are intended to give us a foretaste of those final privations to which life is every where certainly subject; and to reconcile us, by natural degrees, to the last dread separation in death. At all events nothing can be more natural than such feelings. Our hearts faint with fear in the very moment when we are revelling in the sober certainty of waking bliss! When love, hooded and fettered, refuses to quit his cage when every dream appears satisfied; when peace, fostered by security, seems to smile in the conviction of a reality which promises fullest permanence; and the imagination knows nothing to crave, and even egotism loses its strong passion for complaint; even then we shudder, as with an instinct that teaches much more than any thought, and knocks more loudly at the door of the heart, than any of its more reasonable apprehensions.

This instinct was at work, at the same moment, in both their bosoms.

"I know not why it is," said Beauchampe, "but I feel as if something were to happen. I feel unacconntably sad and apprehensive. It is not a fear scarcely a doubt, that fills my mind nay, for that matter my mind is silent I strive to think in vain. It is a sort of voice from the soul a presentiment of evil more like a dream in its approaches, and yet, in its influence, more real, more emphatic, than any actual voice speaking to my outward ears. Do you ever have such feelings, Anna?"

"I have them now!" she answered in low tones.

"Indeed! it is very strange!"

He put his arm about her waist as he spoke, and drew her closer to himself. Her head sunk upon his shoulder. He did not behold them, but her eyes were filled with tears. How strange were such tears to her! How suddenly had she undergone a change and such a change! She who had never known fear, was now timid as a child. Love is, before all, the great subduer. It was in an unknown condition of peace and pleasure that the wife of Beauchampe had become softened. Apprehension necessarily succeeds to conquest. There is no courage so cool and collected as that which has nothing to lose; and timidity naturally grows from a consciousness of large, valuable and easily endangered possessions. Such was the origin of the fear in the bosoms of both.

Certainly they had much to lose! Happiness is always an unstable possession, and we know this by instinct. The union of the two had perfected the union of the two families. Mrs. Beauchampe, the elder, in the very obvious and remarkable change of manner, which followed the marriage of Miss Cooke with her son, had become reconciled nay, pleased with the match. Mary Beauchampe was of course all joy and all tears; and even Jane, escaped from the first danger of being swallowed up, was gradually brought to see the intellectual beauties, and the personal also, of her brother's wife, without beholding her sterner aspects. For the present, Beauchampe lived with his wife's mother, but the two families were together daily. They walked, rode, sang, read and played together. They made a little world to themselves, and they were so happy in it. The tastes of Beauchampe gradually became more and more refined and elevated under the nicer sway of feminine taste, and those delicacies of direction which none can so well impart as a highly intellectual woman. He no longer dreamed of such ordinary distinctions as make up the small hopes of witling politicians. To be the great bellwether of a clamorous flock, for a season, did not now constitute the leading object of his ambition. Far from it. A short month of communion with an enthusiastic, high−souled woman unhappy, perhaps, that she was so had wrought as decided a change in his moral nature, as the love which he brought had operated upon hers. They were both changed. But it needs that we should dwell upon the power of Love to tame, and subject, and elevate the base and stubborn nature. Surely it is no mere fable, rightly read, which makes him lead the lion with a thread. Briefly, there is no human beast that he cannot, with the same ease, subdue.

Before his meeting with his wife, however, Beauchampe was superior in moral respects to his associates. This must be understood. He had strength of mind and ambition; he was generous, free in his impulses, and usually more gentle in their direction than was the case with his companions. His rudenesses were those of the rustic, whose sensibilities yet sleep in his soul, like the undiscovered gold in the dark places of the sullen mountain. It was for Love to detect the slight vein leading to these recesses, and to refine the treasure to which it led. Great, in matters of this sort, is that grand alchemist. The model of refiners is he! No Rosicrucian ever did so much to turn the baser metal into gold. Unhappily, as in the case of other seekers after projection, it is sometimes the case that the grand experiment finishes in fumo, and possibly with a loud explosion.

But it does not become us to jest in this stage of our narrative. Too sad, too serious, are the feelings with which we now must deal. If Beauchampe and his wife are happy, they are so in the activity and excitement of those sensibilities which are the most liable to overthrow. In proportion to the exquisite sweetness of the sensation, is its close approximation to the borders of pain. The joy of the soul which is the source of all the raptures of love, is itself a joy of sadness, and yearning and excessive apprehension. Soon does this apprehension rise to cloud the pleasure and oppress the hope. This is the origin of those presentiments, which say what our thoughts cannot say, and in spite of our thoughts. They grew in the bosom of Beauchampe and his wife, along with the necessity which he felt and had declared, of assuming vigorously the duties of his profession. These duties required that he should move into a more busy sphere, and this duty involved the removal of his wife from that seclusion in which,for the last five years, her sensibilities had found safety. This, to her, was a source of terror; and she trembled with a singular fear lest, in doing so in going once more out into the world she had left, she should encounter her betrayer. Very different now were her feelings toward Alfred Stevens. For five years had she treasured the one vindictive hope of meeting him with the purpose of revenge. For five years had she moulded the bullets, and addressed them to the mark which symbolized his breast. Her chief prayer in all this time, was, that she might behold him with power to employ upon him the skill which she had daily shown upon the insensible trees of the forest. To kill him, and then to die, was all that she had prayed for and now the difference! In one little month all this had undergone a change. Her feelings had once more been humanized perhaps we should say womanized; for, in these respects, women are more capricious than men, and the transitions of love to hate, and hate to love, are much more rapid in the case of a grown woman than in that of a grown man. As for boys, until twenty−five, they are perhaps little more than girls in breeches certainly they are quite as capricious. The experience of five years after twenty−five does more to harden the sensibilities of a man, than any other ten years of his life.

Great, indeed, was the change in this respect which Beauchampe's wife had undergone. Not to meet Stevens was now her prayer. True, she had sworn her husband, if they did meet, to take his life. But that had been the condition of her hand; that was before he had become her husband, before she well knew his value, before she could think upon the risks which she herself would incur, by the danger which, in the prosecution of this pledge, would necessarily accrue to him. Nor was her change of character less decided in another grand essential. In learning to forget and forgive, she had also learned to forego the early dreams with which her ambitious mind commenced its progress.

"You speak of fame, Beauchampe," she said, even while sitting as we have described, in the darkness, looking forth upon the faint light which the stars shed upon the garden−shrubbery: " you speak of fame, Beauchampe, oh! how I once dreamed of it! Now I care for it nothing. Rather, indeed, should I prefer, if wecould remain here, out of the world's eye, living to ourselves, and secure from that opinion which we are too apt to seek; upon which we too much depend; which does not confer fame, and but too often robs us of happiness. It is my presentiment on this very subject, which makes me dread the removal to Frankfort which you contemplate."

"And yet," said he, "I know not how we can avoid it. It seems necessary."

"I believe it, and do not mean to urge you against it. I only wish that it were not necessary. But, being so, I will go with you cheerfully. I am not daunted by the prospect, though it oppresses me. How much more happy, if we could live here always!"

"No, no, Anna, you would soon sicken of this. You would ask, why have I married this rustic? You will hear of the great men around, and will say, 'he might have been one of them.' Your pride is greater than you believe; you are not so thoroughly cured of your ambition as you think."

"Oh, indeed, I am! I look back to the days when I had a passion for fame as to a period when I was under monomania. Truly, it was a monomania. Oh! Beauchampe, had you known me then!"

"Why had I not! We had been so happy then, Anna we had saved so many days of bliss, and then but it is not too late! Anna, there is no good reason why a genius such as yours, should be obscured lost for ever. The world must know it, and worship it!"

"The world! Oh, never!" she exclaimed, with a shudder. "The world is my terror now! Would we could never know it."

"But why these scruples, dearest?"

"Why! Can you ask, Beauchampe? Do you forget what I have been what I am!"

"You are my wife, and I am a man. Do you think the world will venture to speak a word which shall shame or annoy you?"

"It is not in its speech, but in its knowledge!"

"But what will it know? Nothing."

"Unless we meet with him!"

"And if we do?"

"Ah! let us speak of it no more, Beauchampe!"

"One word only! If we meet with him, he dies, andis thus silenced! Will it be likely that he will speak of that, which only incurs the penalty of death?"

"Enough! enough! The very inquiry the conjecture which you utter, Beauchampe, is conclusive with me, that I should not go into the world. With you, as your wife, humble, shrinking out of sight, solicitous only of obscurity, and toiling only for your applause and love, I shall be permitted to pass without indignity, without waking up that many−tongued slanderer, that lies ever in wait, dogging the footsteps of ambition. Were I now to seek the praises which you and others have thought due to my genius, I should incur the hostility of the foul−mouthed and the envious. No moment of my life would be secure from suspicion; no movement of my mind, safe from the assaults of the caviller. It is one quality of error nay, even of misfortune to betray itself wherever it goes. The proverb tells us, that murder will have a tongue it appears to me, that all crimes will reveal themselves in some way, some day or other. Better, Beauchampe, that I remain unseen, unknown, than be known as I am! "

"Better! But this cannot be you must be seen you will be known! The world will seek you, to admire. Remember, Anna, that I have friends, numerous friends; among them are some of the ablest men of our

profession of any profession. There is no man better able than this very gentleman, Colonel Sharpe, to appreciate a genius such as yours."

"Do not mock me with such language, Beauchampe. Instead of thinking of the world's admiration, I should be thinking only of its possible discoveries. As for Colonel Sharpe, somehow, I have an impression gathered, I know not how, but possibly from his letters, that he lacks sincerity. There is a tone of scepticism and levity about his language, which displeases and pains me. He lacks heart. I only wonder how you should have sought your professional knowledge at his hands."

"You forget, Anna, that I sought nothing at his hands but professional knowledge; and most persons will tell you, that I could scarcely have sought it any where with greater prospect of finding it. He is one of our best lawyers. As a man, frankly I confess to you, he is not one whom I admire. You seem to me to have hit his right character. He has always seemed to lack sincerity; and this impression, which he made upon me at a very early period, has always kept me from putting more of my heart within his power, than was absolutely unavoidable."

"Ah, Beauchampe, a man of your earnest temperament knows not how much he gives. You carry your heart too much in your eyes, in your hand. This is scarcely good policy."

"With you, dearest, it was the only policy," he said, with a smile; while he pressed her closer to his bosom.

"Ah! with me! But that is yet to be determined. You know not yet."

"What! are you not mine? Do I not feel you in my arms? Do I not embrace you?"

"It may be that you embrace death, Beauchampe."

"Speak not so gloomily, my love. Why should you yield yourself to such vague and nameless apprehensions? There is nothing to cloud our prospect, which, when I think, seems all bright and cloudless as the night we gaze on."

"Ah! when you think, Beauchampe but thought is no seer, though an active speculator. You forget these instincts, Beauchampe these presentiments!"

"I have forgotten mine," he answered, livelily.

"Ah! but mine depart not so soon. They rise still, and will continue to rise."

"You brood over you encourage them."

"No! but they seem a part of me. I have always had them, even in the days of my greatest exultation; when, in truth, I had no cares to suggest them. They have marked and preceded, like omens, all my misfortunes. Should I not fear them then?"

"Not now: it is only the old habit of your mind which is now active. Gloomy thoughts and complaining accents become habitual; and, even when the sun shines, the eye, long accustomed to the cloud, still fancies that it beholds it gathering blackly in the distance. Now you are secure. Your cloud is gone, dearest, never, never to return."

"See where it rises, Beauchampe, an image on the night. How ominous, were these days of superstition, would that dark image be of our fortunes. Even as you spoke with such confident assurance, the evening star grew faint. Love's own star waned in the growingdarkness of the west. Love's own star seemed to shroud itself in gloom at the prediction which so soon may be rendered false. Look how fast is the ascent of that gloomy tabernacle of the

storm. Not one of the lovely lights in that quarter of the sky remains to cheer us. Even thus, have the lights of my hope for ever gone out. That first light of my soul, which was the morning star of my being its insane passion for fame, was thus obscured; then, the paler gleams of evening which denoted love; and how fast after, followed all that troop of smaller lights which betokened the dreams and hopes of a warm and throbbing heart. Ah! Beauchampe! faded, stricken out, not one by one, as the joys and hopes of others, but with a sudden eclipse that swept all their delusive legions at a moment out of sight, never, never to return!"

"Say not, never!"

"Ah! it is my fear that speaks the long sense of desolation and dread which has made up so many years of my life! It is this which makes me speak, from a conviction of the past, with a dark prophetic apprehension of the future. True, that the love blesses me now, a delusive image of which defrauded me before, but how with the sudden rising of that cloud before my eyes, even in the hour of your boastful speech, and perhaps, my no less boastful hope, how can I else than believe that another delusion, no less fatal than the past, though now untouched with shame, has found its way to my heart, beguiling me with hope, only to sink me in despair?"

"Arouse, my love is no delusion;" said the husband, reproachfully.

"I meant not that, Beauchampe I believe not that. Heaven knows I hold it as a truth and the sweetest truth that my soul has ever known in its human experience. But for its permanence I feared. I doubted not that the light was pure and perfect; but, alas! I knew not how soon it might go out. I felt that it was a bright star shining down upon my soul; but I also feel that there is a gloomy storm rising to obscure the star, and leave me in a darkness more complete than ever. Oh! Beauchampe, if we should ever meet that man!"

"He dies, Anna!"

"Oh, no! I mean not that."

"Have I not sworn?"

"Yes! but the exaction of that oath was in my madness it was impious: I shudder but to think of it. May you never, never meet with him."

"Amen! I trust that we may never!"

"Could I but be sure of that!"

"Let it not trouble you, dearest: we may never meet with him."

"Ay, but we may; and the doubt of that dreadful possibility, flings a gloomy shadow over the dear, sweet reality of the present."

"Be of better cheer, my heart. You are mine. You know that nothing is left for me to learn. You look to me for love you depend not upon the world, but upon me. That world, as it can teach me nothing of your value that can make the smallest approach to the certainties which I feel, so it can report nothing in your disparagement which your own lips have not already spoken. Why then should you fear? At the worst, we can only sink out of the world's sight when its looks irk, or its tones annoy us."

"Ah! that is not so easy, Beauchampe. Once out of the world's eye, nothing is so easy as to remain so. But the world pursues the person who has challenged its regard; and haunts the dwelling where it fancies it may find a spot of shame. Besides, is not your fame precious to me as well as to yourself. This profession of yours, more than

any other in our country, is that which concentrates upon itself the public gaze. When you have won this gaze, Beauchampe, when you have controlled the eager ears of an audience, and commanded the admiration of an admiring multitude if, at this moment, some slanderous finger should guide the eye of the spectator from the commanding eminence of the orator to the form of her who awaits him at home, and say 'what pity!' ah! Beauchampe! "

"Speak of it no more," said Beauchampe, and there was a faintness in his accents while he spoke, that made it certain that he felt annoyance from the suggestion. Unwittingly, she sighed, as her keen instinct detected the feeling which her words had inspired. Beauchampe drew her closer to him, forced her upon his knee, and sought, by the adoption of a tone and words of better assurance, todo away with the gloomy presentiments under which her mood was evidently and painfully struggling.

"I tell you, Anna, these are childish fancies! at the worst, mere womanish fears! Believe me, when I tell you, that the days shall now be bright before you. You have had your share of the cloud. There is no lot utterly void and dark. God balances our fortunes with singular equality. None are all prosperous none are all unfortunate. If the youth be one of gloom and trial, the manhood is likely to be bright and cheerful; while he, who in youth has known sunshine only, will, in turn, most probably be compelled to taste the cup of bitterness for which he is wholly unprepared. It is perhaps fortunate for all to whom the bitterness of this cup becomes, in youth, familiar. At the worst, if still compelled to drink of it, the taste is more certainly reconciled to its ungracious flavour. That you have had this poisoned chalice commended to your lips in youth, is perhaps something of a guarantee that you shall escape the draught hereafter. So far from the past, therefore, flinging its huge dark shadow upon the future, it should be regarded as a solemn background, which, by contrast, shall reflect more brightly than were it not, the gay, gladdening lights which shall gather and burn about your pathway. I tell you, dearest, I know this shall be the case. You have outlived the storm you shall now have sunny skies, and smooth seas. Neither this beauty which I call my own, nor these talents which are so certainly yours, shall be doomed to the obscurity to which your unnecessary fears would assign them. I tell you I shall yet behold you, glowing among, and above, the ambitious circle. I shall yet hear the rich words of your song floating through the charmed assembly, at once startling the soul and soothing the stilled ear of admiration. Come, come fling aside this shadow from your heart, and let it show itself in all its glory. Look your best smiles, my love and will you not sing me now one of those proud songs, which you sang for me the other night one of those which tell me how proud, how ambitious was your genius in the days of your girlhood? Do not deny me, Anna. Sing for me sing for me one of those songs."

She began a strain, though with reluctance, which declared all the audacious egotism which is usually felt, ifnot always expressed, by the ardent and conscious poet. The fame for which she had once yearned the wild dreams which once possessed her imagination and influenced her hope were poured forth in one of those irregular floods of harmony at once abrupt and musical which never issue from the lips of the mere instructed minstrel. Truly, it might have awakened the soul under the ribs of death; and the heart of Beauchampe bounded and struggled within him, not capable of action, yet full, as it seemed, of a most impatient discontent. Wrought up to that enthusiasm of which his earnest nature was easily susceptible, he caught her in his arms ere the strain was ended, and the thought which filled his mind, arising from the admiration which he felt, was that which told him what a sin it would be, if such genius should be kept from its fitting utterance before admiting thousands. The language of eulogism which he had used to her a few moments before was no longer that of hyperbole: and, releasing her from his grasp, while she concluded the strain, he paced the floor of the apartment, meditating with the vain pride of an adoring lover, upon the sensation which such a song, and so sung, would occasion in the souls of any audience.

The strain ceased. The silence which followed, though deep and breathless, was momentary only. A noise of approaching horses was heard at the entrance; and the prescient heart of the wife sunk within her. She felt as if this visit were a foretaste of that world which she feared; and hurrying up to her chamber, while Beauchampe went to the entrance, she endeavoured, by a brief respite from the trials of reception and in solitude to prepare

her mind for an encounter, the anticipated annoyance from which was, however, of a very different character from that to which she was really destined.

CHAPTER XXI.

She was not suffered to remain long in suspense. The first accents of the strange voice, addressing her husband at the door, and which reached her ears in her chamber, proved the speaker to be no stranger. Fearfully her heart sank within her as she heard it. The voice was that of Alfred Stevens! Five years had elapsed since she had heard it last, yet its every tone was intelligible; clear as then; distinct, unaltered; in every syllable the same utterance of the same wily assassin of innocence and love! What were her emotions? It were in vain to attempt to describe them there is no need of analysis. There was nothing compounded in them there was no mystery! The pang and the feeling were alike simple. Her sensations were those of unmitigated horror. "One stupid moment, motionless, she stood," then sunk upon her knees! Her hands were clasped her eyes lifted to heaven but she could not pray. "God be with me!" was her only broken ejaculation, and the words choked her. The trial had come! Her head throbbed almost to bursting. She clasped it with her cold hands. It felt as if the bony mansion could not much longer contain the fermenting and striving mass within. Yet she had to struggle. It was necessary that the firm soul should not yield, and hers was really no feeble one. Striving and struggling to suppress the feeling of horror which every moment threatened to burst, she could readily comprehend the relief that nature could afford her could she only break forth in hysterical convulsions. But these convulsions would be fatal not to herself not to life, perhaps, for that was not now a subject of apprehension. It would endanger her secret! That was now her fear. To preserve her equilibrium to suppress the torments and the troubles of her soul to keep Beauchampe from the knowledge that the man he had sworn to slay was his friend, and was even now a guest upon his threshold this was the important necessity. It was this necessity that made the struggle so terrible. She shook like an aspen in the wind.Her breast heaved with spasmodic efforts that were only not convulsions her limbs trembled she could not well walk yet she could not remain where she knelt. To kneel without submission while her soul still struggled with divided impulses was to kneel in vain. The consolation of prayer can only follow the calmness of the soul. That was not hers could not be. Yet it was necessary that she should appear so. Terrible trial! she tottered across the room to the mirror, and gazed upon its placid surface. It was no longer placid while she gazed. What a convulsion prompted each muscle of her face! The dilation of those orbs, how could that be subdued? Yet it must be done.

"Thy hand is upon me now! God be merciful!" she exclaimed once more sinking to her knees. "Bitterly now do I feel, how much I have offended. Had these five years been passed in prayers of penitence rather than of pride in prayers for grace rather than of vengeance, it had not been hard to pray now. Thy hand had not been so heavy! Spare me, Father. Let this trial be light. Let me recover strength give me composure for this fearful meeting!"

She started to her feet. She heard a movement in her mother's apartment. That restless old lady, apprised of the arrival of the expected visiters, was preparing to make her appearance below. It was necessary that she should be forewarned, else she might endanger every thing. With this new fear, she acquired strength. She hurried to her mother's apartment and found her at the threshold. The impatient old lady, agog with all the curiosity of age, was preparing to descend the stairs.

"Come back with me an instant," said the daughter, as she passed into the chamber.

"What's the matter with you, Margaret? you look as if your old fits were come back to you!"

"It is likely; there is occasion for them. Know you who is below?"

"To be sure I do. Col. Sharpe and Mr. Barnabas. Who but them?"

"Alfred Stevens is below! Col. Sharpe and Alfred Stevens are the same persons."

"You don't say so! Lord, if Beauchampe only knew!" exclaimed the old lady in accents of terror.

"And if you rush down as you are, he will know;" said the daughter sternly. "For this purpose I came to prepare you. You must take time and compose yourself. It is no easy task for either of us, mother, but it must be done. You do not know, for I have not thought it worth while to tell you, that, before I consented to marry Beauchampe, I told him all I kept no secrets from him."

"You didn't sure, Margaret?"

"As I live I did!"

"But that was very foolish, Margaret."

"No! it was right it was necessary. Nothing less could have justified me nothing less could have given me safety."

"I don't see I think 'twas very foolish."

"Be it so, mother it is done; and I must tell you more, the better to make you feel the necessity of keeping your countenance. Before I became the wife of Beauchampe, he swore to revenge my wrong. He pledged himself before Heaven to slay my betrayer whenever they should meet. They have met they are below together."

"Lord have mercy, what a madness was this!" cried the old lady with uplifted hands and sinking into a chair. Her anxiety to get below was effectually quieted.

"It was no madness to declare the truth;" said the daughter gloomily "perhaps it was not even a madness to demand such a pledge."

"And you're going to tell Beauchampe that his intimate friend and Alfred Stevens are the same you're going to have blood shed in the house?"

"No! not if I can help it! When I swore Beauchampe to slay this villain, I was not the woman that I am now. I knew not then his worth. I did not then do justice to his love which was honourable. My purpose now is to keep this secret from him, if you do not betray it; and if the criminal himself can have the prudence to say nothing. From his honour, were that my only security, I should have no hope. I feel that he would manifest no forbearance, were he not restrained by the wholesome fear of vengeance. Even in this respect I have my doubts. There is sometimes such a recklessness in villany that it grows rash in spite of caution. I must only hope and pray for the best; ah! could I pray!"

Once more did the unhappy woman sink upon her knees. She was now more composed. Her feelings had become fixed. The necessity of concentrating her strength and composing her countenance for the approaching trial was sufficiently strong to bring about, to a certain extent, the desired results; and the previous necessity of restraining her mother, or at least, of preparing her for a meeting, which, otherwise, might have provoked a very suspicious show of feeling or excitement, had greatly helped to increase her own fortitude and confirm her will. But, from prayer she got no strength. Still she could not pray. The empty words came from the lips only. The soul was still wandering elsewhere still striving, struggling in a moral chaos where, if all was neither void nor formless, all was dark, indistinct and threatening.

But little time was suffered even for this effort. The voices from below became louder. Laughter, and occasionally the words and topics of conversation reached their ears. That Alfred Stevens should laugh at such a moment, while she struggled in the throes of mortal apprehension on account of him, served to strengthen her pride, and renew and warm her sense of hostility. What a pang it was to hear, distinctly uttered by his lips, an inquiry, addressed to her husband, on the subject of his wife. What feelings of pain, and apprehension were awakened in her bosom by the simple sounds

"But where's your wife, Beauchampe? we must see her, you know. You forget the commission which we bear the authority conferred by the club. Unless we approve, you know "

What more was said escaped her, but a few moments more elapsed when Beauchampe was heard ascending the stairs. She rose from where she knelt, and bracing herself to the utmost, she advanced and met him at the head of the stairs.

"Come," said he, "and show yourself. My friends wonder at your absence. They inquire for you. Where's your mother?"

"I will inform her, and she will probably follow me down."

"Very good come as soon as possible, for we must get them supper. They have had none."

He returned to his guests, and she to her chamber. Her mother was weeping.

"If you do not feel strong enough, mother, to face these visiters to−night, do not come down. I will see to giving them supper. At all events, remember how much depends on your firmness. I feel now that I shall be strong enough; but I tremble when I think of you. Perhaps, you had better not be seen at all. I can plead indisposition for you while they remain, which I suppose will only be to−night."

The mother was undecided what to do. She could only articulate the usual lamentation of imbecility, that things were as they were.

"It was so foolish, to tell him any thing."

The daughter looked at her in silence and sorrow. But the remark rather lifted her forehead. It was, indeed, with the pride of a high and honourable soul that she exulted in the consciousness that she had revealed the truth that she had concealed nothing of her cruel secret from the husband who had the right to know. With this strengthening conviction that, if the worst came, she at least had no concealments which could do her harm, she descended to the fearful encounter. Never was the rigid purpose of a severe will, in circumstances most trying, impressed upon any nature with more inflexibility than upon hers. Every nerve and sensibility was corded up to the fullest tension. She felt that she might fall in sudden convulsion that the ligatures which her will had put upon brain and impulse might occasion apoplexy; but she felt, at the same time, that every muscle would do its duty that her step should not falter, that her eye should not shrink, that no emotion of face, no agitation of frame should effect the development of her fearful secret, or rouse the suspicions of her husband that there was a secret.

She achieved her purpose! She entered the apartment with the easy dignity of one wholly unconscious of wrong, or of any of those feelings which denote the memory of wrong. But she did not succeed, nor did she try, to impart to her countenance and manner the appearance of indifference. On the contrary, the solemnity of her looks amounted to intensity. She could not divest her face of the tension which she felt. The tremendous earnestness of the encounter the awful seriousness of that meeting on which so much depended if not clearly expressed on her countenance, at least, left there the language of an impressivenesswhich had its effect upon the company.

Beauchampe was aware of enough, to be at no loss to account for the grave severity of her aspect. Mr. Barnabas, without knowing any thing, at least felt the presence of much and solemn character in the eyes that met his own. As for Col. Sharpe, he was too much surprised at meeting so unexpectedly with the woman he had wronged, to be at all observant of the particular feelings which her features seemed to express. He started at her entrance. Looking, just then, at his wife, Beauchampe failed to note the movement of his guest. He started, his face became suddenly pale, then red, and his eyes involuntarily turned to Beauchampe as if in doubt and inquiry. His congé, if he made any, was the result of habit only. Never was guilty spirit more suddenly confounded, though, perhaps, never could guilty spirit more rapidly recover from his consternation. In ten minutes after, Col. Sharpe, alias Alfred Stevens, was as talkative as ever, as if he had no mortifications to apprehend, no conscience to quiet; but, when the eyes of Beauchampe and Barnabas were averted, his might be seen to wander to the spot where sat the woman he had wronged! What was the expression in that glance? What was the secret thought in the dishonourable mind of the criminal? Though momentary only, that glance was full of intelligence; but the recognition which it conveyed found no response from hers; though, not unfrequently, at such moments, as if there were some fascination in his eyes, they encountered those of the person whom they sought, keenly fixed upon them!

CHAPTER XXII.

And thus, after five long years of separation, years of triumph on the one hand, years of degradation and desperation on the other, they met, the destroyer and his victim. The serpent had once more penetrated into the garden. Its flowers had been renewed. Its Eden, for a brief moment, appeared to be restored. If the sunshinewas of a subdued and mellowed character, it was still sunshine! Alas! for the woman! She gazed upon her destroyer, and felt that the whole fabric of her peace was once more in peril. She saw before her the same base spirit which had so profligately triumphed in her overthrow. She felt, from a single glance, that he had undergone no change. There was an expression in his look when their eyes encountered, which annoyed her with the familiarity of its recognition. She turned from it with disgust. "At all events," she thought, "he will keep his secret; he will not willingly incur the anger of a husband. A day will free us from his presence, and the danger will then pass for ever!"

Filled with doubts, racked with apprehension, but still with this hope, the woman yet performed the duties of the household with a stern resoluteness that was admirable. No external tokens of her agitation were to be seen. Her movements were methodical, and free from all precipitation. Her voice, though the tones were low, was clear, distinct, and she spoke simply to the purpose. Even her enemy felt, or rather exercised, a far less degree of coolness and composure. His voice sometimes faltered as he gazed upon, and addressed her; and there was, at moments, a manifest effort at ease and playfulness, which the ready sense of Beauchampe himself, did not fail to discriminate. It was something of a startling coincidence that, after fighting with William Calvert about Margaret Cooper, he should, the very next night, be the favoured guest of her husband. Col. Sharpe brooded over the fact with some superstitious misgivings; but the progress of supper, soon made him forgetful of his fears, if he had any; and before the evening was far advanced, he had recovered very much of his old composure.

When the supper things were removed, Mr. Barnabas brought up the subject of horses, in order, as it would seem, to advert to the condition of his favorite roan, which had struck lame that evening on their way from Bowling Green. The question was a serious one whether he suffered from snag, or nail, or pebble; and the worthy owner concluded his speculations by declaring his wish, at an early moment, to subject the animal to fitting inspection. Beauchampe rose to attend him to the stables.

"Will you go, Col.?" asked Mr. Barnabas.

"Surely not," was the reply. "My taste does not lie that way. I will remain with Mrs. Beauchampe in the hope to perfect our acquaintance."

The blood rose in the brain of the person spoken of; her heart strove to suppress the rising feeling of indignation. At first, her impulse was to rise and leave the room. But the next moment determined her otherwise. A single reflection convinced her that there would be no good policy in such a movement that it would be equivalent to a confession of weakness which she did not feel; and she was resolved that her feelings of aversion should not give her enemy such an advantage over her. "He must be met, at one time or other, and perhaps the sooner the issue is over, the better."

This reflection passed through her mind in very few seconds. They were now alone together. The lantern, which the servant carried before Beauchampe and Mr. Barnabas, was already flickering faintly at a distance as seen through the window pane beside her; when Col. Sharpe started from his seat and approached her.

"Can it be that I again see you, Margaret!" he exclaimed "have my prayers been granted am I again blessed with a meeting with one so dearly loved, so long and bitterly lamented."

"You see the wife of Orville Beauchampe, Col. Sharpe!" was the expressive reply.

"Nay, Margaret, it is my misfortune that you are his wife, or the wife of any man but one. Hear me, for I perceive that you think that I have wronged you "

"Think, sir, think! but no more of this!" was her indignant answer as she rose from the chair and prepared to leave the room "it can matter little to you, sir, what my thoughts of your conduct and character may be, as it is now small matter to me what they ever have been. It is enough for you to know that you are the guest of my husband; and that, in his ignorance of your crime, lies your only safety. A word from me, sir, brings down his vengeance upon your head. You yourself best know whether that is to be feared or not."

"But you will not speak that word, Margaret!"

"Will I not?" she exclaimed while a fiery scorn seemed to gather in her eyes.

"No! Margaret, no! I am sure you cannot. For the sake of the past, you will not."

"Be not so sure of that! It is for the sake of the future that I am silent were it for the past only, Alfred Stevens, not only should my lips speak but my hands act. I should not ask of him to avenge me my own arm should right my wrong my own arm should, even now, be uplifted in the work of vengeance, and you should never leave this house alive."

He smiled as he replied

"I know you better, Margaret. If you ever loved "

"Stay, sir stay, Alfred Stevens, if you would not have me so madden as to prove to you how little you have known or can know of me. Do not speak to me in such language. Beware for your own sake, for my sake, I implore you to forbear."

"For your sake, Margaret, any thing for your sake. But be not hasty in your judgment. You wrong me on my soul you do! If you knew the cruel necessity that kept me from you "

"Oh, false!" she exclaimed "false, and no less foolish than false; do not hope to deceive me by your base inventions. I heard all know all! I know that I was the credulous victim of your subtle arts that my conquest and overthrow was the subject of your dishonest boast."

"It is false, Margaret the villain lied who told you this."

"No, Alfred Stevens, no! He spoke the truth, the veracity of the two Hinkleys was never questioned. But your own acts confirmed his story. Why did you not keep your promise why did you fly where have you been for five bitter years, in which I was the miserable mock of those whom once I looked on with contempt the desperate, the fearful wretch, on the verge of a madness which, half the time, kept the weapons of death within my grasp which I only did not use upon myself, because there was still a hope that I should meet with you?"

"I am here now, Margaret if my death be necessary to your peace, command it. I confess that I owe you atonement, though I am less guilty than you think, take my life, if that will suffice; I offer no entreaty; I utter no complaint."

"One little month ago, Alfred Stevens, and you had not needed to make this offer you had not made it a second time in vain. But that time has changed me. Go live! Leave this house with the morning's sun, and forget that you have ever known me! Forget, if possible, that you know my husband! It is for his sake that I spare you for his sake I entreat your silence of the past your utter forgetfulness of him and me."

"For his sake, Margaret!" he answered with an incredulous smile while offering to take her hand. She repulsed him.

"No, no, Margaret! it is impossible that this young man can be any thing to you. You cannot be so forgetful of those dear moments, of that first passion, consecrated as it was by those stolen joys "

"Remind me not, remind me not, man or devil! Remind me not of your crime remind me not of my sworn vengeance sworn, day by day, every day of bitterness and death which I have endured since those dark and damning hours. Hark ye, Alfred Stevens!" her voice here suddenly lowered almost to a whisper "hark ye, you are not a wise man! You are tempting your fate. You are in the very den of danger. I tell you that I spare your life, though the weapon is shotted though the knife is whetted. I spare your life, simply on condition that you depart. Linger longer than is absolutely needful vex me longer with these insolent suggestions, and you wake into fury the slumbering hatred of my soul, which, for five years, has known no moment's sleep till now. See! the light returns a word a single word more by way of warning depart by the dawn to−morrow. Linger longer, and you may never depart again!"

"Why, Margaret, this is downright madness!"

"So it is; and I am mad, and cannot be otherwise than mad while you remain here. Do you not fear that my madness will turn upon and rend you."

"No!" he said quietly, but earnestly and in subdued tones, for the light was now rapidly approaching. "No, Margaret, for I cannot believe in such sudden changes from love to hate. Besides, if it were true, of what profit would it be to take this vengeance? It would forfeit all the peace and happiness which you now enjoy!"

"Do I not know it? Is not this what I would tell you? Do I not entreat you to spare me, for this very reason? To rend and destroy you might gratify my vengeance but it would overthrow the peace of others who have become dear to me. I ask you to spare them to spare me not to provoke me to that desperation which will make me forgetful of every thing except the wrong I have suffered at your hand and the hate I bear you."

"But how do I this, Margaret?"

"Your presence does it."

"I cannot think you hate me."

"Ha! indeed! you cannot? Do not, I pray you, trust to that. You deceive yourself. You do! Leave this house with the morrow. Break off your intimacy with Beauchampe. Forget me! Look not at me! Provoke me not with your glance, still less with your accents; for, believe me, Alfred Stevens, I have had but a single thought since the day of my dishonour but a single prayer, and that was for the moment and the opportunity when I might wash my hands in your blood. Your looks, your words, revive the feeling within me. Even now I feel the thirst to slay you arising in my soul. I do not speak to threaten. To speak at all I must speak this language. I obey the feeling whatever it may be. Let me then implore you, be warned while there is time. Another day, and I may not be able to command myself I can scarcely do so now; and in doing so, the effort is not made in your behalf not even in my own. It is for him for Beauchampe only. He comes be warned beware!"

The approach of the light and the sounds of voices from without, produced their natural effect. They warned the offender much more effectually than even the exhortation of the woman, stern, vehement as it was. Nay, he did not believe in the sincerity of her speech. His vanity forbade that. He could not easily persuade himself of the revolution which she alleged her mind to have undergone, in his case, from love to hate; and was not the man to attach any very great degree of faith to asseverations of such hostility at any time, on the part of a creature usually so unstable and capricious as he deemed woman to be. It is certain that what she said had failed to affect him as it was meant to have done. The unhappywoman saw that with an increased feeling of care and apprehension. She beheld it in the leer of confident assurance which he still continued to bestow upon her even when the feet of Beauchampe were upon the threshold; and felt it in the half whispered words of hope and entreaty with which the criminal closed the conference between them at the same moment. Truly, bitter was that cup to her at this moment fearful and bitter! Involuntarily she clasped her hands, with the action of entreaty, while her eyes once more riveted themselves upon him. A meaning smile, which reawakened all her indignation, answered her, and then the muscles of both were required to be composed and inexpressive, as the husband once more stood between them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The necessity of the case brought a tolerable composure to the countenances of both the parties as Beauchampe and his companion re−entered the room. An instant after, the wife left it and hurried up to her chamber. Beauchampe's eye followed her movements curiously. In truth, knowing the dread and aversion which she had avowed, at mingling again in society, he was anxious to ascertain how she had borne herself in the interview with his friend.

"Truly, Beauchampe," said the latter, as if in answer to his thoughts "your wife is a very splendid woman."

"Ah! do you like her? Did she converse freely with you? She speaks well, but does not like society much."

"Very she has a fine majestic mind. Talks admirably well. Did you meet with her here?"

"Yes," said the other, though with some hesitation. "This farm upon which we live is her mother's."

"Her mother! ah! what was her maiden name, Beauchampe; I think you mentioned it in your letter, but it escapes me now."

"Cooke, Miss Ann Cooke."

"Cooke, Cooke I wonder if she is of the Cookes of Sunbury? I used to know that family."

"I think I believe not I am not sure, however. I really cannot say."

The reply of Beauchampe was made with some trepidation. The inquiry of Sharpe, which had been urged very gravely, aroused the only half latent consciousness of the husband, who began to feel the awkwardness of answering any more particular questions. Sharpe did not perceive the anxiety of Beauchampe he was himself too much absorbed in the subject of which he spoke.

"Your wife is certainly a very splendid woman in person, Beauchampe; and her mind appears to be original and well informed. But she seems melancholy, Beauchampe; quite too much so, for a newly made bride. Eh! what can be the matter?"

"She has had losses misfortunes her mother, too, is an invalid, and she has been compelled to be a watcher for some time past."

"And how long have they been neighbours to your mother? If I recollect, you never spoke of them before?"

"You forget, I have been absent from home some years," replied Beauchampe evasively.

"True I suppose they have come into the neighbourhood within that time? You did not know your wife in boyhood, did you?"

"No I did not. I never saw her till my present visit."

"I thought not! Such a woman is not to be passed over with impunity. Her person must attract and her intellect must secure and fascinate. I should say no man was ever more fortunate in his choice. What say you, Barnabas? We must give Beauchampe a certificate?"

"I suppose so, if you say so; but I can only judge of Mrs. Beauchampe by appearances. I have had none of the chat. I agree with you that she is a splendid woman to the eye, and will take your judgment for the rest."

"You will be safe in doing so. But how do you find your horse?"

"Regularly lame. I'm afraid the cursed brute's snagged or has a nail in his foot. The quick's touched somehow, for he won't lay the foot to the ground."

"That's bad! What have you done?"

"Nothing! We can see to do nothing to−night; but by the peep of day I must be at him. I must have your help,Beauchampe with your soap, and turpentine, and whatever else may be good for such a case?"

Beauchampe gave his assurance with readiness, perhaps rather pleased than otherwise that the subject should be changed.

"With your permission then, I will leave you," said Barnabas, "and get my sleep while I may. Let your boy waken me at dawn, if you please, for I am really anxious about the animal. He is a favourite a nag among a thousand."

"As every man's nag is," said Sharpe. "You can always tell a born egotist. He has always the best horse, and the best gun, the best ox and the best ass, of any man in the country. He really believes it. But ask Barnabas about the best wife, and ten to one he says nothing of his own. He has no boasts strange to say about his own rib bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh."

"You are cutting quite too close," said Barnabas.

"As near to the quick in your case, as in that of your nag."

"Almost! But the quick in that region is getting callous."

"High time, Barnabas it has been subject to sufficient induration."

"At all events I have no dread of your knife its edge is quite too blunt to do much hurt. Good night try it on Beauchampe. A young man and a young wife I have very little doubt you can find the quick in him with a little probing."

The quick in Beauchampe's case had already been found. Good Mr. Barnabas little knew on what delicate ground he was trespassing.

"A good fellow, that Barnabas," said Sharpe, "but a dull one. He really fancies now that his nag is a creature of great blood and bottom; and a more sorry jade never paddled to a country muster ground. He will scarcely sleep to−night with meditating upon the embrocations, the forentations, the fumigations, and whatever else may be necessary. But a truce to this, Beauchampe. I have a better subject. Seriously, my dear boy, I have never been more pleasantly surprised than in meeting with your wife. Really, she is remarkably beautiful; and though she is evidently shy of strangers, yet, as you know I have the artof bringing women out, I may boast of my ability to say what stuff she is made of. She speaks with singular force and elegance. I have never met with equal eloquence in any woman but one."

"And who is she."

"Nay, I cannot tell you that. It is years since I knew her, and she is no longer the same being: but your wife very much reminds me of her."

"Was she as beautiful as Anna?"

"Very near she was something younger than your wife a slight difference a few years only; but the advantage, if this were any, is compensated by the superior dignity and the lofty character of yours. She I allude to but it matters not now. Enough that your wife brings her to my mind as vividly as if the real living presence were before me, whom I once knew and admired, years ago."

Thus, with a singular audacity, did Col. Sharpe dally with this dangerous subject. He did not this perversely with wilful premeditation. It seemed as if he could not well avoid it. Evil thoughts have in them that faculty of perversely impelling the mind and tongue, which is possessed by intoxicating liquors. At moments, the wily assassin strove to avoid the subject, but he returned to it again, almost the instant after, even as one who recoils suddenly from the edge of some unexpected precipice, again and again advances, once more to gaze, with fascinated vision, down into its dim and perilous depths.

A like fascination did this subject possess over the mind of Beauchampe. The feeling of confidence, amounting to defiance, which he expressed to his wife, before their guests had arrived, whenever they spoke of going into the world, no longer seemed to sustain him. The moment that a stranger's lip spoke her name, and those inquiries were made, which are natural enough in such cases from the lips of friends, about the connexions and history of the woman he had married, then did Beauchampe, for the first time, perceive the painful meshes of deception into which the unfortunate events in his wife's life would necessarily involve his utterance. Yet still, with the restlessness of discontent, did he himself incline his ear to the smallest reference which his companion made to this subject. His pride was excited to hear her praises, and the rather barefaced and bald compliments which had

been paid to her intellectand beauty, were dear to him as the lover and the worshipper of both. If love be timid, of itself, in the utterance of eulogium upon the beauties which it admires, it is equally certain that no subject, from the lips of another, can be more really grateful to its ear. It was, perhaps, this sort of pleasure which Beauchampe derived from the subject and which made him incline to it whenever his companion employed it. Still, in the language of Mr. Barnabas, there was an occasional touching of the quick in what Sharpe said, at moments, under which his sensibilities winced. It was, therefore, with a mixed or rather divided feeling, neither of pain nor pleasure, or a compounded one of both, that Beauchampe conducted his friend to the chamber which was assigned him returning afterwards to his own, in a state of mind, highly excited, almost feverish dissatisfied with himself, his friend with every person but his wife. With her he had no cause of quarrel. No doubt of her, no sense of jealousy no regret, no apprehension disturbed that devoted passion which made him resolve, under all circumstances, to link her with his life. If any thing, the effect of the evening's interview was to make him look with eyes of greater favour upon her taste for privacy, and the life of seclusion in which, up to this period, his moments of superior happiness had been known. But this subject does not concern us now.

Col. Sharpe was shown into the same chamber which had been allotted to Mr. Barnabas. In our frontier country, it need scarcely be stated, that the selfishness which insists upon chamber and bed to itself is practically rebuked in a manner the most decided. In some parts, two in a bed would be thought quite a liberal arrangement; and may well be thought so, when it is known that four or five is not an uncommon number the fifth man being occasionally placed crosswise, in the manner of a raft−tie, rather, it would seem, to keep the rest from falling out, than with the view to making him unnecessarily comfortable. Messrs. Sharpe and Barnabas were too well accustomed to the condition of country life to make any scruple about that arrangement which placed them in the same apartment and couch; and under existing circumstances, the former was rather pleased with it than otherwise. He had scarcely entered the room before he carefully fastened the door; listened for the retreating steps of Beauchampe, till theywere finally lost, and while Barnabas was wondering at, and vainly endeavouring to divine the reason of this mystery, he approached the bed where the other lay, and seated himself upon it.

"You are not asleep, Barnabas?" he said in a whisper.

"No," replied the other, with tones made rather husky by a sudden tremulousness of the nerves. "No! what's the matter?"

"Matter enough the strangest matter in the world. Would you believe that Margaret Cooper, the girl whose seduction was charged upon me by Calvert, and Beauchampe's wife are one and the same person!"

"The devil they are!" exclaimed the other, in his surprise rising to a sitting posture in the bed.

"True as gospel!"

"Can't be possible, Sharpe!"

"Possible, and true. They are the same. I have spoken with her as Margaret Cooper; the recognition is complete on both sides; we talked of nothing else while you and Beauchampe were at the stables."

"Great God! how awkward! What's to be done?"

"Awkward! Where's the awkwardness? I see nothing awkward about it. On the contrary, I regard this meeting as devilish fortunate. I was never half satisfied to lose her as I did, and to find her again is like finding one's treasure when he had given up the hope of it for ever."

"But what do you mean, Sharpe? are you really insensible to the danger."

"What danger!"

"Why, that she'll blow you to her husband!"

"What wife would do that, d'ye think? No! no! Barnabas, she's no such fool. Of course she kept her secret when she married him. She'll scarcely blab it now."

"But won't this affair of Calvert get to his ears."

"What if it does? It can do no mischief. Had you listened to my examination of Beauchampe but you're a dull fellow, Barnabas! Didn't you hear me ask what his wife's maiden name was? Maiden name, indeed! Did you hear the answer?"

"Yes he said the name was Cooke."

"To be sure he did. Ann, or Anna Cooke his Anna! Ha! ha! ha! His Anna!"

"But don't laugh so loud, Sharpe; they'll hear you and suspect."

"Pshaw, you're timid as a hare in December. Don't you see that she's imposed upon him a false name. Let him hear till doomsday of Margaret Cooper and myself, and it brings him not a jot nigher to the truth. But, of course, you must tell him of my affair with Calvert, and give the political version. He can scarce hear any other version from any other source; political hacks will scarcely ever deal in truth when a lie may be had as easily, and can serve their turn as well. We are representatives of our several parties and principles, you know; treating each other roughly too roughly without gloves, and, as usual in such cases, exchanging shots by way of concluding an ill−adjusted argument. There's no danger of any thing but what we please meeting Beauchampe's ears."

"But, by Jove, Sharpe, this is a d d ticklish situation to be in. I'd rather you were not here in his house. I'd rather be elsewhere myself."

"You are certainly the most timid mortal. Will you set off to−morrow with your lame horse."

"If he can hobble at all, I will, by Jove. I don't like the situation we're in at all."

"And by Venus, friend Barnabas, if such be your determination, you set off alone. I'm not going to give up my treasure the moment I find it, for any Beauchampe or Barnabas of you all. No! no! my most excellent, but most apprehensive friend! having seen her, how can you think it. But you have neither eyes nor passion. By heavens, Barnabas, I am all in a convulsion of joy. I see her before me now those dilating eyes, wild, bright, almost fierce in their brightness, like those of an eagle; those lips, that brow, and that full and heaving bosom, whose sweets "

"Hush! you are mad if you must feel these raptures, Sharpe, for God's sake, say nothing about them. They will hear you in the adjoining room."

"No! no! it is your silly fears, Barnabas. I am speaking in a whisper."

"D n such whispers, say I. They can be heard by keen ears half a mile. But you say you spoke with her what did she say? Did she abuse you?"

"No! indeed!"

"Is it possible the b "

"Hush! hush! You do not understand her. She did not abuse me, for of Billingsgate she knows nothing. You must not think of her as of your ordinary town wenches. She is too proud for any such proceeding. She threatened me."

"Ah! How!"

"With her own vengeance and that of her husband. Told me she had the weapon for me ready sharpened, and the pistol shotted, and had kept them ready for years."

"The Tartar! and what did you say?"

"Laughed, of course, and but for the coming of the lantern and the husband, I should have silenced her threats by stopping her mouth with kisses."

"You're a dare−devil, Sharpe, and you'll have your throat cut some day by some husband or other."

"You're whiskers will be gray enough before that time comes. You know husbands quite as little as you know wives. Now, as soon as Margaret Cooper began to threaten me, I knew I was safe."

"Devilish strange sort of security that."

"True and certain, nevertheless. People who threaten much seldom perform. But I have even better security than this."

"What's that?"

"She loves me."

"What! you think so still, do you? You're a conceited fellow."

"I know it! That first passion, Barnabas, is the longest lived. You cannot expel it. It holds on, it lasts longer than youth. It is the chief memory of youth. It recalls youth, revives it, and revives all the joys which come with youth the bloom, the freshness and the fragrance. Do you think that Margaret Cooper can forget that it was my lips that first gave birth to the passion of love within her bosom that first awakened its glow, and taught her, what before she never knew, that there were joys still left to earth, which could yet restore all the fabled bliss of Eden? Not easily, mon ami! No, Barnabas, the man who has once taught a woman how to love, may be, if he pleases, the perpetualmaster of her fate. She cannot help but love him she must obey and none but a fool or a madman can forfeit the allegiance which her heart will always be ready to pay to his."

"I don't know, Sharpe you always talk these things well; but I can't help thinking that there's danger. There's something in this woman's looks very different from the ordinary run of women."

"She is different, so far as superiority makes her different, but the same nature is hers which belongs to all. Love is the fate that makes or unmakes the whole world of woman."

"Maybe so; but this woman seems as proud, and cold, and stately "

"Masks, my boy, glorious masks, that help to conceal as much fire and passion, and tumultuous love as ever flamed in any woman's breast."

"She awes me with her looks, and if she threatened you, Sharpe, she seems to me the very woman to keep her threats."

"If she had not threatened me, Barnabas, I should have probably set out to−night."

"It will be a wise step to do so in the morning."

"No! no! my dear fellow. Neither you nor I go in the morning. Fortune favours me! She has thrown in my way the only treasure which I did not willingly throw aside myself, and which I have so long sighed, but in vain, to recover. Shall I now refuse to pick it up and enshrine it in my breast once more? No! no! Barnabas! I am no stoic I am no such profligate insensible!"

"Why, you don't mean "

The inquiry was conveyed, and the sentence finished by a look.

"Do I not! Call me slave, ass, dotard, any thing that can express contempt if I do not. And hark ye, Barnabas, you must help me."

"I help you. I'll be d d if I do! What! to have this fellow, Beauchampe, slit my carotid? Never! never!"

"Pshaw, you are getting cowardly in your old age."

"I tell you this fellow, Beauchampe, is a sort of Mohawk when he's roused."

"And I tell you, Barnabas, there's no sort of danger none at least to you. All that you will have to do will be to get him out of the way. You wish to ride round the country I do not. You wish to try the birds; nay, he can even get up an elk hunt for you. He knows that I have no passion for these things, and it will seem natural enough that I should remain at home. Do you take? at the worst, I am the offender, and the danger will be mine only. But there will be no danger. I tell you that Margaret Cooper has only changed in name. In all other respects she is the same. There can be no danger if Beauchampe chooses to remain blind, and if you will assist me in keeping him so."

"I don't half like it, Sharpe."

"Pshaw! my good fellow, there's no good reason why you should like or dislike. The simple question is whether, in a matter which will not affect you one way or the other, you are willing to serve your friend. That is the true and only question. You see for yourself that there can be no danger to you. I am sure there's no danger to any body. At all events, be the danger what it may, and take you what steps you please, I am resolved on mine. Reconcile to yourself, as you may, the desertion of your friend in consequence of a timidity which has no cause whatever of alarm."

Sharpe rose at this moment, kicked off his boots, and prepared to undress. The effect of a strong will upon a feeble one was soon obvious. Barnabas hesitated still, hemmed and ha'd, dilated once more upon the danger, and finally subsided into a mood of the most perfect compliance with all the requisitions of his friend. They carried the discussion still farther into the night, but that is is no reason why we should trespass longer upon the sleeping hours of our readers.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It was no difficult matter, in carrying out the design of Sharpe, to send Barnabas abroad the next morning in charge of Beauchampe. Sharpe had a headache, and declinedthe excursion; proposing, very deliberately, to the husband, to console himself for his absence in the company of the wife. The latter was not present when the arrangement was made. It took place at the stables, after breakfast, while they were engaged in the examination of the injured horse of Mr. Barnabas, and this gentleman with his cicerone set forth from the spot, leaving Sharpe, at his own leisure, to return to the house. Having seen them fairly off, he did so with the deliberation of one having a settled purpose. For his reappearance, alone, Mrs. Beauchampe was entirely unprepared. As he entered the room where she was sitting, she rose to leave it, though without any symptoms of haste or agitation. He placed himself between her and the door, and thus effectually prevented her egress. She fixed her eye keenly and coldly upon him.

"Alfred Stevens," she said, "you are trifling with your fate."

"Call it not trifling, dear Margaret; you are my fate, and I never was more earnest in my life. Do not show yourself so inflexible. After so long a separation such coldness is cruel it is unnatural."

"You say truly," she replied "I am your fate. I have long felt the persuasion that I would be; and I had prepared myself for it. Still, I would it were not so. I would not have your blood either on mine or the hands of Beauchampe. I implored you last night to spare me this necessity. It is not yet too late. Trifle not with your destiny waste not the moments which are left you. Persevere in this course of madness for a day longer, and you are doomed. Hear me believe me! I speak mildly and with method. I am speaking to you the convictions of five dreary years."

The calm, even, almost gentle manner and subdued accents of the woman, had the effect of encouragement rather than of warning. He was deceived by her bearing. He was not so profound a proficient as he fancied himself in the secrets of a woman's heart; and firmly persuaded of the notion that he had expressed to Barnabas, in the conversation of the previous night, that women are never so little dangerous as when they threaten, he construed all that she said into a sort of ruse de guerre, the more certainly to conceal her real weakness.

"Come, come, Margaret," he said, "it is you that trifle, not me. This is no time for crimination and complaint. Let me atone to you for the past. Believe me you wrong me if you suppose I meant to desert you. I was the victim of circumstances as well as yourself; circumstances which I can easily explain to you, and which will certainly excuse me for any seeming breach of faith. If you ever loved me, dear Margaret, it will not be difficult to believe what I am prepared to affirm."

"I do not doubt, sir, that you are prepared to affirm any thing; but I ask you neither for proofs nor oaths. Why should you volunteer them unasked, undesired. I have no wish to make you add a second perjury to the first."

"It is no perjury, Margaret; and you must hear me. I claim it for my own justification."

"I will not hear you, sir. If you are so well assured of your justification let that consciousness content you. I do not accuse I will not reproach you. Go your ways leave me to mine. Surely, surely, Alfred Stevens, it is the least boon that I could solicit at your hands, that, having trampled me to the dust in shame having robbed me of peace and pride for ever you should now leave me without farther persecution to the homely privacy which the rest of my life requires."

"Do not call it persecution, Margaret. It is love love only! You were my first love you shall be my last. I cannot be deceived, dear Margaret, when I assume that I was yours. We were destined for each other; and when I

recall to your memory those happy hours "

"Recall them at your peril, Alfred Stevens!" she exclaimed vehemently, interrupting him in the speech. "Recall them at your peril! Too vividly black already are those moments in my memory. Spare me spare yourself! Beware! Be warned in season! Oh! man! man! blind and desperate, you know not how nearly you stand on the brink of the precipice."

He regarded her with eyes full of affected admiration.

"At least, Margaret, whatever may be the falling off in your love, your genius seems to be as fresh and vigorous as ever. There is the same high poetical enthusiasm in your words and thoughts, the same burning eloquence "

"Col. Sharpe, these things deceive me no longer. I regard them now as the disparaging mockeries of a subtleand base spirit, meant to beguile and abuse the confidence of a frank and unsuspecting one. I am no longer unsuspecting. I am no longer the blind, vain country girl, whom with ungenerous cunning, you could deceive and dishonour. Shame and grief, which you brought to my dwelling, have taught me lessons of truth and humiliation, if not wisdom. What you say to me now, in the way of praise, does not exhilarate cannot deceive me, and may exasperate! Once more I say to you, beware!"

"Ah, Margaret, are you sure that you do not deceive yourself also in what you say. Allow that you care nothing for praise allow that your ear has become insensible to the language of admiration surely it cannot be insensible to that of love."

"Love! your love!"

"Yes, Margaret my love. You were not insensible to it once."

"I implore you not to remind me!"

"Ah, but I must, Margaret. Those moments were too precious to me to be forgotten. The memory of those joys too dear. Bitter was the grief which I felt when compelled to fly from a region in which I had taught, and been learned myself, the first true mysteries which I had ever known of love. Think you that I could forget those mysteries those joys? Oh, never! nor could you! On that conviction my hope is built. Wherever I fled, that memory was with me still! It was my present solace under every difficulty the sweetening drop in every cup which my lips were compelled to drink of bitter and annoyance. Margaret, I cannot think that you did not love me; I cannot think that you do not love me still. It is impossible that you should have forgotten what we both once knew of rapture in those dear moments at Charlemont. And having loved me then having given to me the first youthful emotions of your bosom, you surely cannot love this Beauchampe. No! no! love cannot be so suddenly extinguished the altar may have been deserted the fire untended it may have grown dim, but it is the sacred fire that can never utterly go out. I can understand, dearest Margaret, that it is proper, that having formed these new ties, you should maintain appearances, but these appearances need not be fatal to love, though they may require prudence at his hands. Have no fearthat my passion will offend against prudence. No, dearest Margaret, the kiss will be the sweeter now, as it was among the groves of Charlemont, from being stolen in secret."

She receded a few steps while he was yet speaking, and at the close sunk into a chair. He approached her. She waved him off in a manner that could not be set at naught. A burning flush was upon her face, and the compression of her lips denoted the strong working of a settled but stifled resolution. She spoke at length.

"I have heard you to the close, Alfred Stevens. I understand you. You speak with sufficient boldness now. Would to God you had only declared yourself thus boldly in the groves of Charlemont. Could I have seen then, as I do now, the tongue of the serpent, and the cloven foot of the fiend, I had not been what I am now, nor would you

have dared to speak these accursed words in my ears."

"Margaret "

"Stay, sir I have heard you patiently. The shame which follows guilt required thus much of me. You shall now hear me!"

"Will I not, Margaret. Ah! though your words continue thus bitter, still it is a pleasure to hearken to your words."

A keen, quick flash of indignation brightened in her eyes.

"I suppress," she said, "I suppress much more than I speak. I will confine my speech to that which seems only necessary. Once more then, Col. Sharpe, I understand your meaning. I do not disguise from you the fact that nothing more is necessary to a full comprehension of the foul purposes which fill your breast. But my reply is ready. I cannot second them. I hate you with the most bitter loathing. I behold you with scorn and detestation; as a creature equally malignant and contemptible as a villain beyond measure as a coward below contempt as a traitor to every noble sentiment of humanity; having the malice of the fiend without his nobleness; and with every characteristic of the snake but his shape. Judge then for yourself, with what prospect you pursue your purpose with me when such are the feelings I bear you, when such are the opinions which I hold you in."

"I cannot believe you, Margaret!"

"God be witness that I speak the truth."

"Margaret, it is you that trifle with your fate. If in truth you despise my love, you cannot surely despise my power. It is now my turn to give you warning. I do not threaten, but beware!"

She started to her feet and confronted him with eyes that flashed the defiance of a spirit above all apprehension.

"Your power! your power! you give me warning you threaten! Do I rightly hear you? Speak out! I would not now misunderstand you! No! no! never again must I misunderstand you! What is it you threaten?"

"You do misunderstand me, Margaret I do not threaten. I seek to counsel only to warn you that I have power; and that there can be no good policy in making me your enemy!"

"You are mine enemy you have ever been my worst enemy. Heaven forbid that I should again commit the monstrous error of thinking you my friend."

"I am your friend, and would be. Nay, more, in spite of this scorn which you express for me, and which I cannot believe, I love you, Margaret, better, far better, than I have ever loved woman."

"You have a wife, Col. Sharpe?"

"Yes but "

"And children?"

"Yes "

"For their sakes I do not plead for myself nor for you for their sakes, once more, I implore you to forbear this pursuit. Persecute me no longer. Do not deceive yourself with the vain belief that I have any feeling for you but that which I now express. I hate and loathe you nay, am sworn, and again swear, to destroy you, unless you desist unless you leave me and leave me for ever."

Her subdued tones again deceived him. He caught her hand as she waved it in the utterance of the last sentence. He carried it to his lips; but hastily withdrawing it from his grasp, she smote him upon the mouth in the next instant, and as he darted towards her threw open the drawer of a table which stood within arm's length of her position, and drawing from it a pistol, confronted him with its muzzle. He recoiled, more perhaps with surprise than alarm. She cocked the weapon, thrust it towards him with all themanner of one determined upon its use, and with the ease and air of one to whom the use of the weapon is familiar. There was a pause of a single instant in which it was doubtful whether she would draw the trigger or not doubtful even to Sharpe himself. But, with that pause, a more human feeling came to her bosom. Her arm sunk the weapon was suffered to fall by her side, and she said, with faltering voice

"Go, I spare you for the sake of the unhappy woman, your wife. Go, sir it is well for you that I remembered her."

"Margaret! this from you?"

"And from whom with more propriety! Know, Alfred Stevens, that this weapon was prepared for you last night nay, more, that mine is no inexpert hand in its use. For five years, day by day, have I practised this very weapon at a mark, thinking of you only as the object upon whom it was necessary I should use it. Think you, then, what you escape, and return thanks to Heaven that brought to my thought, in the very moment when your life hung upon the smallest movement of my finger, the recollection of your wife and innocent children. Judge for yourself who has most to fear you or myself."

"Still, Margaret, there is a cause of fear which you do not seem to see."

"What is that?"

"Not the loss of life, perhaps that, I can readily imagine is not likely to be a cause of much fear with a proud, strong−minded woman like yourself. But there are subjects of apprehension infinitely more great than this particularly to a woman, a wife, and, to you more than all. Your husband!"

"What of my husband!"

"A single word from me to him, and where is your peace, your security? Ha! am I now understood? Do you not see, Margaret, do you not feel, that I have power, with a word, more effectually to destroy than even pistol−bullet could do it."

"And this is your precious thought!" she said with a look of bitter, smiling contempt "and with the baseness which so completely makes your nature, you would lay bare to my husband the unhappy guilt, in which, through your own foul arts, my girlish innocence was lost! What a brave treachery would this be!"

"Nay, Margaret, but I do not threaten this. I only declare what might be the effect of your provoking me beyond patience."

"Oh! you are moderate very moderate. I look on you, Alfred Stevens, from head to foot, and doubt my eyes that tell me I behold a man. The shape is there the outside of that noble animal, but it is sure a fraud. The beast−fiend has usurped the nobler carcass, himself being all the while unchanged."

"Margaret, this scorn "

"Is due, not less to your folly than your baseness, as you will see when I have told you all. Know then, that when I gave this hand to Orville Beauchampe nay, before it was given to him, and while he was yet at liberty to renounce it I told him that it was a dishonoured hand."

"You did not! You could not!"

"By the God that hears me, I did. I told him the whole story of my folly and my shame. Oh! Alfred Stevens, if in truth you had loved me as you professed, you would have known that it was not in my nature to stoop to fraud and concealment at such a time. Could you think that I would avail myself of the generous ardour of that noble youth to suffer him, unwittingly, to link himself to possible shame? No! no! His magnanimity, his love, the warmth of his affections, the loftiness of his soul, his genius all all demanded of me the most perfect confidence; and I gave it him. I withheld nothing, except, it seems, the true name of my deceiver!"

"I cannot believe it, Margaret Beauchampe never would have married you with this knowledge."

"On my life, he did. Every syllable was spoken in his ears. Nay, more, Colonel Sharpe, and let this be another warning to you to forbear and fly I swore Beauchampe on the Holy Evangelists, ere he made my hand his own, to avenge my dishonour on my betrayer. I made that the condition of my hand!"

"And why now would you forbear prosecuting this vengeance? Why, if you were so resolved upon it, why do you counsel me to fly from the danger? Do you mean to declare the truth to Beauchampe when I am gone?"

"No! not if you leave me, and promise me never again to seek either me or him."

"No! no! Margaret, this story lacks probability. I cannot believe it. I am a lawyer, you must remember. These inconsistencies are too strong. You swear your husband on the Holy Evangelists to take my life, and the next moment shield me from the danger? Now, the ferocious hate which induced the first proceeding cannot be so easily quieted, as in a little month after, to effect the second. The whole story is defective, Margaret it lacks all probability."

"Be it so! You are a lawyer, and no doubt a wise one. The story may seem improbable to you, but it is true nevertheless. However strange and inconsistent, it is yet not unnatural. The human ties which bind me to earth have grown stronger since my marriage, and, for this reason, if for no other, I would have the hands of my husband free from the stain of human blood, even though that blood be yours! For this reason I have condescended to expostulate with you to implore you! For this reason do I still implore and expostulate. Leave me, leave this house the moment your friend returns. Avoid Beauchampe as well as myself. There are a thousand easy modes for breaking off an intimacy. Adopt any one of these which shall seem least offensive. Spare me the necessity of declaring to my husband that the victim he is sworn to slay, is the person who has pretended to be his friend."

The philosophical poet tells us, that he whom God seeks to destroy he first renders a lunatic. In the conceit of his soul, in the plenitude of his legal subtlety, and with that blinding assurance that he could not lose, by any process, the affections he had once won, Sharpe persisted in believing that the story to which he listened, was, in truth, nothing more than an expedient of the woman to rid herself of the presence and the attentions which she rather feared than disliked. He neither believed that she had told the truth to Beauchampe, nor that she loathed him as she had declared. Himself of a narrow and slavish mind, he could not conceive the magnanimity of soul, which, in such a case as that of Margaret Cooper, would declare her dishonour to a lover seeking her hand; still less was he willing to believe in the fartherstretch of magnanimity, on the part of Beauchampe, in marrying any woman in the teeth of such a revelation. We may add, that, with such a prodigious degree of self−esteem as he himself

possessed, the improbability was equally great that Margaret should ever cease to regard him with t devotedness of love. He had taken for granted that it was through the medium of her affections that she became his victim, though all his arts were made to bear upon other characteristics of her moral nature, entirely different from those which belong to the tender passion. A vain man finds it easy to deceive himself, if he deceives nobody else. Here then, was a string of improbabilities which it required the large faith of a liberal spirit to overcome. Sharpe was not a man of liberal spirit, and such men are usually incredulous where the magnanimity of noble soul is the topic. Small wits are always of this character. Scepticism is their shield and even sevenfold coat of mail, and incredulity is the safe wisdom of timidity and self−esteem. Such men neither believe in their neighbours or in the novel truths which they happen to teach. They pay the penalty in most cases by dying in their blindness.

Will this be the case with the party before us? Time will show. At all events, the earnest adjurations of the passionate and full−souled woman were entirely thrown away upon him. What she had said had startled him at first; but with the usual obduracy of self−esteem, he had soon recovered from his momentary discomposure. He shook his head slowly, while a smile on his lips declared his doubts.

"No, Margaret, it is impossible that you should have told these things to Beauchampe. I know you better, and I know well that he could never have married you, having a knowledge of the truth. You cannot deceive me, Margaret; and wherefore should you try? Why would you reject the love which was so dear to you in Charlemont; and if you can do this, I cannot? I love you too well, Margaret remember too keenly the delights of our first union, and will not believe in the necessity that denies that we should meet. No! no! Once found, I will not lose you again, Margaret. You are too precious in my sight. We must see and meet each other often. Beauchampe shall still be my friend his marriagewith you has made him doubly dear to me. So far from cutting him, I shall find occasions for making his household a place of my constant pilgrimage; and do not sacrifice yourself by vain opposition to this intimacy. It will do no good and may do harm. I can make his fortune; and I will, if you will hear reason. But you must remove to Frankfort be a dutiful wife in doing so; and, for this passion of revenge, believe that I was quite as much afflicted as yourself by the necessity that tore us asunder as was the truth and you will forgive the involuntary crime, and forget every thing but the dear delights of that happy period. Do you hear me, Margaret you do not seem to listen!"

She regarded him with a countenance of melancholy scorn, which seemed also equally expressive of hopelessness and pity. It seemed as if she was at a loss which sentiment most decidedly to entertain. Looking thus, but in perfect silence, she rose, and taking the pistol from the table where it had lain, she advanced towards the door of the apartment. He would have followed her, but she paused when at the door, and turning, said to him

"If I knew, Colonel Sharpe, by what form of oath I could make you believe what I have said, I would asseverate solemnly its truth. I am anxious for your sake, for my sake, and the sake of my husband, that you should believe me. As God will judge us all, I have spoken nothing but the truth. I would save you, and spare myself the necessity of any farther revelations. Life is still dear to me peace is every thing to me now. It is to secure this peace that I suppress my feelings that I still implore you to listen to me and to believe. Be merciful. Spare me! Spare yourself. Propose any form of oath which you consider most solemn, most binding, and I will repeat it on my knees, in confirmation of what I have said! for on my soul I have spoken nothing but the truth!"

He laughed and shook his head, as he advanced to where she stood.

"Nay, nay, Margaret, the value of oaths in such cases is but small. No form of oath can be very binding. Jove, you know, laughs at the perjuries of lovers; and if we are lovers no longer, which I cannot easily believe, the business between us, is so certainly a lover's business, that Jove will laugh none the less at the vows we violate in carrying it on. You took it too seriously, Margaret it is you that are not wise. You cannot deceive me you are wasting labour."

She turned from him, mournfully, with a single look, and in another moment was gone from sight.

CHAPTER XXV.

Mr. Barnabas and Beauchampe returned from their morning ride in excellent spirits; but there was some anxiety and inquiry in the look of the former as his eye sought that of his confederate. He gathered little from this scrutiny, however, unless it were the perfect success of the latter in the prosecution of his criminal object. The face and manner of Colonel Sharpe wore all the composure and placid satisfaction of one equally at peace with all the world and his own conscience. His headache had subsided. He seemed to have nothing on his mind to desire or to regret.

"Lucky dog!" was the mental exclamation of his satellite. "He never fails in any thing he undertakes. He does as he pleases equally with men and women."

Beauchampe had his anxieties also, which were a little increased as he noted a greater degree of sadness on his wife's countenance than usual. But his anxiety had no relation whatever to the real cause of fear to the real source of that suffering which appeared in her looks. Not the slightest suspicion of evil from his friend, Colonel Sharpe, had ever crossed his mind, even for an instant.

Dinner came off, and Colonel Sharpe was in his happiest vein. His jests were of the most brilliant order; but, unless in the case of Mr. Barnabas, his humour was not contagious. Mrs. Beauchampe scarcely seemed to hear what was addressed to her; and Beauchampe, beholding the increasing depth of shade on his wife's countenance, necessarily felt a corresponding anxiety which imparted similar shadows to his own.

At dinner, Mr. Barnabas said something across the table to his companion, in reference to the probable time of departure.

"What say you, shall we ride to−morrow?"

"Why, how's your nag?"

"Better not absolutely well, but able to go, when going homeward."

"You may go," said Sharpe, abruptly; "but I shall make a week of it with Beauchampe. The country, you say, is worth seeing, and there may be votes to be won in showing one's self. I see no reason even for you to hurry; and I dare say Beauchampe's hospitality will scarcely complain of our trespass for two days longer."

The speaker looked to Beauchampe, who, as matter of course, professed his satisfaction at the prospect of keeping his friends. The eye of Sharpe glanced to the face of the lady. A dark red spot was upon her forehead. She met the glance of her enemy, and requited it with one of deep signification; then, rising from the table, at once left the apartment.

The things were removed, and Mr. Barnabas, counselled by a glance from his companion, proposed to Beauchampe to explore the farm.

"I can't bear the house when I can leave it that is, when I'm in the country. A country−house seems to me an intolerable bore. Won't you go, Sharpe?"

But the person addressed had already disposed himself in the rocking−chair, as if for the purpose of taking a nap. He answered, drowsily

"No! no! Barnabas, take yourself off. I would enjoy my siesta merely. With you I should be apt to sleep

soundly. Take him off, Beauchampe, and suffer me to make myself at home."

"Oh! certainly, if you prefer it."

"I do! I take the world composedly detest sightseeing, and believe in Somnus. This habit of mine keeps me out of mischief into which Barnabas is for ever falling. Away now, my good boys, and enjoy the world and one another."

The roué was alone. Ten minutes had not passed, when Mrs. Beauchampe entered the apartment. This was an event which Col. Sharpe had scarcely anticipated. He had remained simply to be in the way of what he would esteem some such fortunate chance; hoped for it; and, believing that the lady was playing only a very natural feminine game, did not think it improbable that the desiredopportunity would be afforded him. So early a realization of his wishes was certainly unexpected not undesired, however. The surprise was a pleasurable one, and he startled into instant vivacity on her appearance; rising from his seat and approaching her with extended hand as if to conduct her to it.

"Stay, Col. Sharpe I come but for a moment."

"Do not say so, Margaret."

"A moment, sir, will suffice for all that I purpose. You speak of remaining here till the close of the week? Now, hear me! Your horses must be saddled after breakfast to−morrow, You must then depart. I must hear you express this determination when we meet at the breakfast−table. If I do not, sir, on the word of a woman whom you have made miserable and still keep so, I declare to Mr. Beauchampe the whole truth."

"What! expel me from your house, Margaret! No! no! I as little believe you can do this, as do the other. This, my dear girl, is the merest perversity!"

He offered to take her hand. She recoiled.

"Col. Sharpe, your unhappy vanity deceives you. What do you see in my looks, my conduct, to justify these doubts of what I say, or this continued presumption on your part. Do I look the wanton? Do I look the pliant damsel whose grief looks temporary only, which a smile of deceit, or a cunning word can dissipate in a moment. Look at me well, sir, my peace, and your life depends upon the wisdom which Heaven at this moment may vouchsafe you. Oh! sir, be not blind! See, in these wobegone cheeks and eyes, nothing but the misery, approaching to despair, which my bosom feels. See, and be warned! You cannot surely doubt that I am in earnest. For the equal sake of your body and soul, I implore you to believe me."

Cassandra never looked more terribly true to her utterance to the awful predictions which her lips poured forth but like Cassandra, Margaret Cooper was fated not to be believed. The unhappy man, blinded by that flattering self−esteem which blinds so many, was insensible to her expostulations to the intense wo, expressing itself in looks of the most severe majesty of her highly expressive countenance! The effect of her intensity of feeling was to elevate the style of her beauty, and this was somethingagainst the success of her entreay. Vain and dishonourable as he was, Sharpe gazed on her with a sincere admiration. Unhappily, he was not one to venerate. That refining agent of moral worship was wanting to his heart; and in its place a selfish lust after the pleasures of the moment was the only divinity which he had set up. It would be idle to repeat his answer to the imploring prayer of the half−distracted woman. He had as little generosity as veneration. He could not forbear. His mind had become inflexible, from the too frequent contemplation of its lusts, and what he said was simply what might have been said by any callous, clever man, who, in the prosecution of a selfish purpose, regards nothing but the end in view. He answered, with pleasantry, that wo, which was so much more expressively shown in her looks than in her utterance. Pleasantry at such a moment! Pleasantry addressed to that painfully excited imagination whose now

familiar images were of death, and despair, and blood! She answered him by clasping her hands together.

"We are doomed!" she exclaimed, while a groan forced its way at the close of her sentence, as if from the very bottom of her heart.

"Doomed, indeed, Margaret! How very idle unless you doom us!"

"And I do! You are doomed, and doomed by me, Alfred Stevens, unless you leave this house to−morrow."

"Be sure I shall do no such thing!"

"Your blood be upon your own head. I have warned you, counselled you, implored you I can do no more!"

"Yes, Margaret, you can persuade me beguile me, subdue me, make me your captive, slave, worshipper, every thing as you have done before, by only loving me as you did then. Be not foolish and perverse come to me let us renew those happy hours that we knew in Charlemont, when you had none of these gloomy notions to affright others and to vex yourself with!"

"Fool! fool! Blind and vain! With sense neither to see nor to hear! Alfred Stevens there is yet time! But the hours are numbered. God be merciful, so that they be not yours. We meet at the table to−morrow morning for the last time."

"Stay, Margaret!" he exclaimed seeing her about to leave the room.

"To−morrow morning for the last time!" she repeated, as she disappeared from sight.

"Devilish strange! But they are all so! perverse as the devil himself! There is nothing to be done here by assault. We must have time, and make our approaches with more caution. My desertion sticks in her gorge. I must mollify her on that score. Work slowly, but surely. I have been too bold too confident. I did not make sufficient allowances for her pride, which is diabolically strong. I must ply her with the sedatives first; but one would have thought that she had sufficient experience, to have taken the thing more coolly. As for her blabbing to Beauchampe, that's all in my eye. No, no! you cannot terrify me by such a threat. I am too old a stager for that; nay, indeed, how much of your wish to drive me off arises from your dread that I shall blab! Ha! ha! ha! but you too shall be safe from that. My policy is 'mum,' like your own. To be frightened off by such a threat would prove a man as sorry a fool as coward. We shan't go tomorrow, fair Mistress Margaret, doom or no doom!"

Such were the muttered meditations of Col. Sharpe after Mrs. Beauchampe had left him. Perhaps, they were such as would be natural to most men of the same character. His estimate of the woman, also, was no doubt a very just estimate of the ordinary woman of the world, placed in similar circumstances, after having committed the same monstrous and scarcely remediable lapse from virtue and place. But we have shown that Margaret Cooper was no ordinary woman! He knew that, himself, but he did not believe her equal to the course which she threatened, nor did he believe her when she informed him of the magnanimous course which she had already pursued in relation to Beauchampe. Could he have believed that, indeed! But it was not meant that he should believe. The destiny that shapes our ends, was not to be diverted in his case. As his victim had declared, with solemn emphasis on leaving him, he was, indeed, doomed! doomed! doomed!

CHAPTER XXVI.

We pass, with hurried progress, over the proceedings of that night. The reader will please believe that Col. Sharpe was, as usual, happy in his dialogue, and fluent in his humour. Indeed, by that strange contradiction in the work of

destiny, which sometimes so arranges it that death does the work of tragedy in the very midst of the marriage merriment, the spirits of the doomed man were never more elastic and excitable than on that very night. He and Barnabas kept his host, till a late hour, from his couch; the sounds of their laughter penetrated the upper apartments, and smote wofully upon the ears of the unhappy wife, to whom all sounds, at that moment, came laden with the weight of wo. One monotonous voice rang through her senses and the house, as in the case of Macbeth, and cried "sleep no more!" Such, at least, was the effect of the cry upon her. Precious little had been her sleep, in that house, from the moment that bad man entered it. Was she ever to sleep again? She, herself, believed not.

The guests at length retired to their chamber and Beauchampe sought his. At his approach, his wife rose from her knees. Poor, striving, struggling, hopeless heart she had been striving to beat down thought and to wrestle with prayer. But thought mingled with prayer, and obtained the mastery. Such thoughts too! Such thoughts of the terrible necessity before her! Oh! how criminal was the selfish denial of that man. Life had become sweet and precious. Her husband had grown dear to her in proportions he convinced her that she was dear to him. Permitted to remain in their obscurity, life might still be retained and would continue, with length of days, to become more and more precious. But the destroyer was there, unwilling to spare unwilling to forego the ravages he had begun. Not to tell her husband the whole truth to listen to the criminal any longer without denouncing him, would not only be to encourage him in his crimebut to partake of it. If he remained another day, she was bound by duty, and sworn before the altar, to declare the truth; and the truth, once told, was only another name for utter desolation blood upon the hands, death upon the soul! With such thoughts, prayer was not possible. But she had striven in prayer, and that was something. Nay, it was something gained, even to think, in the position of humility upon her knees.

She rose, when she heard her husband approach took a book, and seating herself beside the toilet, prepared to read. She composed her countenance, with a very decided effort of will, so as to disperse some of the storm−clouds which had been hanging over it. Her policy was, at present, not to alarm her husband's suspicions, if possible, in relation to her guests. It might be that Sharpe would grow wiser with the passage of the night. Sleep, and quiet, and reflection, might work beneficial results; and if he would only depart with the morning, she trusted to time and to her own influence over Beauchampe, to break off the intimacy between the parties without revealing the fatal truth.

"What! not abed, Anna?" said Beauchampe. "It is late do you know the hour? It is nigh one!"

"Indeed, but I am not sleepy."

"I am; what with riding and rambling with Barnabas I am completely knocked up. Besides, he is such a dull fellow. Now Sharpe has wit, humour, and other resources, which make a man forgetful of the journey and the progress of time."

"Has Col. Sharpe said any thing about going?" demanded the wife with some abruptness.

"Yes "

"Ah!" with some eagerness "when does he go?"

"At the close of the week. He is disposed to see something of the neighbourhood."

She drew a long breath, scarcely suppressing the deep sigh which struggled for utterance; and once more fixed her eyes on the book. It need not be said that she read nothing.

"Come to bed, dearest," said Beauchampe tenderly. "You hurt your eyes by night reading. They have been looking red all day."

She promised him, and, overcome with fatigue, thehusband soon slept, but the wife did not rise. For more than two hours she sat, the book still in her hands; but her eyes were unconscious of its pages, her thoughts were not in that volume. She thought only of that coming morrow, and the duties and dangers which its coming would involve. She was seeking to steel her mind with the proper resolution, and this was no easy effort. Imagine the task before her and the difficulty in the way of acquiring the proper hardihood will easily be understood. Imagine yourself preparing for the doom which is to follow in twelve hours; and conjecture, if you can, the sort of meditations which will come to you in that dreary but short interval of time. Suppose yourself in health, too young, beautiful, highly endowed, intensely ambitious, with the prospect if those twelve hours can be passed in safety of love, long life, happiness, and possibly, "troops of friends" all before you, smiling, beckoning, entreating in the sunny distance! Imagine all this in the case of that proud, noble−hearted, most lovely, highly intellectual, but wo−environed woman, and you will not wonder that she did not sleep. Still less will it be your wonder that she could not pray. Life and hope were too strong for sufficient humility. The spirit and the energy of her heart was not yet sufficiently subdued.

Dreary was the dismal watch she kept still in the one position. At length her husband moved and murmured in his sleep. In his sleep he called her name, and coupled with it an endearing epithet. Then the tide flowed. The proper chords of human feeling were stricken in her heart. The rock gushed. It was stubborn no longer. But the waters were bitter, though the relief was sweet. Bitter were the tears she wept, but they were tears, human tears; and like the big drops that relieve the heat of the sky and disperse its unbreathing vapours, they took some of the mountain pressure from her heart, and left her free to breathe, and hope, and pray.

She rose and stepped lightly beside the bed where Beauchampe slept. She hung over him. Still he murmured in his sleep. Still he spoke her name, and still his words were those of tenderness and love. Mentally she prayed above him, while the big drops fell from her eyes upon the pillow. One sentence alone became audible in her prayer that sentence of agonizing apostrophe, spoken by the Saviour in his prescience of the dreadful hour of trial which was to come: "If thou be willing, Father, let this cup pass by me!"

She had no other prayer, and in this vain and useless repetition of the undirected thoughts, she passed a sad and comfortless night. But she had been gaining strength. A stern and unfaltering spirit it matters not whence derived came to her aid, and with the return of sunrise she arose, with a solemn composure of soul, prepared, however gloomily, to go forward in her terrible duties.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Beauchampe rose refreshed and more cheerful than usual. The plans for the day, which had been discussed by himself and friends the previous night, together with the lively dialogue which had made them heedless of the progress of the hours, were recalled to his memory, and he rose with an unwonted spirit of elasticity and humour. But the lively glance of his eye met no answering pleasure in that of his wife. She was up before him. He did not dream that she had not slept that for half the night she had hung above his sleep engaged in mental prayer that such slumbers might still be spared to him, even if the dreary doom of such a watch was still allotted to her. He gently reproached her for the settled sadness in her looks, and she replied only by a sigh. He did not notice the intense gleams which, at moments, issued from her eyes, or he might have guessed that some terrible resolution was busy at the forge within her brain. Could he guess the sort of manufacture going on in that dangerous workshop! But he did not.

The party was assembled at the breakfast−table; and, as if with a particular design to apprise Mrs. Beauchampe, that her warnings were not heeded, Col. Sharpe dweltwith great deliberation upon the best modes before them of

consuming the rest of the week with profit.

"What say you, Beauchampe, to a morning at your friend Tiernan's he will give us a rouse, I'm thinking; the next day with Coalter, and Saturday, what ho! for an elk−hunt! at all events, Barnabas must go to Coalter's he's a client of his, and will never forgive the omission; and it is no less important that you should give him the elk−hunt also; he has a taste for hard riding, and it will do him good. He's getting stoutish, and a good shaking will keep his bulk within proper bounds. Certainly, he must have an elk−hunt."

"A like reason will make it necessary that you should share it also, Colonel," said Beauchampe. "You partake, in similar degree, of the infirmity of flesh which troubles Mr. Barnabas."

"Ay, ay, but I am no candidate for the red−hat, which is the case with Barnabas, and which the conclave will religiously refuse to a man with a corporation."

"But you are after the seat of attorney general," said Mr. Barnabas, with the placable smile of dulness.

"Granted, and for such an office a good corporation may be considered an essential, rather than any thing else. It confers dignity, Hal. Now, the red−hatted gentry of the club are not expected to be dignified. The humour of the thing forbids it; and as a candidate for that communion, it is necessary that you should live on soup maigre, and 'seek the chase with hawk and hound,' as Earl Percy did. Besides, Beauchampe, he has a passion for it."

"I a passion for it?" said Barnabas.

"Yes, to be sure what were all those stories you used to tell of hunting in Tennessee; stories that used to set our hair on end at your hair breadth escapes. Either we must suppose you to have grown suddenly old and timid, or we must suppose, that, in telling those stories of your prowess, you were amusing us with some pleasant fictions. That's a dilemma for you, Barnabas, if you disclaim a passion for an elk−hunt now."

"No! by Jupiter, I told you nothing but the truth," said Barnabas, solemnly.

"I believe it," said Sharpe, with equal solemnity, "I believe it, and believe that the passion continues."

"Well," said the other, "I can't altogether deny that it does, but it has been somewhat cooled by other pursuits and associations."

"It must be warmed again," responded Sharpe. "Remember, Beauchampe, be sure to make up a party for Saturday."

"We include you in it?" asked Beauchampe.

"Ay, ay, if I happen to be 'i' the vein.' But, you know, like Corporal Nym, I'm a person of humours. I may not have the fit upon me, or I may have some other fit; and may prefer remaining at home to read poetry with our fair hostess."

The speaker glanced significantly at Mrs. Beauchampe as he said these words. Their eyes encountered. Hers wore an expression of the soberest sadness. As if provoked by the speech and the glance, she said, in the most deliberate language, while her look was full of the most rebukeful and warning expression

"I thought you were to leave this morning for Frankfort, Col. Sharpe. I derived that impression somehow from something that was said last evening."

Beauchampe turned full upon his wife with a stern look of equal astonishment and inquiry. Mr. Barnabas was aghast, and Col. Sharpe himself, for a moment, lost his equilibrium, and was speechless, while his eyes looked the incertitude which he felt. He was the first, however, to recover; and with a sort of legal dexterity, assuming as really having been his own, the determination which she had suggested as being made by him, he replied

"True, my dear madam, that was my purpose yesterday, but the kind entreaties of our host, and the pleasant projects which we discussed last night, persuaded me to yield to the temptation, and to stay till Sunday."

The speaker bowed politely, and returned the severe glance of the lady, with a look of mingled conciliation and doubt. For the first time he began to feel apprehensive that he had mistaken her, and perhaps himself. She was a woman of prodigious strength of soul indomitable resolution, and the courage of a gigantic man. Never did words proceed more deliberately more evenly from human lips than did the reply from hers.

"That cannot be, Col. Sharpe. It is necessary thatyou should keep your first resolution. Mr. Beauchampe can no longer accommodate you in his dwelling."

"How, Mrs. Beauchampe!" exclaimed the husband starting to his feet, and confronting her. She had risen while speaking, and was preparing to leave the room. She looked on him with a countenance mournful and humble very different from that which she wore in addressing the other.

"Speak, Anna, say, Mrs. Beauchampe!" exclaimed the husband. "What does this mean? this to my guests to my friend!"

"He is not your friend, Beauchampe nor mine! But let me pass I cannot speak here!"

She left the room, and Beauchampe, with a momentary glance at Sharpe, full of bewilderment, hurried after his wife.

"What's this, Sharpe, in a devil's name?" demanded Barnabas in consternation.

"The devil himself, Barnabas!" said Sharpe. "I'm afraid the jezebel means to blow me and tell every thing."

"But you told me last night that all was well and going right."

"So I thought! I fear I was mistaken! At all events I must prepare for the worst. Have you any weapons about you?"

"My dirk!"

"Give it me my pistols are in the saddle−bags."

"But what shall I do?"

"You are in no danger. Give me the dirk, and hurry out and have our horses ready. D n the woman! Who could have believed it!"

"Ah! you're always so sanguine!" began Barnabas, but the other interrupted him.

"Pshaw! this is no time for lecturing! Your wisdom is eleventh hour wisdom. It is too late here. Hurry and prepare yourself and the horses, while I go to the room and get the saddle−bags ready. If I am blown, my start cannot be too sudden!"

Barnabas, always pliant, disappeared instantly, and Sharpe, concealing the dirk in his bosom, with the handle convenient to his clutch, found himself unpleasantly alone.

"Who the d l could have thought it! What a woman! But it may not be as bad as I fear. She may invent something to answer the purpose of getting me off. She certainly cannot tell the whole. No! no! That would be to suppose her mad! And mad she may be! I had not thought of that! Now, I think of it, she looks cursedly like an insane woman. That wild, fierce gleam of her eye those accents and indeed, every thing since I have been here! Certainly, had she not been mad, it must have been as I wished. I could not have been deceived never was deceived yet by a sane woman! It must be so, and if so, it is possible that she may blurt out the whole. I must be prepared. Beauchampe's as fierce as a vulture when roused. I've seen that in him before. I must get my pistols, though, in going for them, I may meet him on the stairs. Well, if I do! I am armed. He is scarcely more powerful than myself. Yet I would not willingly have him grapple with me, if only because he is her husband. The very thought of her makes me half a coward! And yet I must be prepared. It must be done!"

Such were his reflections. He advanced to the entrance. The footsteps of Beauchampe were heard rapidly striding across the chamber overhead. The criminal recoiled as he heard them. A tremor shot through his limbs. He clutched the dagger in his bosom, set his teeth firmly, and waited for a moment at the entrance. The sounds subsided above. He thrust his head through the doorway, into the passage, and leaned forward in the act of listening. The renewed silence which now prevailed in the house, gave him fresh courage. He darted up the steps, sought his chamber, and with eager trembling hands caught up and examined his pistols. Both were loaded, and he thrust them into the pockets of his coat; then seizing his own and the saddle−bags of his companion, he darted out of the chamber, and down the steps, with footsteps equally light and rapid. Once more in the hall and well armed, he was more composed but as little prepared, morally, for events as before. There was a heavy fear upon his spirit. The consciousness of guilt is a terrible queller of one's manhood. He waited impatiently for the return of Barnabas. At such a moment, even the presence of one whom he estimated rather humbly, and with some feelings of contempt, was grateful to his enfeebled spirit; and the appearanceof the horses at the door, and the return of his friend, had the effect of re−enlivening him to a degree which made him blush for the feeling of apprehension which he had so lately entertained.

"All's ready! will you ride?" demanded Barnabas, picking up his saddle−bags. The worthy coadjutor was by no means audacious in his courage. Sharpe hesitated.

"It may be only a false alarm after all," said he "we had better wait and see!"

"I think not," said the former. "There was no mistaking the words, and as little the looks. She's a very resolute woman."

Col. Sharpe was governed by the anxieties of guilt as well as its fears. The painful desire to hear and know to what extent the revelations of the wife had gone a half confidence that all would not be told that some loophole would be left for retreat; and the farther conviction, that, at all events, whatever was the nature of her story to her husband, it was quite as well that he should know it at one moment as another encouraged him to linger; and this resolve with the force of habitual will, he impressed upon his reluctant companion.

Leaving them to their suspense below, let us join the husband and wife above stairs.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"In the name of God, Mrs. Beauchampe!" such was the address of her husband as he joined her in their chamber, "what is the meaning of all this?"

She took from the toilet a pair of pistols and offered them to him. "What mean you by these, by this treatment of my friends?"

"Your friends are villains! Col. Sharpe and Alfred Stevens are the same person!"

"Impossible!" he replied, recoiling with horror from the proffered weapons.

"True as gospel, Beauchampe!"

"True!"

"True! before Heaven, I speak the truth, my husband! a dreadful, terrible truth, which I would not speak were it possible not to do so!"

"And why has not this been told me before? Why has he been suffered to remain in your presence nay, to be alone with you, for hours since his coming? Did you know him from the first to be the same man?"

"From the first!"

"Explain, then! for God's sake explain. You blind me, you stun me! I am utterly unable to see this thing! How, if you knew him from the first, suffer for a moment the contagion of his presence?"

"This I can easily answer you, my husband. Bear with me patiently while I do so! I will lay bare to you my whole soul, and show you by what motives of forbearance I was governed, until driven to the course I have pursued by the bold insolence of this uncompromising villain."

She paused pressed her head with her hands as if to subdue the tumult which was striving within; then, with an effort which seemed to demand her greatest energies,she proceeded with her speech. She entered into an explanation of that change in her feelings and desires which had been consequent to her marriage. She acknowledged the force of those new domestic ties which she had formed, in making her unwilling that any event should take place which should commit herself or husband in the eyes of the community, and bring about a disruption of those ties, or a farther development of her story; which would be certain to follow, in the event of an issue between her husband and her seducer. With this change in her mood, prior to the appearance of this person and his identification with Col. Sharpe, she had prayed that he might never reappear; and when he did when he became the guest of her husband, and was regarded as his friend, it was her hope that a sense of his danger would have prompted him to make his visit short, and prevent him from again renewing it. Her own deportment was meant to be such as should produce this determination in his breast. But when this failed of its effect when in despite of warning, in defiance of danger, in the face of hospitality and friendship, the villain presumed to renew his loathsome overtures of guilt; when no hope remained that he would forbear when it was seen that he was without generosity, and that neither the rebuke of her scorn, nor the warnings of her anger, could repel his insolent advances then it was that she felt compelled to speak then, and not before! She had deferred this necessity to the last moment. She had been purposely slow. She had given the seducer every opportunity to withdraw in safety, and made the condition of his future security easy, by asking only that he would never seek nor see her again! She had striven in vain; and failing to find the immunity she sought, from her own strength and firmness, it was no longer possible to evade the necessity which forced her to seek it in the protection of her husband. It was now necessary that he should comply with his oath, and for this reason she had placed the weapons of death in his hands. Henceforth, the struggle was his alone. Of the sort of duty to be done, no doubt could abide in either mind!

Such was the narrative which, with the coherence not only of a same but a strong mind, and a will that no pain of body and pang of soul could overcome, she poured into the ears of her husband. We will not attempt to

describethe agony, the utter recoil and shrinking of soul with which he heard. There is a point to which human passion sometimes arrives when all language fails of description, as in a condition of physical suffering, the intensity of the pain is providentially relieved by utter unconsciousness and stupor. But, such was the surprise with which Beauchampe received the information of that identity between Alfred Stevens and his friend his friend! that the impression which followed from what remained of his wife's narrative, was comparatively slight. You might trace the accumulation of pang upon pang, in his heart, as the story went on, by a slight convulsive movement of the lip, but the eye did not seem to speak. It was fixed and glassy, and so vacant, that its expression might have occasioned apprehension in the mind of the wife, had her own intensity of suffering however kept down not been of so blinding and darkening a character.

When she had ended, he grasped the pistols, and hurried to the entrance, but as suddenly returned. He laid the weapons down upon the toilet.

"No!" he exclaimed "not here! It must not be in this house. He has eaten at our board he is beneath our roof this threshold must not be stained with the blood of the guest!"

He looked at her as he spoke these words. But she did not note his glance. Her eyes were fixed her hands were clasped she did not seem to note his presence, and her head was bent forward as if she listened. A moment was passed in this manner, when, as he still looked, she turned suddenly and seemed only then to behold him.

"You are here!" she said; "where are the pistols?"

He did not answer, but following the direction of his eye, she saw them on the toilet, and striding fierce and rapidly, she caught them up from the place where they lay.

"What would you, Anna?" he asked seizing her wrists.

"The wrong is mine!" she exclaimed. "My hand shall avenge it. It is sworn to it. I am prepared for it. Why should it be put upon another?"

"No!" he cried while his brow gathered into a cloud of wrinkles "no, woman! You are mine, and your wrongs are mine mine only! I will average them; but I must avenge them as I think right after my own fashion in my own time. Fear not that I will. Believe that I am a man, with the feelings and the resolution of a man, and do not doubt that I will execute my oath, ay, even were it no oath! to the uttermost letter of the obligation. Give me the weapons!"

She yielded them. Her whole manner was subdued her looks her words.

"Oh, Beauchampe would that I could spare you this!"

"Do I wish it, Anna! Would I be spared? No, my wife! The duty is doubly incumbent on me now. This reptile has made your wrong doubly that of your husband. Has he not renewed his criminal attempt, under my own roof. This, this alone, would justify me in denying him its protection, but I will not. He shall not say he was entrapped! As the obligation is a religious one, I shall execute its laws with the deliberation of one who has a task from God before him. I will not violate the holy pledges of hospitality, though he has done so. While he remains in my threshold, it shall protect him. But fear not that vengeance shall be done. Before God, my wife, I renew my oath!"

He lifted his hand to heaven as he spoke, and she sunk upon her knees, and with her hands clasped his. Her lips parted in speech, and her murmurs reached his ears, but what she spoke was otherwise inaudible. He gently extricated himself from her embrace went to the basin, and deliberately bathed his forehead in the cold water.

She remained in her prostrate position, her face clasped in her hands and prone upon the floor. Having performed his ablutions, Beauchampe turned, and looked upon her steadfastly, but did not seek to raise her; and, after a moment's further delay, left the chamber and descended the stairs.

Then his wife started from her feet, and moved towards the toilet where the weapons lay. Her hand was extended as if to grasp them, but she failed to do so, and staggered forward with the manner of one suddenly dizzy with blindness. With this feeling she turned towards the bed, and reached it in time to save herself a fall upon thefloor. She sank forward upon it, and while a husky sound, like feeble laughter, issued from her throat, she lost the consciousness of the agony that filled her soul, in the relief of present unconsciousness.

CHAPTER XXIX.

When Col. Sharpe heard the descending footsteps of Beauchampe as he came down the stairs, he asked Barnabas to go into the passage−way and meet him a request which made the other look a little blank.

"There is no sort of danger to you, and you hear he walks slowly, not like a man in a passion. I doubt if she has told him all; perhaps, she has told him nothing. At all events, you will be decidedly the best person to receive intelligence of what she has told. I'm thinking it's a false alarm after all; but, whether true or false, it can in no manner affect you. You are safe, go out, meet him, and learn how far I am so."

It has been seen that the will of the superior man, in spite of all first opposition, usually had its way with the inferior. Mr. Barnabas, however reluctant, submitted to the wishes of his companion, and with some misgivings, and with quite slow steps, left the room in order to meet with the husband of whose rage such apprehensions were formed in both their minds. Sharpe, though he had expressed himself so confidently, or at least so hopefully, to Barnabas, was really full of apprehension. The moment that the latter left the room, he took out his pistols, deliberately cocked them, and placing them behind his back, moving backward a little farther from the entrance, prepared himself in that manner for the encounter, if that became inevitable with the angry husband.

But the danger seemed to have passed away. Silence followed. The steps of Beauchampe were no longer heard, and, moving towards one of the front windows,the criminal beheld the two already at a distance, and about to disappear behind the copse of wood that spread itself in front.

Sharpe breathed more freely, and began to fancy that the cloud had dispersed, that the danger was overblown. He was mistaken. Let us join Beauchampe and his companion.

"Mr. Barnabas," said the former, "I speak to you still as to a gentleman, as I believe you have had no knowledge of the past crime of Col. Sharpe, and no participation in his present villany."

Such was the opening remark of Beauchampe, when he had led the other from the house. Mr. Barnabas was prompt of denial.

"Crime Beauchampe, villany! Surely, you cannot think I had any knowledge any participation ah! do you suppose do you think I knew any thing about it "

"About what?" demanded the suspicious Beauchampe, coolly fixing his eyes, with a keen glance, upon the embarrassed speaker.

"Nay, my dear Beauchampe that's the question," said the other. "You speak of some crime, some villany, as I understand you, of which our friend Sharpe has been guilty. If it be true, that he has been guilty of any, you are right in supposing that I knew nothing about it. Nay, my dear fellow, don't think it strange or impertinent, on my

part, if I venture a conjecture mark me, my dear fellow, a mere supposition that there must be some mistake in this matter. I can't think that Sharpe, a fellow who stands so high, whom we both know so well and have known so long, such an excellent fellow in fact, so cursed smart, and so clever a companion, can have been such a d d fool as to have practised any villany, at least upon a gentleman whom we both love and esteem so much as yourself."

"There's no mistake, Mr. Barnabas!" said the other, gravely. "This man is a villain, and has been practising his villany to my dishonour, while in my house and enjoying my confidence and hospitality."

"You don't say so! it's scarce possible, Beauchampe! The crime's too monstrous. I still think, I mean, I still hope, that there's some very strange mistake in the matter which can be explained."

"Unhappily, sir, there is none. There is no mistake, and nothing needs explanation!"

"That's unfortunate, very unfortunate! May I ask, my dear fellow, what's the offence?"

"Surely, of this I drew you forth to tell you, in order that you might tell him. I do not wish to take his life in my own dwelling, though his crime might well justify me in forgetting the sacred obligations of hospitality, might justify me, indeed, in putting him to death even though his hands grasped the very horns of the altar. He has busied himself, while in my dwelling, in seeking to dishonour its mistress. While we rode, sir, and in our absence, he has toiled for the seduction of my wife. That's his crime! You will tell him that I know all!"

"Great God! what madness, what folly, what could have made him do so. But, my dear Mr. Beauchampe, as he has failed, not succeeded, eh?"

The speaker stopped. It was not easy to finish such a sentence.

"I cannot guess what you would say, Mr. Barnabas, nor, perhaps, is it necessary. You will please to go back to your companion, and say to him that he will instantly leave the dwelling which he has endeavoured to dishonour. I see that your horses are both ready a sign, sir, that Col. Sharpe has not been entirely unconscious of this necessity. I would fain hope, Mr. Barnabas, that in preparing to depart yourself, you acknowledge no more serious obligation to do so, than the words of my wife, conveyed at the breakfast−table?"

The sentence was expressed inquiringly, and the keen, searching glance of Beauchampe, declared a lurking suspicion that made it very doubtful to Barnabas whether the husband did not fully suspect the auxiliary agency which he had really exhibited in the dishonourable proceedings of Sharpe. He felt this, and could not altogether conceal his confusion, though he saw the necessity of a prompt reply.

"My dear Beauchampe, was it not enough to make a gentleman think of trooping, with bag and baggage, when the lady of the house gives him notice to quit."

"But the notice was not given to you, Mr. Barnabas."

"Granted, but Sharpe and myself were friends, youknow, and came together, and being the spokesman in the case, you see "

"Enough, Mr. Barnabas; I ask no explanations from you. I do not say to you that it is necessary that you should quit along with Col. Sharpe, but as your horse is ready, perhaps it is quite as well that you should."

"Hem! such was my purpose, Mr. Beauchampe."

"Yes, sir; and you will do me the favour for which I requested your company, to say to him that the whole history of his conduct is known to me. In order that he should have no further doubts on this subject, you will suffer me to intrude upon you a painful piece of domestic history."

"My dear Beauchampe, if it's so very painful "

"I perceive, Mr. Barnabas, that what I am about to relate will not have the merit of novelty to you."

"Indeed, sir, but it will I mean, I reckon it will. I really am very ignorant of what you intend to mention. I am, sir, upon my honour, I am!"

Beauchampe regarded the creature with a cold smile of the most outer contempt, and when he had ended, resumed:

"Tell Col. Sharpe, if you please, that before I married Mrs. Beauchampe, she herself told me the whole history of Alfred Stevens and her own unhappy frailty, while she swore me to avenge her dishonour. Tell him that I will avenge it, and that he must prepare himself accordingly. My house confers on him the temporary privilege of safety. He will leave it as soon as convenient after you return to it. I will seek him only after he has reached his own; and when we meet it is with the one purpose of taking his life or losing my own. There can be no half struggle between us. There can be no mercy. Blood, alone! the blood of life the life itself can acquit me of my sworn obligation. It may be his life, or it may be mine; but he must understand, that, while I live, the forfeit stands against him, not to be redeemed but in his blood! This is all, sir, that I have to say."

"But, my dear Beauchampe "

"No more, Mr. Barnabas, if you please. There can be nothing more between us. You will understand me farther, when I tell you that I am not assured of your entirefreedom from this last contemplated crime of Col. Sharpe. I well know your subserviency to his wishes, and but for the superior nature of his crime, and that I do not wish to distract my thoughts from the sworn and solemn purpose before me, I should be compelled to show you that I regard the weakness which makes itself the minister of crime as a quality which deserves its chastisement also. Leave me, if you please, sir. I have subdued myself with great difficulty, to the task I have gone through, and would not wish to be provoked into a forgetfulness of my forbearance. You are in possession of all that I mean to say your horses are ready I suspect your friend is ready also! Good morning, sir!"

The speaker turned into the copse, and Mr. Barnabas was quite too prudent a person to follow him with any farther expostulations. The concluding warning of Beauchampe was not lost upon him, and glad to get off so well, he hurried back to the house, where Sharpe was awaiting him with an eagerness of anxiety which was almost feverish.

"Well what has he to say? You were long enough about it!"

"The delay was mine. He was as brief as charity. He knows all."

"All! impossible!"

"All! every syllable. Nay, says he knew the whole story of Alfred Stevens and of his wife's frailty before he married her. Begs me particularly to tell you that, and to say, moreover, that he was sworn to avenge her wrong before marriage."

"Then she told me nothing but the truth. What a blind ass I have been not to have known it, and believed her. I should have known that she was like no other woman under the sun!"

"It's too late now for such reflections the sooner we're off the better!"

"Ay, ay, but what more does he say?"

"That you are safe till you reach your own home. But after that never. It's your life or his! He swears it!"

"But was he furious?"

"No by no means."

"Then I'm deceived in the man. If he lets me off now, I suspect there's little to fear."

"Don't deceive yourself. He looked ready to break out at a moment's warning. It was evidently hard work with him to contain himself. Some fantastic notion about the obligations of hospitality, alone, prevented him from seeking instant redress."

"Fantastic or not, Barnabas, the reprieve is something. I don't fear the cause, however bad, if I can stave it off for a term or two. Witnesses may die, in the meantime; principles become unsettled new judges, with new dicta, come in, and there is always hope in conflicting authorities. To horse, mon ami, a reprieve is a long step to a full pardon."

"It's something, certainly," said the other, "and I'm sure I'm glad of it; but don't deceive yourself. Be on your guard if ever there was a man seriously savage in his resolution, Beauchampe is."

"Pshaw! Barnabas! you were ever an alarmist!" replied Sharpe, whose elasticity had returned to him with the withdrawal of the momentary cause of apprehension. "We shall tame this monster, however savage, if you only give us time. Let him come to Frankfort, and we'll set the whole corps of Red−Hats, yours among 'em, at work to get him to the conclave; and one Saturday's bout, well plied, will mellow body and soul in such manner that he will never rage afterwards, however he may roar. I tell you, my lad, time is something more than money. It subdues hate and anger, softens asperity, wakens up new principles, makes old maids young ones ay, my boy, and" here, looking up over his horse, which he was just about to mount, at the windows of Beauchampe's chamber, and closing the sentence in a whisper "ay, my boy, and may even enable me to overcome this sorceress tigress, if you prefer it make her forget that she is a wife forget every thing, but the days when I taught her her first lessons in loving!"

"Sharpe!" exclaimed the other in a sort of husky horror "you are a very dare−devil! To speak so in the very den of the lion?"

"Ay, but it is while thinking of the lioness."

"Keep me from the claws of both!" ejaculated Barnabas, with an honest terror as he struck spurs into the flanks of his horse.

"I do not now feel as if I feared either!" replied the other.

"Don't halloo till out of the woods!"

"No! but Barnabas, do you really think that his woman is sincere in giving me up?"

"Surely! how can I think otherwise."

"Ah! my boy, you know nothing of the sex."

"Well but she has told him all. How do you explain that?"

"She has had her reasons. She, perhaps, finds or fancies, that Beauchampe suspects. She hopes to blind him by this apparent frankness. She's not in earnest."

"D n such manœuvring, say I?"

"Give us time, Barnabas! Time, my boy, and I shall have her at my feet yet! I do not doubt that, with the help of some of our boys, I shall baffle him, and I will never lose sight of her, while I have sight. I have felt more passion for that woman than I ever felt for any woman yet, or ever expect to feel for another; and if scheme and perseverance will avail for any thing, she shall yet be mine!"

"If such were your feelings for her, why didn't you marry her in Charlemont?"

"So I would have done if it had been necessary; but who pays for his fruit when he can get it for nothing?"

"True," replied the other, evidently struck by the force of this dictum in moral philosophy "that's very true; but the fruit has its Argus now, if it had not then and the paws of Briareus may be upon your throat, if you look too earnestly over the wall. My counsel to you is, briefly, that you arrive with all possible speed at the faith of the fox."

"What! sour grapes? No! no! Barnabas the grapes are sweet and I do not think them entirely out of reach. As for the dragon, we shall yet contrive to 'calm the terrors of his claws.' "

So speaking they rode out of sight, the courage of both rising as they receded from the place of danger. Whether Sharpe really resolved on the reckless course which he expressed to his companion, or simply sought, with theinherent vanity of a small man, to excite the wonder of the latter, is of no importance to our narrative. In either case, his sense of morals and of society are equally and easily understood.

CHAPTER XXX.

Colonel Sharpe sat one pleasant forenoon in the snug parlour of his elegant mansion in the good city of Frankfort. It was a dies non with him. He had leisure, and his leisure was a leisure which had its sauce. It was a satisfactory leisure. The prospect of wealth with dignity was before him. Clients were numerous; fees liberal; his political party had achieved its triumph, and his own commission as attorney−general of the state was made out in the fairest characters. The world went on swimmingly. Truly, it was a blessed world. So one may fancy with the wine and walnuts before him. Ah! how much of the beauty of this visible world depends on one's dessert and digestion! Col. Sharpe's dessert was excellent, but his digestion not so good. Nay, there were some things that he could not digest; but of these, at the pleasant moment when we have thought proper to look in upon him, he did not think. His thoughts were rather agreeable than otherwise. Perhaps, we should say, rather exciting than agreeable. They were less sweet than piquant; but they were such as he did not seek to disperse. A man of the world relishes his bitters occasionally. It is your long−legged lad of eighteen who purses his lips while his eyes run water, as he imbibes the acrid but spicy flavour. Col. Sharpe was no such boy. He could linger over the draught, and sip, with a sense of relish, from the mingling but not discordant elements. He was no milksop. He had renounced the natural tastes at a very early day.

He thought of Margaret Cooper we should say Mrs. Beauchampe but that, when he recalled her to his memory, she always came in the former, never in the latter character. He did not like to think of her as the wife of

another. The reflection made him sore; though, to think of her was always a source of pleasure in a greater or less degree. But he had not forgotten the husband; and now, in connexion with the wife, he felt himself unavoidably compelled to think of him. His countenance assumed a meditative aspect. There was a gathering frown upon his brow in spite of his successes. At this moment a rap was heard at the door, and Mr. Barnabas was announced.

"Ha! Barnabas how d'ye do?"

"Well when did you get back?"

"Last night, after dark."

"Yes I looked in yesterday and you were not here then. What news bring you?"

"None! Have you any here?"

"As little. It's enough to know that all's right. We are quite joyful here nothing to dash our triumph."

"That's well, and our triumph's complete; but" with an air of abstraction "what do you hear of Beauchampe?"

"Not a word but he's in Frankfort!"

"Ha! indeed!"

"Was here two days ago. Haven't you heard from him."

"Not a syllable."

"But how could you? going to and fro, and so brief a time in any place, it was scarcely possible to find you!"

"I doubt if he'll do any thing, Barnabas. The affair will be made so much worse by stirring. He'll not think of it he's very proud, very sensitive very sensible to ridicule!"

"I don't know. I hope he won't. But he's as strange an animal as the woman, his wife; and, I tell you, there was a damned sour seriousness about him when he spoke to me on the subject, that makes me apprehensive that he'll keep his word. The ides of March are not over yet."

Sharpe's gravity increased. His friend rose to depart.

"Where do you go?"

"To Folker's. I have some business there. I just heard that you were here, and looked in to say how happy we all are in our successes."

"You will sup with me to−night, Barnabas. I want you; I feel dull."

"The devil you do, what, and just made attorney−general!"

"Even so! Honours are weighty."

"Not the less acceptable for that. Glamis thou art, Cawdor shalt be, and let me be your weird sister, and proclaim, yet further 'thou shalt be king hereafter!' governor, I mean."

"Ah! you are sharp, this morning, Barnabas," said Sharpe, his muscles relaxing into a pleasant smile. "I shall expect you to−night, if it be only to hear the repetition of these agreeable predictions."

"I will not fail you! addio!"

Col. Sharpe sat once more alone. Pleasant indeed were the fancies which the words of Mr. Barnabas had awakened in his mind. He murmured in the strain of dramatic language which the quotation of his friend had suggested, as he paced the apartment to and fro

" 'I know I'm thane of Glamis,

But how of Cawdor

And to be king,

Rests not within the prospect of belief.'

Ay, but it does;" he proceeded in the more sober prose of his own reflections "the steps are fair and easy. Barnabas is no fool in such matters, though no wit. He knows the people. He can sound them as well as any man. This suggestion does not come from himself. No! no! It comes from a longer head. It must be C ! Hem! this is to be thought upon! His word against a thousand pound! If he thinks so, it is as good as done; and Barnabas is only an echo, when he says "thou shalt be king hereafter!" Poor Barnabas! how readily he takes his colour from his neighbour."

A rap at the door arrested these pleasant reflections. The soliloquist started and grew pale. There was surely a meaning in that rap. It was not that of an ordinary acquaintance. It wanted freedom, rapidity. It was verydeliberate and measured. One two three! you could count freely in the intervals. A strange voice was heard at the door.

"Colonel Sharpe is in town is he at home?"

The servant answered in the affirmative, and appeared a moment after followed by a stranger a gentleman of dark, serious complexion, whose face almost declared his business. The host felt an unusual degree of discomposure for which he could not so easily account.

"Be seated, sir, if you please. I have not the pleasure of your name."

"Covington, sir, is my name John A. Covington."

"Covington, John A. Covington! I have the pleasure of knowing a gentleman whose name very much resembles yours. I know John W. Covington."

"I am a very different person;" answered the stranger "I have not the honour of being ranked among your friends."

The stranger spoke very coldly. A brief pause followed his words, in which Col. Sharpe's discomposure rather underwent increase. The keen eye of Covington observed his face, while he very deliberately drew from his pocket a paper which he handed to Sharpe, who took it with very sensible agitation of nerve.

"Do me the favour, sir, to read that. It is from Mr. Beauchampe. He tells me you are prepared for it. It is open, you see; I am aware of its contents."

"From Beauchampe "

"Mr. Beauchampe, sir," said the visited coolly correcting the freedom of the speaker.

"This paper, as you will see by the date, sir, has been some time in my hands. Your absence in the country, alone, prevented its delivery."

"Yes, sir" said Sharpe, slowly, and turning over the envelope; "yes, sir this, I perceive, is a peremptory challenge, sir?"

"It is."

"But, Mr. Covington, there may be explanations, sir."

"None, sir! Mr. Beauchampe tells me that this is impossible. He adds, moreover, that you know it. There is but one issue, he assures me between you, and that is life or death."

"Really, sir, there is no good reason for this. Mr.Covington, you are a man of the world. You know what is due to society. You will not lend yourself to any measure of unnecessary bloodshed. You have a right, sir surely you have a right, sir, to interpose, and accept some more qualified atonement perhaps, sir an apology the expression of my sincere regret and sorrow, sir "

The other shook his head coldly

"My friend leaves me none."

"But, sir, if you knew the cause of this hostility if "

"I do, sir!" was the stern reply.

"Indeed! But are you sure that you have heard it exactly as it is. There are causes which qualify offence "

"I believe Mr. Beauchampe, sir, in preference to any other witness. This offence, sir, admits of none. You will permit me to add, though extra−official, that my friend deals with you very magnanimously. The provocation is of a sort which deprives you of any claim of courtesy. May I have your answer, sir, to the only point to which this letter relates? Will you refer me to your friend?"

"Sir, Mr. Covington I will not fight Mr. Beauchampe!"

"Indeed, sir! can it be possible!" exclaimed Covington rising from his chair and regarding the speaker with surprise.

"No, sir, I cannot fight him. I have wronged him too greatly. I cannot lift weapon against his life!"

"Col. Sharpe, this will never do! You are a Kentuckian! You are regarded as a Kentucky gentleman! I say nothing on the score of your claim to this character. Let me remind you of the penalties which will follow this refusal to do my friend justice."

"I know them, sir I know them all. I defy them; will bear them, but I cannot fight Beauchampe!"

"You will be disgraced, sir I must post you!"

Sharpe strode the apartment hastily. His cheek was flushed. He felt the humiliation of his position. In ordinary matters, in the usual spirit of society, he was no coward. We have seen how readily he fought with William Calvert. But he could not meet Beauchampe he could not nerve himself to the encounter.

"I cannot, will not fight Beauchampe!" was his mutteredejaculation. "No! I have wronged him wronged her! I dare not meet him. I can never do it!"

"Be not rash, Col. Sharpe," said the other. "Think of it again before you give me such an answer. I will give you three hours for deliberation I will call again at four."

"No, sir no, Mr. Covington the wrongs I have done to Beauchampe are known probably well known; the world will understand that I cannot fight him; that my offence is of such a nature, that, to lift weapon against him, would be monstrous. You may post me, sir but no one who knows me will believe that it is fear that makes me deny this meeting. They will know all they will acquit me of the imputation of cowardice."

"And how should they know?" demanded Covington sternly, "unless you make them acquainted with the facts, and thus add another to my friend's causes of provocation."

"Nay, Mr. Covington, he himself told Mr. Barnabas."

"True, sir, but that was in a special communication to yourself, which implied confidence, and must have secrecy. My friend will have his remedy against Mr. Barnabas, if he does not against you, if he speaks what he should not. There is a way, sir, to muzzle your barking dogs."

"It is known to others, Mr. William Calvert, with whom I fought on this very quarrel."

"Ah! that is new to me; but as you fought in this very quarrel with Mr. Calvert, it seems to me that your objection fails. You must fight with Mr. Beauchampe also on the same quarrel."

"Never, sir you have my answer I will not meet him!"

"Do not mistake your position with the public, Col. Sharpe. The extent of the wrong which you have done to Beauchampe, only makes your accountability the greater. Nobody will acquit you on this score, nay, any effort to make known to the people the true cause of Mr. Beauchampe's hostility, will make it obvious that you seek rather to excuse your cowardice, than to show forbearance, or to make atonement. Truly, they will regard that as a very strange sort of remorse, which publishesthe shame of the wife, in order to justify a refusal to meet the husband."

"I will not publish it Beauchampe has already done so."

"It is known to two persons, sir, through him. It need not be known to more. Col. Calvert is a friend of mine. He is not the man to speak of the affair. Besides, I will communicate to him on the subject, and secure his silence. You shall have no refuge of this sort."

"I have answered you, Mr. Covington," said Sharpe doggedly.

"I must post you then as a scoundrel and a coward!"

Sharpe turned upon the speaker with a look of suddenly roused fury in his face, but swallowing the word which rose to his lips, he turned away. The other proceeded coolly.

"This shall be done, sir, and I must warn you that the affair will not end here. Mr. Beauchampe will disgrace you in the public streets."

The sweat trickled from the brows of Sharpe in thick drops such as precede the torrents of the thunder storm. He strove to speak, but the convulsive emotions of his bosom effectually baffled utterance; and with dilated eyes, and labouring breast, he strode the floor, utterly incapable of self−control. Covington lingered.

"You will repent this, Col. Sharpe. You will recall me when too late. Suffer me to see you this afternoon for your answer."

The other advanced to him, then turned away; once more approached and again receded. A terrible strife was at work within him, but when he did find words, they expressed no bolder determination than before, Covington regarded him with equal pity and contempt, as he turned away evidently dissatisfied and disappointed.

He was scarcely gone when the miserable man found words.

"God of Heaven! that I should feel thus! That I should be so unmanned! Why is this! Why is the strength denied me the courage which never failed before? It is not too late. He has scarcely left the step! I will recall him! He shall have another answer!" and, with this late resolution he darted to the entrance and laid his hand upon the knob of the door; but the momentaryimpulse had already departed. He left it unopened. He recoiled from the entrance, and striking his hands against his forehead, groaned in all the novel and unendurable bitterness of this unwonted humiliation.

"And this is the man, Cawdor, Glamis, all! King hereafter, too, as Mr. Barnabas promised; echoing, of course, the language of that great political machinist, Mr. C . Ha! ha! ha!"

Did some devil growl this commentary in the ears of the miserable man? He heard it, and shuddered from head to foot.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Let nobody imagine that a sense of shame implies remorse or repentance. Nay, let them not be sure that it implies any thing like forbearance in the progress of offence. It was not so with our attorney−general. The moment he recovered, in any fair degree, his composure, he despatched a messenger for his friend Barnabas. He, good fellow, came at the first summons. We will not say that his footsteps were not absolutely quickened by the recollection that it was just then the dinner hour; and, possibly, some fancy took possession of his mind, leading him to the strange, but pleasant notion, that Sharpe had suddenly stumbled upon some bonne bouche in the market−place, of particular excellence, of which he was very anxious that his friend should partake. The supper, be it remarked, was no less an obligation still! Conceptive Mr. Barnabas! Certainly, he had some such idea. The bonne bouche quickened his movements. He came seasonably. The dinner was not consumed; perhaps not quite ready; but, for the bonne bouche, alas! Sic transit gloria mundi. Such is the inscription, at least, upon this one pleasant hope of our friendly philosopher. There was a morsel for his digestion, or rather for that of his friendly entertainer, but, unhappily, it was one that neither was well prepared to swallow. Mr. Barnabas was struck dumb by the intelligence which he heard. He was not surprised that Beauchampe had sent a challenge; his surprise, amounting to utter consternation, was that his friend should have refused it. He was so accustomed to the usual bold carriage of Colonel Sharpe knew so well his ordinary promptness nay, had seen his readiness on former occasions to do battle, right or wrong, with word or weapon, that he was taken all aback with wonder at a change so sudden and unexpected. Besides, it must be recollected, that Mr. Barnabas was brought up in that school of an earlier period, throughout the whole range of southern and western country, which rendered it the point of honour to yield redress at the first summons, and in whatever form the summoner pleased to require. That school was still

one of authority, not merely with Mr. Barnabas, but with the country, and the loss of caste was one of those terrible social consequences of any rejection of this authority, which he had not the courage to consider without absolute horror. When he did speak, the friends had changed places. They no longer stood in the old relation to each other. Instead of Colonel Sharpe's being the superior will, while that of Barnabas was submission, the latter grew suddenly strong, almost commanding.

"But, Sharpe, you must meet him. By Jupiter! it won't do. You're disgraced for ever, if you don't. You can't escape. You must fight him."

"I cannot, Barnabas! I was never so unnerved in my life before. I cannot meet him. I cannot lift weapon against the husband of Margaret Cooper."

"Be it so; but, at all events, receive his fire."

"Even for this I am unprepared. I tell you, Barnabas, I never felt so like a cur in all my life. I never knew till now what it was to fear."

"Shake it off. It's only a passing feeling. When you're up, and facing him, you will cease to feel so."

The other shook his head with an expression of utter despair and self−abandonment.

"By God, I know better!" exclaimed Barnabas, warmly, "I've seen you on the ground I've seen you fight. There was that chap, Calvert."

"Barnabas, it is in vain that you expostulate. I have fought have been in frequent strifes with men, and brave men, too; but never knew such feelings as oppress me now and have oppressed me ever since I had this message. Do not suppose me insensible to the shame. It burns in mybrain with agony it rives my bosom with a choking and continual spasm. An hundred times since Covington has been gone, have I started up with the view to sending him a message, declaring myself ready to meet his friend, but as often has this accursed feeling come upon me, paralyzing the momentary courage, and depriving me of all power of action. I feel that I cannot meet Beauchampe; I feel that I dare not."

"Great God, what are we to do? Think, my dear fellow, what is due to your station to your position in the party? Remember, you are just now made attorney−general you are the observed of all observers. Every thing depends upon what exhibition you make now. Get over this difficulty man yourself for this meeting and the rest is easy. Another year puts you at the very head of the party."

"I have thought of all these things, Barnabas; and one poor month ago, had an angel of heaven come and assured me that they would have failed to provoke me to the encounter with any foe, however terrible, I should have flouted the idle tidings. Now, I cannot."

"You must! What will they say at the club? You'll be expelled, Sharpe, think of that! You'll be cut by every member. Covington will post you. Nay, ten to one, but Beauchampe will undertake to horsewhip you."

"I trust I shall find courage to face him then, Barnabas, though I could not now. Look you, Barnabas, something can be done in another way. Beauchampe can be acted on."

"How how can that be done?"

"Two or three judicious fellows can manage it. It is only to show him that any prosecution of this affair necessarily leads to the public disgrace of his wife. It is easy to show him, that, though he may succeed in

dishonouring me, the very act that does it, is a public advertisement of her shame."

"So it is," said the other.

"Something more, Barnabas. It might be intimated to Convington, that, as Margaret Cooper had a child "

"Did she, indeed?"

"So I ascertained by accident. She had one before leaving Charlemont."

"Indeed! well?"

"Well, it might have the effect of making him quiet to show him that this child was "

The rest of the sentence was whispered in the ears of his companion.

"The d l it was!" exclaimed the other. "But is that certain, Sharpe? for if so it acquits you altogether. The colour alone would be conclusive."

"Certainly it would. Now, some hint of this kind to Covington, or to Beauchampe, himself."

"By Jupiter! I shouldn't like to be the man to tell him, however. He's such a bull−dog."

"Through his friend, then. It might be done, Barnabas; and it can't be doubted that the dread of such a report would effectually discourage him from any prosecution of this business."

"So it might so it would, but "

"Barnabas, you must get it done."

"But, my dear colonel "

"You must save me, Barnabas relieve me of this difficulty. You know my power my political power you see my strength. I can serve you, you cannot doubt my willingness to serve you: but if this power is lost if I am disgraced by this fellow, we are all lost."

"True, very true. It must be done. I will see to it. Make yourself easy. I will set about it as soon as dinner's over."

Here the politic Mr. Barnabas looked round with an anxious questioning of the eye, which Colonel Sharpe understood.

"Ah! dinner I had not thought of that, but it must be ready. Of course you will stay and dine with me."

"Why, yes though I have some famous mutton−chops awaiting me at home."

"Mine are doubtlessly as good."

We shall leave the friends to their pottage, without any unnecessary inquiry into the degree of appetite which they severally brought to its discussion. It may not be impertinent however to intimate, as a mere probability, that Mr. Barnabas, in the discussion of the affair, was the most able analyst of the two. The digestion of Colonel Sharpe

was, at this period, none of the best. We have said as much before.

For that matter, neither was Beauchampe's. The returnof Convington, with the wholly unexpected refusal of Colonel Sharpe to meet and give him redress, utterly confounded him. Of course he had the usual remedies. There was the poster, which may be termed a modern letter of credit a sort of certificate of character, in one sense carrying with it some such moral odour, as in the physical world, is communicated by the whizzing of a pullet's egg, addled in June, directed at the lantern visage of a long man, honoured with a high place in the public eye, though scarcely at ease (because of his modesty) in the precious circumference of the pillory. Beauchampe's friend was bound to post Colonel Sharpe Beauchampe himself had the privilege of obliterating his shame, by making certain cancelli on the back of the wrong−doer, with the skin of a larger but less respectable animal. But were these remedies to satisfy Beauchampe? The cowskin might draw blood from the back of his enemy; but was this the blood which he had sworn to draw? His oath! his oath! That was the difficulty! The refusal of Colonel Sharpe to meet him in personal combat, left his oath unobliterated uncomplied with. The young man was bewildered by his rage and disappointment. This was an unanticipated dilemma.

"What is to be done, Covington?"

"Post him, at the court−house, jail, and every hotel in town."

"Post him, and what's the good of that?"

"You disgrace him for ever!"

"That will not answer that is nothing!"

"You can go farther. Horsewhip him cowskin him cut his back to ribands, whenever you meet him in the open thoroughfare!"

"Did you tell him that I would do so?"

"I did!"

"It did not move him? What said he then?"

"Still the same! He would not fight you could not lift weapon against your life."

"The villain! the black−hearted, base, miserable villain! Convington, you will go with me?"

"Surely! You mean to post him, or cowhide him, or both?"

"No, no! That's not what I mean. I must have his blood his life!"

"That's quite another matter, Beauchampe. I do not see that you can do more than I have told you. He is a coward you must proclaim him as such. Your poster does that. He is a villain has wronged you. You will punish him for the wrong. Your horsewhip does that! You can do no more, Beauchampe."

"Ay, but I must, Covington. Your poster is nothing, and the whip is nothing. I am sworn to take his life or lose my own!"

"I can do no more than I have told you. I will back you to this extent no farther."

"I can force him to fight me," said Beauchampe.

"In what way?"

"By assaulting him with my weapon, after offering him another."

"How, if he refuses to receive it?"

"He cannot surely he will not refuse."

"He will! I tell you, he will refuse. The man is utterly frightened. I never witnessed such unequivocal signs of cowardice in any man."

"Then is he wonderfully changed."

A servant entered at this moment, and handed Beauchampe a letter. It was from his wife. Its contents were brief.

"I do not hear from you, Beauchampe I do not see you. You were to have returned yesterday. Come to me. Let me see you once more. I tremble for your safety."

The traces of an agony which the words did not express were clearly shown in the irregular, sharp lines of the epistle.

"I will go to her at once. I will meet you to−morrow, Covington, when we will discuss this matter farther."

"The sooner you take the steps I propose, the better," said Covington. "The delay of a day to post him, is, perhaps, nothing; but you must not permit the lapse of more."

"I shall not post him, Covington that would seem to mock my vengeance and to preclude it. No, no! posting will not do. The scourging may; but even that does notsatisfy me now. To−morrow we shall meet to−morrow."

Let us go with the husband and rejoin Mrs. Beauchampe. A week had wrought great changes in her appearance. Her eyes have sunken, and the glazed intensity of their stare is almost that of madness. Her voice is low, subdued almost to a whisper.

"It is not done!" she said, her lip touching his ear her hands clasping his convulsively.

"No! the miserable wretch refuses to fight with me."

She recoiled as she exclaimed,

"And did you expect that he would? Did you look for manhood or manly courage at his hands?"

"Ay, but he shall meet me!" exclaimed Beauchampe, who perceived, in this short sentence, the true character of the duty which lay before him. "I will find him, at least, and you shall be avenged! He shall not escape me longer. His blood or mine."

"Stay! go not, Beauchampe! Risk nothing. Let me be the victim still. Your life is precious to me more precious than my own name. Why should you forfeit station, pride, peace, safety, every thing for me? Leave me, dear Beauchampe leave me to my shame leave me to despair!"

"Never! never! You are my life. Losing you I lose more than life all that can make it precious! I will not lose you. Whatever happens, you are mine to the last."

"To the last, Beauchampe thine, only thine to the last the last the last!"

She sunk into his arms. He pressed his lips upon hers, and drawing the dirk from his bosom, he elevated it above her head, while he mentally renewed his oath of retribution. This done, he released her from his grasp, placed her in a seat, and, once more, pressing his lips to hers, he darted from the dwelling. In a few seconds more the sound of his horse's feet were heard, and she started from her seat, and from the stupor which seemed to possess her faculties. She hurried to the window. He had disappeared.

"He is gone!" she exclaimed, pressing her hand upon her forehead, "He is gone! gone for what! Ha! Ihave sent him. I have sent him on this bloody work. Oh! surely it is madness that moves me thus! It must be madness. Why should he murder Alfred Stevens? What good will come of it? What safety? What! But why should he not? Are we never to be free? Is he to thrust himself into our homes for ever to baffle our hopes destroy our peace point his exulting finger to the hills of Charlemont, and cry aloud, 'remember there?' No! better he should die, and we should all die! Strike him, Beauchampe! Strike and fear nothing! Strike deep! Strike to the very heart, strike! strike! strike!"

Why should we look longer on this mournful spectacle. Yet the world will not willingly account this madness. It matters not greatly by what name you call a passion which has broken bounds, and disdains the right angles of convention. Let us leave the wife for the husband.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Was Beauchampe any more sane we should phrase it otherwise was he any less mad than his wife? Perhaps, he was more so. The simple inquiry which Mrs. Beauchampe had made, when he told her that Sharpe refused to fight him, had opened his eyes to all the terrible responsibility to which his unhappy oath had subjected him. When he had pledged himself to take the life of her betrayer, he had naturally concluded that this pledge implied nothing more than the resolution to meet with his enemy in the duel. That a Kentucky gentleman should shrink from such an issue did not for a moment enter his thoughts; and it is not improbable but that, if he could have conjectured this possibility, he had not so readily yielded to the condition which she had coupled with her consent to be his wife. But, after this, when in his own house, and under the garb of friendship, Col. Sharpelaboured to repeat his crime, still less could he have believed it possible that the criminal would refuse the only mode of atonement, which, according to the practices of that society to which they both were accustomed, was left within his power to make. Had he apprehended this, he would have chosen the most direct mode of vengeance such as the social sense every where would have justified and put the offender to death upon the very hearth which he had striven to dishonour. That he had not done so, was now his topic of self−reproach. An idea, whether true or false, of what was due to a guest, had compelled him to forbear, and to send the criminal forth, with every opportunity to prepare himself for the penalties which his offences had incurred. Still, up to this moment, he had not contemplated the necessity of lifting his weapon except on equal terms, with the enemy whose life he sought. In fair fight he had no hesitation at this; but, as a murderer, to strike the undefended bosom, however criminal however deserving of death was a view of the case equally unexpected and painful. It was one for which his previous reflections had not prepared him; and, the excitement under which he laboured in consequence, was one, that, if it did not madden him deprived him at least of all wholesome powers of reflection. While he rode to Frankfort, he went as one in a cloud. He saw nothing to the right or the left. The farmer, his neighbour, spoke to him, but he only turned as if impatient at some interruption, but, without answering, put spurs again to the flanks of his horse, and darted off with a wilder speed than ever. An instinct, rather than a purpose, when he reached Frankfort, carried him to the lodgings of his friend Covington.

"And what do you mean to do?" demanded the latter.

"Kill him there is nothing else to be done!"

"My dear Beauchampe you must not think of such a thing."

"Ay, but I must why should I not? Tell me that. Shall such a monster live?"

"There are good reasons why you should not kill him. If you do, unless in very fair fight; you will not only be tried, but found guilty of the murder."

"I know not that. His crime "

"Deserves death and should have found it at the time!Had you put him to death when he was in your house, and made the true cause known, the jury must have justified you; but you allowed the moment of provocation to pass."

"Such a moment cannot pass."

"Ay, but it can and does! Time, they say, cools the blood!"

"Nonsense! When every additional moment of thought adds to the fever."

"They reason otherwise. Nay, more; just now that feeling of party runs too high. Already, they have trumpeted it about that Calvert sought to kill Sharpe on the score of his attachment to Desha. They made the grounds of that affair political, when, it seems to have been purely your own; and if you should attempt and succeed in such a thing, he would be considered a martyr to the party, and you would inevitably become its victim."

"Covington, do you think that I am discouraged by this? Do you suppose I fear death? No! If the gallows were already raised if the executioner stood by, if I saw the felon cart, and the gloating throng around, gathered to behold my agonies, I would still strike, strike fatally, and without fear!"

"I know you brave, Beauchampe; but such a death might well appal the bravest man!"

"It does not appal me. Understand me, Covington, I must slay this man!"

"I cannot understand you, Beauchampe. As your friend I will not. I counsel you against the deed. I counsel you purely with regard to your own safety."

"As a friend, would you have me live dishonoured?"

"No! I have already counselled you how to transfer the dishonour from your shoulders to his. Denounce him for his crime disgrace him by the scourge!"

"No! no! Covington this is no redress no remedy. His blood only can wipe out that shame."

"I will have nothing to do with it, Beauchampe."

"Will you desert me?"

"Not if you adopt the usual mode. Take your horsewhip, arm yourself; give Sharpe notice to prepare; and it is not impossible, then, that he will be armed, and the rencontre may be as fatal as you could desire it. I am ready for you to this extent."

"Be it so then! Believe me, Covington, I would rather a thousand times risk my own life than be compelled to take his without resistance. But, understand one thing. He or I must perish. We cannot both survive."

"I will strive to bring it about;" said the other, and urged by the impatience of Beauchampe, he proceeded, a second time, to give Col. Sharpe the necessary notice.

But Sharpe was not to be found. He was denied at his own dwelling as in town; and Covington took the way to the house of his arch−vassal, Mr. Barnabas. The latter gentleman confirmed the intelligence. He stated, not only that Sharpe had left town, but had proceeded to Bowling Green. Covington did not conceal his object. Knowing the character of Barnabas and his relation to Sharpe, he addressed himself to the fears of both.

"Mr. Barnabas, it will be utterly impossible for Col. Sharpe to avoid this affair. Beauchampe will force it upon him. He will degrade him daily in the streets of Frankfort he will brand him with the whip in the sight of the people. You know the effect of this upon a man's character and position."

"Certainly, sir, but, Mr. Covington, Mr. Beauchampe will do so at his peril."

"To be sure, he knows that; but with such wrongs as Mr. Beauchampe has had to sustain, he knows no peril. He will certainly do what I tell you."

"But, Mr. Covington, my dear sir, cannot this be avoided? is there no other remedy? will no apology no atonement of Col. Sharpe suppose a written apology most humble and penitent, to Mr. and Mrs. Beauchampe."

"Impossible! How could you think that such an apology could atone for such an offence first the seduction of this lady, while yet unmarried, and next the abominable renewal of the attempt when she had become a wife."

"But nobody believes this, Mr. Covington. It is generally understood that the first offence is the only one to be laid at Sharpe's doors, and this is to be urged only on political grounds. Beauchampe supported Tompkins against Desha, and the friends of Tompkins revive this stale offence only to discredit Sharpe as the friend of the former."

"Mr. Barnabas you know better. You know that Beauchampe was the friend of Sharpe and spoke against Calvert in his defence. We also know, as well as you, that Calvert and Sharpe fought on account of this very lady; though Desha's friends have contrived to make it appear that the combat had a political origin."

"Well, Mr. Covington, my knowledge is one thing, that of the people another. I can only tell you that it is very generally believed that the true cause of the affair is political."

"And how has this general knowledge been obtained, Mr. Barnabas?" remarked Covington rather sternly. "As the friend of Beauchampe, and the only one to whom he has confided his feelings and wishes, I can answer for it that no publicity has been given to this affair by us."

"I don't know," said Barnabas, hurriedly, "how the report has got abroad. I only know that it is very general."

Mr. Covington rose to depart.

"Let me, before leaving you, Mr. Barnabas, advise you, as one of the nearest friends of Col. Sharpe, what he is to expect. Mr. Beauchampe will take the road of him and will horsewhip him through the streets of Frankfort on the first occasion nay, on every occasion till he is prepared to fight him. I am free to add, for the benefit of any of Col. Sharpe's friends, that I will accompany him whenever he proposes to make this attempt."

And with this knightly intimation, Mr. Covington took his departure.

When Beauchampe heard that Sharpe had left town, and gone to Bowling Green, he immediately jumped on his horse and went off in the same direction. That very afternoon, Mr. Barnabas sat with his friend, Col. Sharpe, over a bottle, and at the town−house of the latter. It had been a falsehood by which Beauchampe was sent on a wild−goose chase into the country. The object was to gain time, so as to enable the friends of both parties, or rather the friends of the criminal, who were members of the club, to interpose and effect an arrangement of the affair, if such a thing were possible; and in the natural gratification which Sharpe felt that the danger was parried, though for a moment only, the spirits of the criminal rose into vivacity. The two made themselves merry with the unfruitfuljourney which the avenger was making; not considering the effect of such manœuvring upon a temper so excitable, nor allowing for the accumulation of those passions which, as they cannot sleep, and cannot be subdued, necessarily become more powerful in proportion to the delay in their utterance, and the restraints to which they are subjected. Of course Mr. Barnabas made a full report to his principal of all that Covington had told him. There was little in this report to please the offender; but there were other tidings which were more gratifying. The members of the club were busy to prevent the meeting. Mr. Barnabas had already sent a judicious and veteran politician to see Covington; and having a great faith himself in the powers of the persons he had employed, to bring the matter to a peaceable adjustment, he had infused a certain portion of his own faith into the breast of his superior. And the bowl went round merrily; and the hearts of the twain were lifted up, for, in their political transactions, there was much that had taken place of a character to give both of them positive gratification. And so the evening passed until about eight o'clock, when Mr. Barnabas suddenly recollected that he had made an appointment with some gentleman which required his immediate departure. Sharpe was unwilling to lose him, and his spirits sunk with the departure of his friend; nor were much enlivened by the entrance of a lady, in whose meek, sad countenance might be read the history of an unloved, neglected, but uncomplaining wife. He did not look up at her approach. She placed herself in the seat which Mr. Barnabas had left.

"You look unwell, Warham. You seem to have been troubled, my husband," she remarked with some hesitation, and in a faint voice. "Is any thing the matter?"

"Nothing which you can help, Mrs. Sharpe," he replied in cold and repelling accents, crossing his legs, and half wheeling his chair about so as to turn his back upon her. She was silenced, and looked at him with an eye full of a sad reproach, and a lasting disappointment. No farther words passed between them, and a few moments only elapsed when a rap was heard at the outer entrance.

"Leave the room," he said, "I suppose it is Barnabas returned. I have private business with him. You had better go to bed."

She rose meekly and did as she was commanded. He also rose and went to the door.

"Who's that Barnabas?" he demanded while opening the door. He was answered indistinctly; but he fancied that the words were in the affirmative, and the visiter darted in the moment the door was opened. The passage−way being dark, he could not distinguish the person of the stranger except to discover that it was not the man whom he expected. But this discovery was made almost in the very instant when the intruder entered, and with it came certain apprehensions of danger, which, however vague, yet startled and distressed him. Under their influence he receded from the entrance, moving backward with his face to the stranger till he re−entered the sitting apartment. The moment that the light fell upon the face of the visiter his knees knocked against one another. It was Beauchampe.

"Beauchampe!" he involuntarily exclaimed with a hollow voice, while his dilated eyes regarded the fierce, wild aspect of the visiter.

"Ay! Beauchampe!" were the echoed tones of the other tones almost stifled in the deep intensity of mood with which they were spoken. Tones, low, but deep, like those of some dull convent bell, echoing at midnight along the gray rocks and heights of some half−deserted land. As deep and soul−thrilling as would be such sounds upon the ear of some wanderer, unconscious of any neighbourhood, did they fall upon the sudden sense of that criminal. His courage instantly failed him. His knees smote each other his tongue clove to his mouth he had strength enough only to recede as if with the instinct of flight. Beauchampe caught his arm.

"You cannot fly you must stay! My business will suffer no farther postponement."

Beauchampe forced him into a chair.

"What is the matter, Beauchampe? What do you mean to do?" gasped the trembling criminal.

"Does not your guilty soul tell you what I should do?" was the stern demand.

"I am guilty!" was the half choking answer.

"Ay, but the confession alone will avail nothing. You must atone for your guilt."

"On my knees, Beauchampe?"

"No! with your blood!"

"Spare me, Beauchampe! oh! spare my life. Do not murder me for I cannot fight you on account of that injured woman!"

"This whining will not answer, Col. Sharpe. You must fight me. I have brought weapons for both. Choose!"

The speaker threw two dirks upon the floor at the feet of the criminal, while he stood back proudly.

"Choose!" he repeated pointing to the weapons.

But the latter, though rising, so far from availing himself of the privilege, made an effort to pass his enemy and escape from the room. But the prompt arm of Beauchampe arrested him and threw him back with some force towards the corner of the apartment.

"Col. Sharpe, you cannot escape me. The falsehood of your friend, which sent me from the city, has resolved me to suffer no more delay of justice. Will you fight me? Choose of the weapons at your feet."

"I cannot! spare me, Beauchampe my dear friend for the past in consideration of what we have been to each other spare my life!"

"You thought not of this, villain, when, in the insolence of your heart, you dared to bring your lust into my dwelling."

"Beauchampe, hear me for your own sake, hear me."

"Speak! speak briefly. I am in no mood to trifle."

"My crime was that of a young man "

"Stay! your crime was the invasion of my family of its peace!"

"Ah! that was a crime if it were so."

"What, do you mean to deny! Dare you to impute falsehood to my wife?"

"Beauchampe, she is your wife; and for this reason, I will not say what I might say, but "

"Oh! speak all speak all! I am curious to see by what new invention of villany you hope to deceive me."

"No villany no invention, Beauchampe I speak only the solemn truth. Before God, I assure you it is the truth only which I will deliver."

"You swear?"

"Solemnly."

"Speak, then but take up the dirk."

"No! If you will but hear me, I do not fear to convince you that there needs none either in your hands or mine."

"You are a good lawyer, keen, quick−witted and very logical; but it will task better wits than yours to alter my faith that you are a villain, and that you shall perish by this hand of mine."

Beauchampe stooped and possessed himself of one of the weapons.

"Speak now! what have you to say? Remember, Col. Sharpe, you have not only summoned God to witness your truth, but you may be summoned in a few moments to his presence to answer for your falsehood. I am sent here, solemnly sworn, to take your life!"

"But only because you believed me a criminal in respects in which I am innocent. If I show you that I never approached Mrs. Beauchampe, while your wife, except with the respect due to herself and you "

"Liar! but you cannot show me that! I tell you, I believe what she has told me. I know her truth and your falsehood."

"She is prejudiced, my dear friend. She hates me "

"And with good reason; but hate you as she may, she speaks, and can speak, nothing in your disparagement but the truth."

"She has misunderstood mistaken me, in what I said."

"Stay!" approaching him. "Stay! do not deceive yourself, Col. Sharpe you cannot deceive me. She has detailed the whole of your vile overtures the very words of shame and guilt, and villanous baseness which you employed."

"Beauchampe my dear friend! are you sure that she has told you all?"

Here the criminal approached with extended hand, while he assumed a look of mysterious meaning, which left something for the other to anticipate.

"Sure that she told me all? Ay! I am sure! What remains? Speak out and leave nothing to these smooth, cunning faces. Speak out, while the time is left you."

"Did she tell you of our first meeting in Charlemont?"

"Ay, did she that! every thing!"

"I seek not to excuse my crime, there, Beauchampe but that was not a crime against you! I did not know you then. I did not then fancy that you would ever be so allied to "

"Cease that and say what you deem needful."

"Did she tell you of the child?"

"Child! what child?" demanded Beauchampe with a start of surprise.

The face of Sharpe put on a look of exultation. He felt that he had gained a point.

"Ah! ha! I could have sworn that she did not tell you all!"

The eyes of Beauchampe glared more fiercely, and the convulsive twitching of the hand which held the dagger, and the quivering of his lip, might have warned his companion of the danger which he incurred of trifling with him longer. But Sharpe's policy was to induce the suspicions of Beauchampe in relation to his wife. He fancied, from the unqualified astonishment which appeared in the latter's face, as he spoke of the child, that he had secured a large foothold in this respect, for it was very evident that Mrs. Beauchampe, while relating every thing of any substantial importance which concerned herself, had evidently omitted that portion of the narrative which concerned the unhappy and short−lived offspring of her guilty error. It does not need to inquire why she had forborne to include this particular in her statement to her husband. There may have been some superior pang in the recollection of that gloomy period which had followed her fall; and it was not necessary to the frank confession which she had freely offered of her guilt. But, though unimportant, Col. Sharpe very well knew, that there is a danger in the suppression of any fact, in a case like this, where the relations are so nice and sensitive, which is like to invoke an appearance of guilt, and to lead to its presumption. Like an experienced practitioner at the sessions, he deemed it important to dwell upon this particular.

"I could have sworn!" he repeated, "that she had not told you of that child. Ah! my dear friend, spare me the necessity of telling you what she has forborne. She is now your wife. Her reputation is yours her shame would be yours also. Believe me, I repent of all I have done for your sake, for hers believe me, moreover,when I assure you that she mistook my language, when she fancied that I meant indignity in what I said lately in your house."

"But I could not mistake that, Col. Sharpe."

"No! but did you hear it rightly reported?"

"Ay! she would not deceive me. You labour in vain. This dirty work is easy with you; but it does not blind me! Col. Sharpe, what child is this that you speak of?"

"Her child, to be sure!"

"Her child! Had she a child?"

"To be sure she had. Ask her, she will not deny it, perhaps and if she does I can prove it."

"Her child! and yours?"

"No! no! No child of mine!"

"Ha! not your child! Whose, whose then?"

"Go to her, my dear friend! Ask her of that child."

"Where is the child?"

"Dead!"

"Dead! well! what of it then?"

"Go to her ask her whose it was? Ah! my dear Beauchampe, let me say no more. Press me no farther to speak. She is your wife!"

The eye of Beauchampe settled upon him with a suddenly composed but stony expression.

"Say all!" he said deliberately. "Disburthen yourself of all! I request it particularly, Col. Sharpe, nay, I command it."

"My dear friend, Beauchampe, I really would prefer not ah! it is an ugly business."

"Do not trifle, Col. Sharpe speak you do not help your purpose by this prevarication. What do you know farther of this child. It was not yours, you say, whose was it then?"

"It was not mine! but to say whose it was is scarce so easy a matter, but " and he drew nigh and whispered the rest of the sentence, some three syllables, into the ears of the husband. The latter recoiled. His face grew black, his hand grasped the dagger with nervous rigidity, and, while the look of cunning confidence mantled the face of the criminal, and before he could recede from the fatal proximity to which, in whispering, he had brought himself with the avenger, the latter had struck. The sharp edge of the dagger had answered the shockingsecret, whatever might have been its character, and the solemn oath of the husband was redeemed redeemed in a single moment, and by a single blow! The wrongs of Margaret Cooper were at last avenged, but her sorrows were not ended! How should they be? The hand that is stained with human blood, in whatever cause, must bide a dreary destiny, before the waters of heavenly mercy shall cleanse and sweeten it! Col. Sharpe fell at the feet of the avenger. A single blow had slain him!

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A murder in a novel is a matter usually of a thousand very thrilling minutiæ. In the hands of that excellent historico−romancer of modern days, Mr. G. P. R. James, you would see what he would make of it. You would be confounded at the dilating substance, the accumulating details the fact upon fact whether of moment or not, is not necessary to be asked here which grows out of it on every hand. You should see the good old butler of the household, Saunders Maybin or Richard Swopp, by name, going forth at morning, and suddenly encountering a blood−spot upon the grass. At which sight the said Saunders starts, and shakes his head significantly; and says,

with native sagacity, "this is miching malico; it means mischief." And so saying, he goes on nosing all sense from that moment till he finds the fag end of a carcass jutting out from a dung−heap. Nay, it may not be so easily found, and it may not be in a dung−heap. It may be in the bushes only, but they may be a good long summer day in finding it, and by that time the nose of the seeker becomes of rare service in the search. But, whatever may be the particulars, you have 'em all; even to the very shape and size of the wound made by bowie−knife or bludgeon−stroke under which the poor man perished. Then follows "crowner's quest," lawyer's arguments, difference of opinion, and so forth; and there is always an innocent mannigh, to look like the guilty one, and, by some cursed stupidity, to get himself laid by the heels in prison to answer the offence. This is a notable way to relate such an affair, if it wasn't that some censorious people think it rather tedious.

Having seen how Sharpe was murdered, who was the murderer, and how the blow was struck we shall not fatigue the reader in showing how many versions of the affair got abroad among those who were, of course, more and more positive in their conjectures in proportion to the small knowledge which they possessed. We make short a story, which, long enough already, we apprehend, might, by an ingenious romancer, be made a great deal longer. Suspicion fell instantly on Beauchampe. On whom else should it fall? He had announced his purpose to take the life of the criminal; and wherever Sharpe's offence had got abroad, people expected that he would commit the deed. In our country a great many crimes are committed to gratify public expectation. Most of our duels are fought to satisfy the demands of public opinion, by which is understood the opinions of that little set, batch, or clique, of which some long−nosed Solomon some addle−pated leader of a score whose brains are thrice addled, is the sapient lawgiver and head. Most of the riots and mobs are instigated by half−witted journalists, who first goad the offender to his crime, and, the next day, rate him soundly for its commission. He who, in a fit of safe valour, the day before, taunted his neighbour with cowardice for submitting to an indignity; lifts up his holy hands with horror when he hears that the nose−pulling is avenged; and, as a conscientious juryman, hurries the wretch to the halter who has only followed his own suggestions in braining the assailant with his bludgeon. All this is certainly very amusing, and, with proper details, makes a murder−paragraph in the newspaper which delights the old ladies to as great an extent as a marriage does the young ones. It produces that pleasurable excitement which is the mental brandy and tobacco to all persons of the Anglo−Saxon breed, for which the appetite is tolerably equal in both Great Britain and America.

In Beauchampe's case, the hue and cry knew, by a sort of instinct, in which way to turn its sagacious nostrils. Beauchampe returned to his dwelling, but not with the steps of fear; not even with those of flight. His journey homewards was marked with the deliberation of one who feelsthat he has performed a duty, the neglect of which had long been burdensome and painful to his conscience. It is of course to be understood that he was labouring under a degree of excitement which makes it something like an absurdity to talk of conscience at all. The fanaticism which now governed his feelings, and had sprung from them, possessed his mind also. With the air of one who has gone through a solemn and severe ordeal, with the feeling of a martyr, he presented himself before his wife. The deliberation of monomania is one of its most remarkable features. It is singularly exemplified by one portion of his proceedings. On leaving her to seek the interview with Sharpe, he had informed her, not only on what day, but at what hour, to look for his return; and he reached his dwelling within fifteen minutes of the appointed moment. Anxiously expecting his arrival, she had walked down the grove to meet him. On seeing her he raised his handkerchief, red with the bloody proofs of his crime, and waved it in the manner of a flag. She ran to meet him, and as he leapt from his horse, she fell prostrate on her face before him. Her whole frame was convulsed, and she burst into a flood of tears.

"Why weep; why tremble?" he exclaimed. "Do you weep that the deed is done the shame washed out in the blood of the criminal that you are avenged at last?"

His accents were stern and reproachful. She lifted her hands and eyes to heaven as she replied

"No! not for this I weep and tremble; or, if for this, it is in gratitude to heaven that has smiled upon the deed."

But though she spoke this fearful language, she spoke not the true feeling of her soul. We have already striven to show that she no longer possessed those feelings which would have desired the performance of the deed. She no longer implored revenge. She strove to reject the memory of the murdered man, as well as of the wanton crime by which he had provoked his fate; and the emotion which she expressed, when she beheld the bloody signal waving from her husband's hands, had its birth in the revolting of that feminine nature, which, even in her, after the long contemplation which had made her imagination familiar with the crime, was still in the ascendant. But this she concealed. This she denied, as we have seen. Her motivewas a noble one. It is soon expressed. "He has done the deed for me in my behalf! Shall I now refuse approbation shall I withhold my sympathy? No! let his guilt be what it may, he is mine, and I am his, for ever!" And with this resolve, she smiled upon the murderer, kissed his bloody hands, and lifted her own to heaven in seeming gratitude for its sanction of the crime.

But a new feeling was added to those which, however conflicting, her words and looks had just expressed. She rose from the ground in apprehension.

"But are you safe, my husband?" she demanded.

"What matters it?" he replied. "Has he not fallen beneath my arm?"

"Yes, but if you are not safe!"

"I know not what degree of safety I need," was his reply. "I have thought but little of that. If you mean, however, to ask whether I am suspected or not, I tell you I believe I am. Nay, more I think the pursuers are after me. They will probably be here this very night. But what of this, dear wife? I have no fears. My heart is light. I am really happy never more so since the deed is done. I could laugh, dance, sing, practise any mirth or madness just as one who has been relieved of his pain, throws by his crutch and feels his limbs and strength free at last, after a bondage to disease for years."

And he caught her in his arms as he spoke, and his eye danced with a strange fire, which made the woman shudder to behold it. A cold tremor passed through her veins.

"Are you not happy too do you not share with me this joy?" he demanded.

"Oh, yes, to be sure I do!" she replied with a husky apprehension in her voice which, however, he did not seem to see.

"I knew it, I knew you would be! Such a relief, ending in a triumph, should make us both so happy. I never was more joyful, my dear wife. Never! never!" and he laughed, laughed until the woods resounded, and did not heed the paleness of her cheek; did not feel the faltering of her limbs as he grasped her to his breast, did not note the wildness in her eye, as she looked stealthily backward on the path over which he came.

She, at least, was now fully in her senses, whatever she may have been before. She stopped him in his anties. She drew him suddenly aside, into the cover of the grove for, by this time, they had come in sight of the dwelling and throwing herself on her knees, clasped his in her arms, while she implored his instant flight. But he flatly refused, and she strove in vain, however earnestly, to change his determination. All that she could obtain from him was a promise to keep silent, and not, by any act of his own, to facilitate the progress of those who might seek to discover the proofs of his criminality. Crime, indeed, he had long ceased to consider his performance. The change, in this respect, which had taken place in her feelings and opinions had produced none in his. His mind had been wrought up to something like a religious frenzy. He regarded the action not only as something due to justice an action appointed for himself particularly, but as absolutely and intrinsically glorious. Perhaps, indeed, such an act as his, should always be estimated with reference to the sort of world in which the performer lives. What were those brave deeds of the middle ages, the avenging of the oppressed, the widow, and the orphan,

by which stalwart chiefs made themselves famous? Crimes, too, and sometimes of the blackest sort, but that they had their value as benefits at a period when society afforded no redress for injury, and consequently no protection for innocence. And what protection did society afford to Margaret Cooper, and what redress for injury? Talk of your action for damages your five thousand dollars, and of what avail to such a woman; robbed of innocence; mocked, persecuted, followed to the last refuge of her life, the home of her mother and her husband; and afterwards, thrice blackened in fame by the wanton criminal by slanders of the most shocking invention. Society never yet could succeed in protecting and redressing all its constituents, or any one of them, in all his or her relations. There are a thousand respects where the neighbours must step in where to await for law, or to hope for law, is to leave the feeble and the innocent to perish. You hear the cry of murder? Do you stop, and resume your seat with the comforting reflection that if John murders Peter, John,after certain processes of evidence, will be sent to the state prison or the gallows, and make a goodly show on some gloomy Friday, for the curious of both sexes. Law is a very good thing in its way, but it is not every thing; and there are some honest impulses, in every manly bosom, which are the best of all moral laws, as they are the most certainly human of all laws. Give us, say I, Kentucky practice, like that of Beauchampe, as a social law, rather than that which prevails in some of our pattern cities, where women are, in three−fourths the number of instances, the victims, violated, mangled, murdered, where men are the criminals, and where (Heaven kindly having withdrawn the sense of shame) there is no one guilty at least none brave enough, or manly enough to bring the guilty to punishment. What is said is not meant to defend or encourage the shedding of blood. We may not defend the taking of life, even by the laws. We regard life as an express trust from Heaven, of which, as we should not divest ourselves, no act but that of Heaven should divest us; but there is a crime beyond it, in the shedding of that vital soul−blood, its heart of hearts, life of all life, the fair fame, the untainted reputation; and the one offence which provokes the other, should be placed in the opposing balance, as an offset, in some degree, to the crime by which it is avenged.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

We could tell a long story about the manner in which Beauchampe was captured, but it will suffice to say that when the pursuers presented themselves at his threshold, he was ready, and with the high, confident spirit of one assured that all was right in his own bosom, he yielded himself up at their summons, and attended them to Frankfort. Behold him there in prison. The cold, gloomy walls are around him, and all is changed, of the sweet, social outer world, in the aspects which meet his eye. But the woman of his heart is there with him; and if the thing that we love is left us, the dungeon has its sunshine, and the prison is still a home. The presence of the loved one hallows it into home. Amidst doubt, and privation, the restraint he endures, and the penal doom which he may yet have to suffer, her affection rises always above his affliction, and baffles the ills that would annoy, and soothes the restraint which is unavoidable. She has a consolation such as woman alone knows to administer, for the despondency that weighs upon him. She can soothe the dark hours with her song, and the weary ones with her caress and smile. But not to ordinary appeals like these does the wife of his bosom confine her ministry. Her soul rises in strength corresponding to the demands of his. Ardent in his nature, little used to restraint, the circumscribed boundary of his prison grows irksome, at moments, beyond his temper to endure. At such moments his heart fails him, and doubts arise shadows of the solemn truth which always haunt the soul of the wrong−doer, however righteous to his diseased mind may seem his deeds at the moment of their performance; doubts that distress him with the fear that he may still have erred. To the pure heart, to the conscientious spirit there is nothing more distressing than such a doubt; and this very distress is the remorse which religion loves to inspire, when it would promote the workingsof repentance. It is misplaced kindness that the wife of Beauchampe undertakes to fortify his faith, and strengthen him in the conviction that all is right. We cannot blame her, though pity 'tis 'twas so. She no longer speaks, perhaps she no longer thinks of the deed which he has done, as an event either to be deplored, or to have been avoided. She speaks of it as a necessary misfortune. As she found that he derived his chief consolation from the conviction that the deed was laudable, she toils, with deliberate ingenuity and industry, to confirm his impressions. Through the sad, slow−pacing moments of the midnight, she sits beside him and renews the long and cruel story of her wrong. She suppresses nothing now. That portion of the narrative relating to the child, from her previous suppression of which, the unhappy man

whom he had slain, had striven to originate certain doubts of her conduct, and to infuse them into the mind of Beauchampe, was all freely told, and its previous suppression explained and accounted for. The wife seemed to take a singular and sad pleasure in reiterating this painful narrative; and yet, every repetition of the tale brought to her spirit the pang, as keenly felt as ever, of her early humiliation. But she saw that the renewal of the story strengthened the feeling of self−justification in the mind of her husband! That was the rock upon which he stood, and to confirm the solidity of that support, was to lighten the restraints of his prison, and all the terrors which might be inspired by the apprehension of his doom. Of the mere stroke of death, he had no fears: but there is something in the idea of a felon death by the halter, which distresses and subjugates the strongest nerves. This idea sometimes came to afflict the prisoner, but the keen instincts of his wife enabled her very soon to discover the causes of his depression, and her quick commanding intellect provided her with the arguments which were to combat them.

"Do not fear, my husband," she would say. "I know that they must acquit you. No jury of men men who have wives, and daughters, and sisters, but must not only acquit of crime, but must justify you and applaud you for the performance of a deed which protects their innocence, and strikes terror into the heart of the seducer. You have not been my champion merely, you are thechampion of my sex. The blow which your arm has struck, was a blow in behalf of every unprotected female, of every poor orphan; fatherless, brotherless, and undefended; who otherwise would be the prey of the ruffian and the betrayer. No, no! There can be no cause of fear. I do not fear for you. I will myself go into the court, and, if need be, plead your cause by telling the whose story of my wrong. They shall hear me. I will neither fear nor blush and they shall believe me when they hear."

But to this course the husband objected. The heart of a man is more keenly alive to the declared shame of one he truly loves, than to the loss of life or of any other great sacrifice which the social man can make. Besides, Beauchampe knew better than his wife what would be permitted, and what denied, in the business of a court of justice. Still, it was necessary that steps should be taken for his defence. At first, he proposed to argue his own case; but he was very soon conscious, after a few moments given to reflection on this subject, that his feelings would enter too largely into his mind to suffer it to do him, or itself justice. While undetermined what course to pursue, or who to employ, his friend Covington suggested the name of Calvert, as that of a lawyer likely to do him more justice by far than any other that he could name.

"I know, Col. Calvert," said the young man "and I can assure you he has no superior as a jury pleader in the country. He is very popular makes friends wherever he goes, and is beginning to be accounted, every where, the only man who could have taken the field against Sharpe."

"But what was it that you told me of his fighting with Sharpe on my account?" was the inquiry of Beauchampe, now urged with a degree of curiosity which he had neither shown nor felt, when the fact was first mentioned to him.

"Of that I can tell you little. It is very well known that Sharpe and Calvert quarrelled and fought, almost at their first meeting. The friends of Sharpe asserted that the quarrel arose on account of offensive words which Calvert made use of in disparagement of Desha."

"Yes, I heard that now I remember from Barnabas himself."

"Such was the story; but Sharpe assured me that the affair really took place on account of Mrs. Beauchampe."

"Mrs. Beauchampe!" exclaimed the husband. The wife, who was present, looked up inquiringly, but said nothing. Mr. Covington looked to the lady and remained silent, while, with a face suddenly flushed, Beauchampe motioned to his wife to leave them. When she had done so, Covington repeated what had been said by Sharpe concerning his duel with Calvert.

"It was only some lie of his, intended to help his evasion. It was to secure the temporary object. I never heard of Calvert from my wife."

Such was Beauchampe's opinion. But Covington thought otherwise.

"A rumour has reached me since," he added, "which leads me to think that the story is not altogether without foundation. At all events, whether there be any thing or not, Calvert will be your man for the defence. If any thing is to be done, he will do it. But really, Beauchampe, if you have stated all the particulars, they can establish nothing against you."

"Ah! the general persuasion that I ought to kill Sharpe, will produce testimony enough. I think I shall escape, Covington, but it will be in spite of the testimony. I will escape, because of the sentiment of justice, which, in the breast of every honest man, will say, that Sharpe ought to die, and that no hand had a better right to take his life than mine. But you know the faction. They are strong his friends and relatives are numerous. They will strain every nerve, spare no money, and suborn testimony enough to effect their object. They will fail, I think; I can scarcely say I hope, for, of a truth, my dear fellow, it seems to me that I have done the great act of my life. I feel as if I had performed the crowning achievement. I could do nothing more meritorious if I lived a thousand years; and death, therefore, would not be to me now such a misfortune as I should have regarded it a month ago. Still, life has something for me. I should like to live. The thought of losing her, is a worse pang than any that the mere loss of life could inflict."

The prisoner was touched as he said these words. A big tear gathered in his eye, and he averted his face from his companion. Covington rose to depart. As he did so he asked

"Shall I see Calvert for you, Beauchampe."

"I will think of it and let you know to−morrow," was the reply.

"The sooner the better. Your enemies are busy, and Calvert lives at some distance. He must be written to, and time may be lost as he may be on the road now somewhere. I will look in upon you in the morning."

"Do so. I shall then be better able to say what should be done. I will think of it to−night: but, of a truth, Covington, I do not feel disposed to do any thing. I prefer to remain inactive. For what should I say? Speak out? That would be against all legal notions of making a defence. And yet, I know no mode, properly, of defending myself, than by declaring the act my own, and justifying it as such. To myself to my own soul, it is thus justified. God! if it were not! But, in order to make this justification felt by the jury, they must know my secret. They must hear all that damning tale of her trial and overthrow, and the serpent−like progress of him whose head I have bruised for ever. How can I tell that? That is impossible!"

Covington agreed with the speaker, who proceeded thus

"Well then, I am silent. The general issue is one of form, pleading which I am not supposed to be guilty of any violation of the laws of morals, though what an absurdity is that! I plead it, and keep silent. The onus probandi lies with the state "

"And it can prove nothing, if your statement be correct."

"Non sequilur, my good fellow. My statement is correct. Nobody saw me commit the deed. The clothes which I wore are sunk to the bottom of the Kentucky river the dirk is buried and I know, that, with the exception of the great Omniscient, my proceedings were hidden from the eyes of all. But it does not follow from this that there will be no evidence against me. I suspect there will be witnesses enough. The friends and family of Sharpe will

suborn witnesses. There are hundreds of people, too, who readily believe what they fancy; and conjecture will make details fast enough, which the vanityof seeming to know will prompt the garrulous to deliver. I am convinced that vanity makes a great many witnesses, who will lie for the sake of having something to say, and will swear to the lie for the sake of having an audience who are compelled to listen to them. With a little management, you can get any thing sworn to. You have heard of the philosopher, who, under a bet, with some previous arrangement, collected a crowd in the street to see certain stars at noonday, which soon became visible to as many as looked. Some few did not see so many stars as others, nor did they seem to these, so bright as the rest; but all of them saw the stars they were there, that was enough; and some of your big mouthed observers looked a few incipient moons or comets, and of course were more conspicuous themselves, in consequence of their conspicuous sight−seeing. If I have any fear at all, it will be from some such quarter. The friends of Sharpe have already turned upon me as the criminal, and other eyes will follow theirs. Those who know the crime of Sharpe will conclude that the deed is mine from a conviction which all have felt that it should be mine; and not to look to the political manœuvres for interference. I make no question but they will find the very dagger with which the deed is done; perhaps, half a dozen daggers, each of which will have its believer, and each believer will be possessed of as many leading circumstances, to identify the murderer."

"I believe that they will try to convict you, Beauchampe, but I cannot think, with you, that witnesses are so easy to be found."

"We shall see. We shall see."

"At all events, a good lawyer, who will test such witnesses to the quick will be the best security against their frauds, whether these arise from vanity or malevolence; and I cannot too earnestly recommend you to let me see or write to Calvert."

"On that point, I will give you my answer hereafter," said Beauchampe evasively.

"In the morning." Suggested the other.

"Ay, perhaps so. At least, Covington, let me see you then."

The other promised, and, taking a kind farewell, departed. When he had gone, the wife of Beauchampe reappeared, and with some earnestness of manner, he directed her to sit beside him upon his pallet.

"Anna," said he, "you never told me any thing of a Mr. Calvert. Do you know any such person, and how are you interested in him?"

"I know but one person of the name an old gentleman who taught school at Charlemont. But I have neither seen or heard of him for years."

"An old gentleman! How old?"

"Perhaps sixty or sixty−five."

"Not the same! But, perhaps, he had a son? Now, I remember, that when I went to Bowling Green, there was an old gentleman, with a very white head, who seemed intimate with Col. Calvert."

"He had no son none, at least, that I ever saw."

"It is strange."

"What is strange, Beauchampe?" she asked. He then told her all that he had learned from Covington. She concurred with him that it was strange, if true; but, declared her belief that the story was an invention of Sharpe by which he hoped to effect some object which he might fancy favourable to his safety.

"But, at all events, husband, employ this Col. Calvert of whom Mr. Covington and the public seem to think so highly. You have spoken very highly of him yourself."

"Yes:" was the reply: "but somehow, Anna, I am loath to do any thing in my defence. I hate to seek evasion from the dangers of an act which I performed deliberately, and would again perform, were it again necessary."

"But this is a strange prejudice, surely, Beauchampe. Why should you not defend yourself?"

"I would, my wife, if defence, in this case, implied justification."

"And does it not?" demanded the wife anxiously.

"No, nothing like it. It implies evasion, the suppression of the truth if not the suggestion of the falsehood. You are no lawyer, Anna. The truth would condemn me."

"What! the whole truth?"

"No! Perhaps not but it would be difficult to get the whole truth before a jury, and even if this could be done, could I do it."

"And why not, my husband?" she demanded earnestly, approaching him at the same moment, and laying her hand impressively upon his shoulder, while her eyes were fixed upon his own.

"And why not? The day of shame shame from this cause has gone by from us. We are either above or below the world. At least we depend not for the heart's sustenance upon it. Suppose it scorns and reviles us suppose it points to me as the miserable victim of that viperous lust which crawled into our vallyes with a glozing tongue; I, that know how little I was the slave of that foul passion, in my own breast, will not madden, more than I have done, at its contumelious judgment. They cannot call me harlot. No! Beauchampe! I fell I was trampled in the dust of shame; I was guilty of weakness and vanity and wilfulness but, believe me, if ever spirit felt the remorse and the ignominy, which belongs to virtuous repentance of error, that spirit was mine!"

"I know it do I not know it, dearest?" he said tenderly taking her in his arms.

"I believe you know and feel it, and this conviction, Beauchampe, strengthens me against the world. In your judgment I fixed my proper safety for the future. Let the world know all the whole truth, if that will any thing avail for your justification. Let them speak of me hereafter as they please. Secure in myself secure from the self−reproach of having fallen a victim to the harlot appetite though the victim to my own miserable vanity and folly doubly secure in your conviction of the truth of what I say, and am I can smile at all that follows I can do more, Beauchampe, endure it with patience and fortitude, and without distressing you or myself with the language of complaint. Do not, therefore, dear Beauchampe, refuse the justification which the truth may bring, through any wish to save me from the farther exposure. Hear me, when I assure you, solemnly, in this solemn midnight with no eye upon us in this cold, gloomy dungeon, but that of Heaven hear me solemnly affirm that though you should resolve to spare me, I will not spare myself. If need be, I will go into the court−house before the assembled judges before the people, and with my own tongue declare the story of my shame. Base should I be, indeed, if, to save these cheeks from the scarlet which would followsuch a recital, I could see them hale you to the ignominious gallows."

"And sooner would I die a thousand deaths on that gallows, than suffer you to do yourself such cruel wrong!"

Such was the answer, spoken with effort, with husky accents, which the criminal made to the strong−minded woman, whose high−souled, and seemingly unnatural resolution however opposed to his yet touched him really as a proof of the most genuine devotion. He did not say more he did not offer to dispute a resolution which he well knew he could not overthrow; but he determined, inly, to practice some becoming artifice, to deprive her, when the crisis of his fate was at hand, of any opportunity of meddling in its progress.

Thus the night waned the long, dark night in that gloomy dungeon. Not altogether gloomy! Devotion makes light in the dark places. Love cheers the solitude with its own pure star−lighted countenance. Sincerity wins us from the contemplation of the darkness; and with the sweet word of the truthful comforter in our ear, the fever subsides from the throbbing temples, and the downcast heart is lifted into hope. That night, and every night, she shared with him his dungeon!

CHAPTER XXXV.

The arguments of Covington, to persuade Beauchampe to employ the services of Calvert, were unavailing. He, at length, gave it up in despair. The very suggestion which Sharpe had made, that Calvert had some knowledge already of the wife's character, and that the duel between himself and Calvert had originated in the knowledge of his wrong to her however curious it made Beauchampe to learn what relation the latter could have had to his wife was also a cause, why, in the general soreness of his feelings on this subject, he should studiously avoid his professionalassistance. The wife, when Covington took his departure, renewed the attempt. The arguments of the latter had been more imposing to her mind than they were to that of the husband; but, repeated by her, they did not prove a jot more successful than when urged by Covington. To these she added suggestions of her own, a sample of which we have seen in a previous chapter; but the prisoner remained stubborn. The wife at length ceased to persuade, having, with the quick perception and nice judgment which distinguished her character, observed the true point of difficulty one not to be easily overcome and which was to be assailed in a manner much more indirect. She resolved to engage the services of Calvert herself. Her own curiosity had been raised in some degree by what she had heard in respect to this person, and though she did not believe the story which Covington got from Sharpe, touching the causes of the duel between himself and rival, yet the fact that they had fought, and that Calvert had been wounded in the conflict with her enemy, of itself commended the former to her regard. As the period for her husband's trial drew nigh, her anxieties naturally increased, so as to strengthen her in the resolution which she had already formed to secure those legal services which Beauchampe had rejected. Accordingly, concealing her purpose, she absented herself from the prison, and, having secured the necessary information, set forth on her mission.

Of the prosperous fortunes of William Calvert some glimpses have already been given to the reader in the latter half of this narrative. These glimpses, we trust, have sufficed to satisfy any curiosity, which the story of his youth and youthful disappointments might have occasioned in any mind. We understand, of course, that, thrown upon his own resources, driven from the maternal petticoats, which enfeeble and destroy so many thousand sons, the necessities to which he was subjected, in the rough attrition of the world had brought into active exercise all the materials of his physical and intellectual manhood. He had plodded over the dusky volumes of the law with unrelaxing diligence. He had gone through his probationary period without falling into any of those emasculating practices which too often enslave the moral sense and dissipate the intellectual courage of young men. He had graduated with credit; had begun practice with an unusual quantityof business patronage, and had made his debut with a degree of eclat, which, while it put to rest all the apprehensions of the good old man who had adopted him, had effectually commended him to the public, as one of the strong men to whom they could turn with confidence, to represent the characteristics and maintain the rights of the people. Of his success, some idea may be formed, if we remember the position in which he stood in the conflict with Col. Sharpe. If the latter was the Coryphæus of one party, William Calvert was regarded by all eyes as the most prominent champion of the other; and though the

other party might be in the minority, it was not the less obvious to most, that, if the success of the party could be made entirely to depend upon the relative strength of the representative combatants, the result would have been very far otherwise. The best friends of Sharpe, as we have already seen, endeavoured to impress upon him the belief, which they really felt, that, with such an opponent as William Calvert in the field against him, it would require the exercise of his very best talents in order to maintain his ground. We need not dwell longer on this part of our subject.

But with the prominence of position, taken of necessity by William Calvert, in the political world, was an accumulation of legal business which necessarily promised fortune. In the brief space of three years which followed his admission to the bar, his clients became so numerous as to render it necessary that he should concentrate his attentions upon a more limited circuit of practice. Other effects followed, and the good old man whose name he had taken, leaving Charlemont, like his protégé, for ever, had come to live with him in the flourishing town where he had taken up his abode. Here their united funds enabled them to buy a fine house and furnish it with a taste, which, day by day, added some object of ornament or use. The comforts being duly considered, the graces were necessarily secured, as the accumulation of means furnished the necessary resources. Books grew upon the already groaning shelves; sweet landscapes and noble portraits glowed from the walls. With no wife to provide in those thousand trifles for which no funds would be altogether adequate, in the shocking and offensive style of expenditure which has recently covered our land with sores and spangles, shame andfrippery, the income of William Calvert was devoted to the cultivation of such tastes as are legitimate in the eyes of a truly philosophical judgment. He sought for no attractions but such as gave employment either to the sense of beauty or the growth of the understanding. The contemplation of the forms of beauty produces in the mind a love of harmony and proportion, which, in turn, establish a nice moral sense, that revolts with loathing at what is mean, coarse or brutal; and, with this impression, our young lawyer, whenever his purse permitted such outlay, despatched his commission to the Atlantic city for the speaking canvass or the eloquent and breathing bust. In tastes like these his paternal friend fully sympathized with him. In fact they had been first awakened in him by his venerable tutor, during the course of his boyish education. Thus co−operating, and with habits, which, in other respects, were singularly inexpensive, it is not surprising that the dwelling of William Calvert should already be known, among the people of ,as the very seat of elegance and art. His pictures formed a theme among his acquaintance, and even those who were not, which every new addition contributed to revive and enlarge; and, in the innocent pursuit of such objects of grace and beauty with books, the philosophies and songs, of the old divines of Nature her proper priesthood the days of the youth began to go by sweetly and with such soothing, that the memory of Margaret Cooper, though it never ceased to sadden, yet failed entirely to sting. He had neither ceased to love nor to regret; but his disappointment did not now occasion a pang, nor was his regret such as to leave him insensible to the genial influences which life every where spreads generously around for the working spirit, and the just and gentle heart.

We have formed a sufficient idea of the dwelling−house of William Calvert. The reader will please go with us while we enter it. We ascend the neat and always well swept porch, and pass at once into the parlour. Old Mr. Calvert is there alone. His hair has become thinner and much more silvery since we last saw it. But, in other respects, he seems to have undergone very trifling change. His skin is quite as smooth as ever; but little wrinkled; his eye is bright nay, brighter than it ever seemed to us in Charlemont; his hopes and heart are lifted he has realized the pride of a father without suffering all the trials and apprehensions of one; and with heart and body equally in health, he is still young for a gentle spirit in age, is not a bad beginning of the soul's immortality. He owes this state of mind and body, to a contemplative habit acquired in youth; to the presence of a nice governing sense of justice, and to that abstinence which would have justified in him the brag of good old Adam, in "As You Like It."

"For in my youth I never did apply

Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood;

Nor did not, with unbashful forehead, woo

The means of weakness and debility;

Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,

Frosty but kindly."

The old man sits in a snug well−cushioned armchair with his eyes cast upward. A smile mantles upon his face. His glance rests upon a portrait of his favourite; and as he gazes upon the well−limned and justly drawn features and as the mild and speaking eye seems to answer to his own the unconscious words tremble out from his lips! Good old man! he recalls the early lessons that he gave the boy; how kindly they were taken with what readiness they were acquired; and the sweet humility which followed most of his rebukes. Then, he renews the story of the first lessons in law his own struggles and defeats he recalls only, as it would seem, to justify the exultation which announces, under his guidance, the better fortunes of the youth. And thus soliloquizing, he rises, and mounting a chair, dusts the picture with his handkerchief, with a solicitude that has seen a speck upon the cheek, and fancies a fly upon the hair! This was a daily task, performed unconsciously, and under the same course of spiriting! While thus engaged a servant enters and speaks. He answers, but without any thought of what he is saying. The servant disappears, and the door is re−opened. The old man is still busy at the heart−prompted duty. His lips are equally busy in dilating upon the merits of his favourite. He still wipes and rewipes the picture; draws back to examine the outline; comments upon eye and forehead; and dreams not, the while, what eye surveys his toils what ear is listening to the garrulous eulogiumthat is dropping from his lips. The intruder is Margaret Cooper Mrs. Beauchampe we should have said but for a silent preference for the former name, for which we can give no reason and offer no excuse.

She stands in silence she watches the labour of the good old man with mixed but not unpleasant feelings. She recognises him at a glance. She does not mistake the features of that portrait which exacts his care. She gazes on that, too, with a very melancholy interest. The features, though the same, are yet those of another. The expression of the face is spiritualized and lifted. It is the face of William Hinkley true but not the face of the rustic, whom once she knew beneath that name. The salient points of feature are subdued. The roughness has disappeared, and is succeeded by the entreating sweetness and placid self−subjection which shows that the moulding hand of the higher civilization has been there. It is William Hinkley, the gentleman the man of thought, and of the world whose features meet her eye; and a sigh involuntarily escapes her lips. That sigh is the involuntary utterance of the self−reproach which she feels. Her conscience smites her for the past. She thinks of the young man, worthy and gentle, whom she slighted for another and that other! She remembers the youth's goodness his fond devotedness; and, forgetting in what respect he erred, she wonders at herself, with feelings of increasing humiliation, that she should have repulsed and treated him so harshly. But, in those days she was mad! It is her only consolation that she now thinks so.

Her sigh arrests the attention of the old man and awakens him from his grateful abstraction. He turns, beholds the lady, and muttering something apologetically, about the rapid accumulation of dust and cobwebs, he descends from the chair. A step nearer to the visiter informs him who she is. He starts, and trembles.

"You, Miss Cooper can it be?"

"It is, Mr. Calvert but there is some mistake. I sought for Col. Calvert, the lawyer."

"My son no mistake at all be seated, Miss Cooper."

"Your son, Mr. Calvert?"

"Yes, my son your old acquaintance but here he is!"

William Calvert, the younger, had now joined the party.His entrance had been unobserved. He stood in the doorway his eye fixed upon the object of his former passion. His cheeks were very pale; his features were full of emotion. Margaret turned as the old man spoke, and their eyes encountered. What were their several emotions then? Who shall tell them? What scenes, what a story, did that one single glance of recognition recall. How much strife and bitterness what overwhelming passions and what defeat, what shame, and sorrow to the one; and to the other what triumph over pain what victory even from defeat. To her, from pride, exultation and estimated triumph, had arisen shame, overthrow, and certain fear. Despair was not yet not altogether. To the other, "out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness." From his defeat he was strengthened; and from the very overthrow of his youthful passion, had grown the vigour of his manhood.

The thought of William Calvert, as he surveyed the woman of his first love, was a natural one: "Had she been mine!" but with this thought he did not now repine at the baffled dream and desire of his boyhood. If the memory and reflection were not sweet, at least the bitter was one to which his lips had become reconciled by time. Recalling the mournful memory of the past, his sorrow was now rather for her than for himself. His regret was not that he had been denied, but that she had fallen. He recollected the day of her pride. He recalled the flashes of that eagle spirit, which, while it won his admiration, had spurned his prayer. The bitter shame which followed, when, by crawling, the serpent had reached the summits where her proud soul kept in an aerie of its own, oppressed his soul as he gazed upon the still beautiful, still majestic being before him. She too had kept something of that noble spirit which was hers before she fell. We have seen how she had sustained herself;

"Not yet lost

All her original brightness, nor appeared

Less than archangel ruined, and th' excess

Of glory obscured;"

and still, as the youth gazed, he wondered and as he remembered, he could not easily restrain the impulse oncemore to sink in homage. But all her story was now known to him. Of Sharpe's murder he was aware; and that the wife of the murderer was the same Margaret Cooper, in whose behalf he had himself met the betrayer in single combat, he was apprised by private letter from Covington.

While he thus stood beholding, with such evident tokens of emotion, the hapless woman who had been the cause, and the victim, equally, of so much disaster what were her reflections at the sight of him? At first, when their eyes encountered, and she could no longer doubt the identity of the Col. Calvert whom she sought, with the William Hinkley whom she had so well and so little known, her colour became heightened her form insensibly rose, and her eye resumed something of that ancient eagle−look of defiance, which was the more natural expression of her proud and daring character. She felt, in an instant, all the difference between the present and the past; between his fortune and her own and, naturally assuming that the same comparison was going on in his mind, necessarily leading to his exaltation at her expense, she was prepared, with equal look and word, to resent the insolence of his triumph. But when, at a second glance, she beheld the unequivocal grief which his looks expressed when she saw still, that the fire in his heart had not been quenched that the feeling there had nothing in it of triumph but all of a deep abiding sorrow and a genuine commiseration, her manner changed the bright, keen expression parted from her glance, and her cheek grew instantly pale. But her firmness and presence of mind returned sooner than his. She advanced and extended to him her hand. The manner was so frank, so confiding, that it seemed to atone for all the past. It evidently was intended to convey the only atonement which, in her situation, she could possibly offer. It said much more than words, and his heart was satisfied. He took her hand and conducted her to a seat. He was silent. It was with great difficulty that he withheld the

expression of his tears.

"You know me, Col. Calvert," she at length said. "I see you know me."

"Could you think otherwise, Margaret?" he succeeded in replying. "Could I forget?"

"No! not forget, perhaps," she returned; "but you seem not to understand me. My person, of course, you know who I was but not who I am?"

"Yes even that too I know."

"Then something is spared me!" she replied with the sigh of one who is relieved from a painful duty.

"I know the whole sad story, Margaret Mrs. Beauchampe."

The old man interrupted him with an exclamation of surprise.

"Mrs. Beauchampe!"

"Yes I kept the truth from you, sir," remarked the young man in side tones: "I thought it would only distress you to hear it. It was communicated to me by Mr. Covington. Can I serve you, Margaret is it for this you seek me?"

"It is."

"I am ready. I will do what I can. But it will be necessary to see Mr. Beauchampe."

"Cannot that be avoided! I confess, I come to you without his sanction or authority. He is unwilling to seek assistance from the law, and proposes, either to argue his own case, or to leave it, unargued, to the just sense of the community."

The youth mused in silence for a few moments, before he replied. At length

"I will not hide from you, Margaret, forgive me Mrs. Beauchampe, the danger in which your husband stands. The frequency of such deeds as that for which he is indicted, has led to a general feeling on the part of the community, that the laws must be rigorously enforced. But "

She interrupted him with some vehemence: "But the provocation of the villain he slew "

She stopped suddenly. She trembled, for the truth had been revealed in her inadvertence.

"What have I said!" she exclaimed.

"Only what shall be as secret with us, Margaret, as with yourself "

"Oh! more so, I trust!" she ejaculated.

"Do not distress yourself with this. Understand me. It was to gather from Mr. Beauchampe the whole truth, that I desired to see him. To do him justice, I mustknow from him, what may be known by others, and which might do him hurt. It is to prepare for the worst, that I would seek to know the worst. I will return with you to Frankfort. I will see him. He, as a lawyer, will better understand my purpose than yourself."

"Ah! I thank you I thank you, William Hinkley I feel that I do not deserve this at your hands. You are avenged amply avenged for all the past!"

She covered her face with her hands. Memories, bitter memories, were rushing in upon her soul.

"Speak not thus, Margaret;" replied the youth in subdued and trembling accents. "I need no such atonement as this. Believe me, to know what you were and should have been, Margaret, and see you thus, brings to me no feelings but those of shame and sorrow. Such promise, such pride of promise, Margaret "

"Ah! indeed! such pride, such pride! and what a fall! there could not be a worse, William surely not a worse! "

"But there is hope still, Margaret there is hope."

"You will save him!" she said, eagerly.

"I trust," said he; "that there is hope for him. I will try to save him."

"I know you will. I know you will! But, even then, there is no hope. I feel like a wreck. Even if we founder not in this storm even if you save us, William, it will be as if some once good ship, shattered and shivered, was carried into port by some friendly prow only to be abandoned as then no longer worth repair. These storms have shattered me, William shattered me quite. I am no longer what I was, strong, proud, confident. I fear, sometimes, that my brain will go wild. I feel that my mind is failing me. I speak now with an erring tongue. I scarce know what I say. But I speak with a faith in you. I believe, William, you were always true."

"Ah! had you but believed so then, Margaret."

"I did! I did believe so."

"Ah! could it have been, Margaret could you have only thought "

"No more say no more," she exclaimed hurriedly, with a sort of shudder. "Say no more!"

"Had it been," he continued, musingly "could ithave been, there had been now no wreck. Neither of us had felt these storms. We had both been happy! "

"No, no! speak not thus, William Hinkley!" she exclaimed, rising, and putting on a stern look and freezing accent. "The past should be is nothing now to us. Nor could it have been as you say. There was a fate to humble me; and I am here now to sue for your succour. You have nothing to deplore. You have fortune which you could not hope, fame which you did not seek every thing to make you proud, and keep you happy."

"I am neither proud nor happy, Margaret. You "

"Enough!" she exclaimed. "You have promised to strive in his behalf. Save him, William Hinkley and if prayer of mine can avail before Heaven, you will feel this want no longer. You must be happy!"

"Happy, Margaret I do not hope for it."

She extended him her hand. He took it and instantly released it, though not before a scalding tear had fallen from his eyes upon it. Farther farewell than this they had none. She locked round for old Mr. Calvert, but he was no longer in the apartment.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

We pass over the interviews between Beauchampe and William Calvert. At none of these was the wife present. The former was satisfied to accept the services of one who approached him with the best manners of the gentleman, and the happy union, in his address, of the sage and lawyer; and he freely narrated to him all the particulars of that deed for which he was held to answer. Calvert was put in possession of all that was deemed necessary to the defence, or rather of all that Beauchampe knew. But, either the latter did not know all, or perjury was an easily bought commodity upon his trial. There were witnesses to swear to his footsteps, to his voice, his face, his words, his knife and clothes; though he believed that no livingeye, save that of the Omniscient, beheld him in his approaches to commit the deed. The knife which struck the blow was buried in the earth. The clothes which he wore were sunk in the river. Yet a knife was produced on the trial as that which had pierced the heart of the victim, and witnesses identified him in garments which he no longer possessed, and in which, according to his belief, they had never seen him. It is possible that he deceived himself. There can be no doubt that he was just enough of the maniac, while carrying out the monomania which made him so, to be conscious of little else but the one stirring, all−absorbing passion in his mind. Such a man walks the streets and sees no form save that which occupies his imagination speaks his purpose in soliloquy which his own ears never heed; fancies himself alone though surrounded by spectators. His microcosm is within. He has, while the leading idea is busy in his soul, no consciousness of any world without.

Could we record the argument of Calvert, analyse for the reader the voluminous and not always consorting testimony, as he analysed it for the court, and repeat, word for word, and look for look, the exquisite appeal which he offered to the jury, we should be amply justified in occupying, in these volumes, the considerable space which such a record would require; but we dare not make the attempt; the more particularly, as, however able and admirable, it failed of its effect. Eyes were wet, sighs were audible at its close; but the jury, if moved by the eloquence of the orator, were obdurate, so far as concerned the prisoner. The verdict was rendered "Guilty," and with the awful word, Mrs. Beauchampe started to her feet, and accused herself to the court, not only of participating in the offence, but of prompting it. It was supposed to be a merciful forbearance that Justice permitted herself to become deaf, as well as blind, on this occasion. Her wild asseverations were not employed against her; and she failed of the end she sought to unite her fate, at the close, with that of him, to whom, as she warned him in the beginning, she herself was a fate.

But, though she failed to provoke justice to prosecution, she was yet not to be baffled in her object. Her resolution was taken, to share the doom of her husband. For her he had incurred the judgment of the criminal, and hernature was too magnanimous to think of surviving him. She resolved upon death in her own case, and at the same time resolved on defeating, in his, that brutal exposure which attends the execution of the laws. But of her purpose she said nothing, not even to him whom it most concerned. With that stern directness of purpose which formed so distinguishing a trait in her character, she made her preparations in secret. The indulgence of the authorities permitted her to see her husband at pleasure, and to share with him, when she would, the sad privilege of his dungeon. This indulgence was not supposed to involve any risk, since a guard was designated to maintain a constant watch upon the prisoner; and it does not seem to have entered into the apprehensions of the jailer to provide against any danger except that of the convict's escape.

The dungeon of the condemned was a close cell, the only entrance to which was by a trap−door from above. Escape from this place, with a guard in the upper chamber, was not an easy performance, nor did it seem to enter for a moment into the calculation or designs of either of the Beauchampes. The husband was prepared to die, and the solemn, though secret determination of the wife, had prepared her also. The former considered his fate with the feeling of a martyr; and every word of the latter, was intended to confirm, in his mind, this strengthening and consoling conviction. The few days which were left to the criminal, were not otherwise unsoothed and unlighted from without. Friends came to him in his dungeon, and strove, with the diligence of love, to convert the remaining hours of his life into profitable capital for the future grand investment of immortality. Religion lent her aid to

friend ship; and whether Beauchampe did or did not persist in the notion that the crime for which he stood condemned was praiseworthy, at all events, he was persuaded by her unremitting cares and counsels, that he was a sinner, sinning in a thousand respects for which repentance was the only grand remedy which could atone to God for the wrongs done, and left unrepaired, to man.

Among the friends who now constantly sought the cell of the criminal, William Calvert was none of the least punctual. Beauchampe became very fond of him, and felt, in a short time, the very vast superiority of his mind and character over those of his late tutor. The wife,meanwhile, with that fearless frankness which knows thoroughly the high value of the most superior truth for truth has its qualities and degrees, though each may be intrinsically pure had freely told her husband the whole history of the early devotion of William Calvert, when she knew him as the obscure William Hinkley; how, blinded by her own vanity, and the obscurity to which the very modesty of the young rustic had subjected him, she despised his pretensions, and, for the homage of the sly serpent by whom she had been deceived, beguiled with his lying tongue and pleased with his gaudy coat, had slighted the superior worth of the former, and treated his claims with a scorn as little deserved by him as becoming in her. Sometimes, Beauchampe spoke of this painful past in the history of his wife and visiter, and the reference now did not seem to give pain, at least to the former. The reason was good she had done with the past. The considerations which now filled her mind were all of a superior nature; and she listened to her husband, even when he spoke on this theme in the presence of William Calvert himself, with an unmoved and unabashed countenance. The latter possessed no such stoicism. At such moments his heart beat with a wildly increased rapidity of pulsation; and he felt the warm flush pass over his cheeks, as vividly and quickly now, as in the days of his first youthful consciousness of love.

It was the evening preceding the day of execution. The dark hours were at hand. The guard of the prison had warned the visiters to depart. The divine had already gone. The drooping sisters of Beauchampe were about to go for the night, moaning wildly as they went, in anticipation of the day of awful moan which was approaching. Fond and fervent, and very sad, was the parting, though for the night only, which the condemned gave to these dear twin−buds of his affections. It was a pang spared to him that his poor old mother was too sick to see him. When he thought of her, and of the unspeakable misery which would be hers were she present, he felt the grief lessened which followed from the thought that their eyes might never more encounter. But the sisters went, all went but William Calvert, and he seemed disposed to linger to the last permitted moment. His thoughts were less with the condemned man than withthe wife. His eyes were fixed upon the same object. His anxiety and surprise increased with each moment of his gaze. Whence could arise that strange serenity which appeared in her countenance? Where did she find that strength which, at such an hour, could give her composure? Nor was it serenity and composure alone, which distinguished her air, look, and carriage. There was a holy intentness, a sublime decision in her look, which filled him with apprehension. He knew the daring of her character the bold disposition which had always possessed her to dare the dark and the unknown and his prescient conjecture divined her intention. She sat behind her husband on his lowly pallet. Calvert occupied a stool at its foot. Beauchampe had been speaking freely with all his visiters. He was only moved by the feeling of his situation on separating from his sisters. At all other periods he was tolerably calm, and sometimes his conversation ran into playfulness. When we say playfulness, we do not mean to be understood as intimating his indulgence of mere fun and jest, which would have been as inconsistent with his general character as with the solemn responsibility of his situation. But there was an ease of heart about what he said, an elastic freedom, which insensibly coloured with a freshness and vitality, the idea which he uttered.

"Sit closer to me, Anna," he said to his wife "sit closer. We are not to be so long together that we can spare these moments. We have no time for distance and formality. Calvert will excuse this fondness, however annoying it might seem between man and wife at ordinary periods."

He took her hand in his as she drew nigh, and passed his arm fondly about her waist. She was silent and Calvert, thinking of the conjecture which had been awakened in his mind, by the deportment of the wife, was too full of serious and startling thoughts to be altogether assured of what Beauchampe was saying. The latter

continued, after a brief pause, by a reference of some abruptness to the past history of the two:

"It seems to me the strangest thing in the world, Anna, that you should ever have refused to marry our friend Calvert. My days," he said, turning to the latter as he spoke, "my days of idle speech and vain flattery are numbered, Calvert; and you will do me the justiceto believe that I am not the man to waste words at any time in worthless compliment. Certainly I will not now. But, since I have known you, I feel that I could wish to know no more desirable friend; and how my wife could have rejected you for any other person I care not whom I do not exclude myself I cannot understand, unless by supposing that there is a special fate in such matters, by which our best judgments are set at nought, and our wisest plans baffled. Had she married you, Calvert "

"Why will you speak of it?" said Calvert with an earnestness of tone which yet faltered. The wife was still silent. Beauchampe answered:

"Because I speak as one to whom the business of life is over. I am speaking as one from the grave. The passions are dumb within me. The strifes are over. The vain delicacies of society seem a child's play to me now. Besides, I speak regretfully. For her sake, how much better had it been. Instead of being, as she is now, the wife of a convict, doomed to a dog's death instead of the long strife through which she has gone instead of the utter waste of that proud genius which might, under other fortunes, have taken such noble flights and attained such a noble eminence, "

The wife interrupted him with a smile.

"Ah, Beauchampe, you are supposing that the world has but one serpent but one Alfred Stevens! The eagle in his flight may escape one arrow, but who shall insure him against the second or the third? I suspect that few persons at the end of life of a long life looking back, with all their knowledge and experience, could recommence the journey and find it any smoother or safer than at first. He is the best philosopher who, when the time comes to die, can wash his hands of life the soonest, with the least effort, and dispose his robes most calmly and so gracefully around him. Do not speak of what I have lost, and of what I have suffered. Still less is it needful that you should speak of our friend's affairs. We are all chosen, I suspect. Our fortunes are assigned us. That of our friend was never more favourable than when mine prompted my refusal of his kind offer. I was not made for him nor he for me. We might not have been happy together; and for the best reason, since I was too blind and ignorant to see what I should have seen, that the very humility which I despised in him, was the source of his strength and would have been of my security. I now congratulate him that I was blind to his merits. He will live, he will grow stronger with each succeeding day, fortune will smile upon his toils, and fame will follow them. At least we will pray, Beauchampe, that such will be the case. At parting, William Hinkley I cannot call you by the other name now at parting, for ever, believe this assurance. You shall have our prayers and blessings such as they are truly, fondly, my friend, for we owe much to your help and sympathy."

"For ever, Margaret! why should you say for ever?"

Calvert fastened his eyes upon her as she spoke. She met the glance unmoved, and replied

"Will it not be for ever? To−morrow, which deprives me of him, deprives me of the world. I must hide from it. I have no more business with it, nor it with me. I have still some sense of shame some feelings of sacred sorrow which I should be loth to expose to its busy finger. Is not this enough, William Calvert?"

"But I am not the world. Friends you will still need; my good, old father "

She shook her head.

"I know what you would say, William I know all your goodness of heart, and thank you from the very bottom of mine. Let it suffice that, should I need a friend after to−morrow, I shall seek none other than you."

"Margaret," said William, impressively, "you cannot deceive me. I know your object. I see it in your eyes in those subdued tones. I am sure of what you purpose."

"What purpose? what do you mean?" demanded Beauchampe.

Before he could be answered by Calvert the wife had spoken. She addressed herself to the latter.

"And if you do know it, William Hinkley, you know it only by the conviction in your own heart of what, if not unavoidable, is at least necessary. Speak not of it give it no thought, and only ask of yourself what, to me, to such a soul as mine would be life after to−morrow's sun has set! Go now the guard calls. You will see us in the morning."

"Margaret for your soul's sake "

The expostulation was arrested by the repeated summons of the guard. The wife put her finger on her lips in sign of silence. He prepared to depart, but could not forbear whispering in her ears the exhortation which he had begun to speak aloud. She heard him patiently to the end, and sweetly, but faintly smiling, she shook her head, making no other answer. The hoarse voice of the guard again summoned the visiter, who reluctantly rose to obey. He shook hands with Beauchampe, and Margaret followed him to the foot of the ladder. When he gave her his hand she carried it to her lips.

"God bless you, William Hinkley!" she murmured. "You are and have been a noble gentleman. Remember me kindly, and oh! forgive me that I did you wrong, that I did not do justice to your feelings and your worth. Perhaps it was better that I did not."

"Let me pray to you, Margaret. Do not oh! do not what you design. Spare yourself."

"Ay, William, I will! Shame, certainly, the bitter mock of the many the silent derision of the few deceit and fraud reproach without and within all these will I spare myself."

"Come! come!" said the guard gruffly, from above, "Will you never be done talking? Leave the gentleman to his prayers. His time is short!"

And thus they parted for the night.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

"What did Calvert mean, Anna, when he said he knew your purpose?" was the inquiry of Beauchampe, when she returned to his side "what do you intend? what purpose have you?"

She put her hand upon her lips in sign of silence, then looked up to the trap−door, which the guard was slowly engaged in letting down. When this was done, she approached him and drawing a phial from her bosom displayed it cautiously before his eyes.

"For me!" he exclaimed "poison!"

A sort of rapturous delight gathered in his eyes as he clutched the phial.

"Enough for both of us!" was the answer. "It is laudanum."

"Enough for both, Anna! Surely you cannot mean "

"To share it with you, my husband. To die with you, as you die for me."

"Not so! This must not be. Speak not think not thus, my wife. Such a thought makes me wretched. There is no need that you should die."

"Ay, but there is, Beauchampe. I should suffer much worse were I to live. Where could I live? How could I live? To be the scorned, and the slandered to provoke the brutal jest, or more brutal violence of the fopling and the fool! For, who that knows my story, will believe in my virtue; and who that doubts, will scruple to approach me as if he knew that I had none! If I have neither joy nor security in life, why should I live; and if death keeps us together, Beauchampe, why should I fear to die? Should I not rather rejoice, my husband?"

"Ah, but of that we know nothing. That is the doubt the curse, Anna!"

"I do not doubt I cannot. Our crime, if crime it be, is one our punishment will doubtless be one also."

"It were then no punishment. No, Anna, live! you have friends who will protect you who will respect and love you. There is Col. Calvert "

"Do not speak of him, Beauchampe. Speak of none. I am resolute to share with you the draught. We tread the dark valley together."

"You shall not! It is in my grasp, no drop shall pass your lips. It is enough for me only."

"Ah, Beauchampe, would you be cruel?"

"Kind only, dear wife. I cannot think of you dying, so young, so beautiful, and born with such endowments so formed to shine, to bless "

"To kill rather to blight, Beauchampe; to darken the days of all whom I approach. This has ever been my fate; it shall be so no longer. Beauchampe, you cannot baffle me in my purpose. See! even if you refuse to share with me the poison, I have still another resource."

She drew a knife from her sleeve and held it up before his eyes, but beyond the reach of his arm.

"Oh! why will you persist in this, my wife? Why make these few moments, which are left me, as sad as they are short and fleeting."

"I seek not to do so, dear husband; nor should my resolution have this effect. Would you have me live for such sorrows, such indignities, as I have described to you."

"You would not suffer them! Give me the knife, Anna."

"No! my husband!" She restored it to her sleeve. "I have sworn to die with you, and no power on earth shall persuade me to survive."

"Not my entreaties my prayers, Anna!"

"No! Beauchampe! not even your prayers shall change my purpose."

"Nay, then, I will call the guard!"

"And if you do, Beauchampe, the sound of your voice shall be the signal for me to strike. Believe me, husband, I do not speake idly!"

The knife was again withdrawn from her sleeve as she spoke, and the bared point placed upon her bosom.

"Put it up, dearest; I promise not to call. Put it up, from sight. Believe me, I will not call!"

"Do not, Beauchampe; and do not, I implore you, again seek to disturb my resolution. Move me you cannot. I have reached it only by calmly considering what I am, and what would be left me when you are gone. I have seen enough in this examination to make me turn with loathing from the prospect. I know that it cannot be more so behind the curtain; and we will raise it together."

"The assurance, Anna, is sweet to my soul, but I would still implore you against this resolution. To be undivided even in death conveys a feeling to my heart like rapture, and brings back to it a renewed hope; yet I dare not think of your suffering and pain. I dread the idea of death when it relates to you."

"Think rather, my husband, that I share the hope and the rapture of which you speak. Believe me only, that I joy also in the conviction that in death we shall not be divided. The mere bitter of the draught or the pain of the stroke, is not worthy of a thought. The assurance that there will be no interruption in our progress together that death, with us, will be nothing but a joint setting forth in company on a new journey and into another country that is worthy of every thought, and should be the only one!"

"Ay, but that country, Anna?"

"Cannot be more full of wo and bitter than this hath been to us."

"It may! I have read somewhere, my wife, a vivid description of two fond lovers, fondest among the fond born, as it were, for each other, devoted, as few have been to one another; who, by some cruel tyrant were thrown into a dungeon, and ordered to perish by the gnawing process of hunger. At first, they smiled at such a doom. They believed that their tyrant lacked ingenuity in his capacity for torture, for he had left them together! Together, they were strong and fearless. Love made them light−hearted even under restraint; and they fancied a power or resistance in themselves, so united, to endure the worst forms of torment. For a few days they did so. They cheered each other. They spoke the sweetest, soothing words. Their arms were linked in constant embrace. She hung upon his neck, and he bore her head upon his bosom. Never had they spoken such sweet truths, such dear assurances. Never had their tendernesses been so all−compensating. Perhaps, they never had been so truly happy together, at least for the first brief day of their confinement. Their passion had been refined by severity, and had acquired new vigour from the pressure put upon it. But as the third day waned, they ceased to link their arms together. They recoiled from the mutual embrace. They shrunk apart. They saw in each other's eyes, a something rather to be feared than loved. Famine was there, glaring like a wolf. The god was transformed into a demon; and in another day the instinct of hunger proved itself superior to the magnanimous sentiment of love. The oppressor looked in on the fourth day, through the grated−window upon his victims; and lo! the lips of the man were dripping with the blond, drawn from the veins of his beloved one. His teeth were clenched in her white shoulder; and he grinned and growled above his unconscious victim, even as the tiger, whom you have disturbed ere he has finished with his prey."

"Horrible! But she submitted she repined not. Her moans were unheard. She sought not, in like manner, to pacify the baser, beastly cravings, at the expense of him she loved. Hers was love, Beauchampe his was

passion."

"Alas! my wife, what matters it by what name we seek to establish a distinction between the sentiments and passions? In those dreadful extremes of situation, from which our feeble nature recoils, all passions and sentiments run into one. We love! Before Heaven, my wife, I conscientiously say, and as conscientiously believe, that I love you as passionately as I can love, and as truly as woman ever was beloved by man. It is not our love that fails us, in the hour of physical and mental torment. It is our strength. Thought and principle, truth and purity, are poor defences, when the frame is agonized with a torture beyond what nature was intended to endure. Then the strongest man deserts his faith and disavows his principles. Then the purest becomes profligate, and the truest dilates in falsehood. It is madness, not the man, that speaks. It was madness, not the man, that drunk from the blue veins of the beloved one, and clenched his dripping teeth in her soft white shoulder. The very superior strength of his blood, was the cause of his early overthrow of reflection. As, in this respect, she was the weaker, so her mind, and consequently, the sweet pure sentiments which were natural to her mind, the longest maintained its and their ascendency, and preserved her from the loathsome frenzy to which the man was driven! Ah, of this future, dear wife! This awful, unknown future! Fancy some penal doom like this fancy some tiger rage in me depriving me of the reason, and the sentiments which have made me love you, and made me what I am fancy, in place of the man, the frenzied beast, raging in his bloody thirst, rending in his savage hunger drinking the blood from the beloved one's veins, tearing the flesh from her soft white shoulder! This thought this fear, Anna "

"Is neither thought nor fear of mine! God is good and gracious. I am not bold to believe in my own purity of heart, or propriety of conduct. I am a sinner, Beauchampe a proud, stern, fierce sinner. I feel that I am I would that I were otherwise, and I pray for Heaven's help to become otherwise; but, sinner as I am, I neitherfear nor believe, that such penal dooms are reserved for any degree of sin. The love of physical torture is an attribute with which man has dressed the Deity. As such torture cannot be human, so it cannot be godlike. I can believe that we may be punished by privation, by denial of trust, by degradation to inferior offices, but it is the brutal imagination that ascribes to God a delight in brutal punishments. Nowhere do we see in nature such a feelling manifested. Life is every where a thing of beauty. Smiles are in heaven, sweetness on earth, the winds bring it, the airs breathe it, stars smile it, blossoms store and diffuse it; man, alone, defaces and destroys, usurps, vitiates, and overthrows. It was man, not God, who, in your story, was the oppressor. He made the prison, and thrust the victims into it. It was not God! And shall God be likened to such a monster? What idea can we have of the Deity to whom such characteristics are ascribed! "

"I go yet farther," she added, after a pause. "I do not think, even if our sins incur the displeasure of God, that his treatment of us, however harsh, will be meant as punishment. That it will be punishment, I doubt not; but this will be with him a secondary consideration. We are his subjects, in his world, employed to carry out his various purposes, and set to various tasks. Failing in these, we are set to such as are inferior, perhaps, not employed at all, as being no longer worthy of trust. I cannot think of a severer moral infliction. Where all are busy, triumphantly busy, pressing forward in the glorious tasks of a life which is all soul, to be the only idle spirit denied to share in any mighty consummation, pitied, but abandoned by the rest the proffer of service rejected, the sympathy of joint action and enterprise denied a spirit without wings a sluggish personification of moral sloth, and that too, in such an empire as God's own in his very sight, millions speeding beneath his eye at his bidding, all bid, all chosen, all beloved but one! Ah! Beauchampe, to a soul like mine, so earnest, so ambitious as mine has been, and is could there be a worse doom?"

"No, dearest! but the subject is dark, and such speculations may be bold too bold!"

"Why? Do I disparage God in them? Does it notseem that such a future could alone be worthy of such a present of such a God, as has made a world so various and so wondrous? methinks, the disparagement is in him who ascribes to the Deity such tastes and passions as preside over the Inquisitions and the thousand other plans of mortal torture, which have made man the hateful monster that we so frequently find him."

"Let us speak no more of this, Anna. The subject startles me. It is an awful one!"

Hers was the bolder spirit.

"And should not our thoughts be awful thoughts? What other should we have? The future, alone, is ours will be ours in a short time. A few hours will bring us to the entrance. A few hours will lift the curtain, and the voice that we may not disobey will command us to enter."

"Not, you, Anna oh! not you! Let me brave it alone. I cannot bear to think that you too should be cut off in your youth with all that vigorous mind, that beauty that noble heart all crushed, blighted, now, when blooming brightest buried in the dust, no more to speak, or sing, or feel."

"But they do not perish, Beauchampe. I might grow coward I might cling to this life could I fancy there were no other. But this faith is one of my strongest convictions. It is an instinct. No reasoning will reach the point and establish it, if the feeling be not in our heart of hearts. I know that I cannot perish quite. I know that I must live; and that poison−draught, or the thrust of this sudden knife, I regard as the plunge which one makes, crossing a frail trembling bridge, or hurrying through some dark and narrow passage. Do not waste the moments, which are so precious, in the vain endeavour to dissuade me from a sworn and settled purpose. Beauchampe, we die together!"

"Lie down by me, Anna. You should sleep you are fatigued. You must be weary."

"No! I am not weary. At such moments as these we become all soul. We do not need sleep. With the passage of this night we shall never need it again. Think of that, Beauchampe! What a thought it is."

"Terrible!"

"Glorious, rather! Sleep was God's gift to an animal, to restore limbs that could be wearied to refresh spirits that could be dull! What a godlike feeling to know that we shall need it no longer! no more yawning no more drowsiness and that feebleness and blindness, which, without any of the securities of death, has all of its incompetencies when the merest coward might bind, and the commonest ruffian abuse, and trample on us. Ah! the immunities of death! How numerous how great! What blindness to talk of its terrors to shrink from its glorious privileges of unimpeded space, of undiminishing time. Already, Beauchampe, it seems to me as if my wings are growing. I fancy, I should not feel any hurt from the knife perhaps, not even taste the poison on my lips."

"Sit by me, at least, if you will not sleep, Anna."

"I will sit by you, Beauchampe, nay, I wish to do so, but you must promise not to attempt to dispossess me of the knife. I suspect you, my husband."

"Why suspect me?"

"I perceive it in the tones of your voice; I know what you intend. But, believe me, I have taken my resolution from which nothing will move me. Even were you now to deprive me of the weapon, nothing would keep me from it long. I should follow you soon, my husband, and the only effect of present denial would be to deprive me of the pleasure of dying with you!"

"Come to me, my wife. I will not attempt to disarm you. I promise you."

"On your love, Beauchampe?"

"With my full heart, dearest. You shall die with me. It will be a sweet moment instead of a bitter one. For your sake only, my wife, would I have disarmed you But my selfish desires triumph. I will no longer oppose you."

"Thanks! thanks!"

She sprang to him and clung to his embrace.

"Will you sleep?" he asked as her head seemed to sink upon his bosom.

"No, no! I had not thought of that! I thought only of the moment the moment when we should leave this prison."

"Leave it?"

"By death! I am tired, very tired, of these walls these walls of life, that keep us in bonds, put us at the mercy of the false and the cruel, the base and the malicious oh! my husband, we have tried them long enough."

"There is time enough!" he said. "I would see the daylight once more."

"You can only see it through those bars."

"Still, I would see it. We can free ourselves a moment after."

Even while they spoke together, Beauchampe sunk into a pleasant slumber. She pillowed his head upon her bosom, but had no feeling or thought of sleep. Through the grated bars, she saw a few flitting stars. One by one, they came into her sphere of vision, gleamed a little while, and passed, like the bright spiritual eyes of the departed dear ones. When she ceased to behold them, then she knew that the day was at hand, and the interval of time between the disappearance of the stars, and the approach of dawn, though brief was dark.

"Such," she mused, "will be that brief period of transition, when, passing from the dim, deceptive starlight of this life, we enter into the perfect day. That will be momentarily dark, perhaps. It must be. There may be a state of childhood an imperfect consciousness of the things around us of our own wants, and among these, possibly, a lack of utterance. Strange, indeed, that the inevitable, should still be the inscrutable. But of what use the details. The great fact is clear to me. Even now things are becoming clearer while I gaze. My whole soul seems to be one great thought. How strange that he should sleep, so soundly too so like an infant! He does not fear death, that is certain, but he loves life. I, too, love life, but it is not this. Oh, of that other! Could I get some glimpses, but this is childish. I shall see it all very soon!"

Beauchampe slept late, and bearing his head still on her bosom, the sleepless wife did not seek to awaken him. Through the intensity of her thought, she acquired an entire independence of bodily infirmities. The physical nature, completely controlled by the spiritual, was passive at her mood. But the soundness of Beauchampe's sleep, continued as it was after day had fairly dawned, awakened her suspicions. She searched for the phial of laudanumwhere she had seen him place it. It was no longer there. She found it beside him on the couch it was empty!

But his breathing was not suspended. His sleep was natural, and while she anxiously bent over him in doubt whether to strike at once, or wait to see what farther effects might be produced on him by the potion, he awakened. His first words at awakening, betrayed the still superior feelings of attachment with which he regarded her. His voice was that of exultation.

"It is over, and we are still together. We are not divided!"

"No! but the hour is at hand!"

"What mean you, my love! I have swallowed the laudanum! where am I?"

His question was answered as his eyes encountered the bleak walls of his dungeon and beheld the light through the iron bars of his window.

"God! the poison has failed of its effect." His look was that of consternation. Her glance and words reassured him.

"We have still the knife, my husband!"

"Ah! we shall defeat them still!"

"On the morning of the fifth of June, eighteen hundred and twenty−six;" says the chronicle, "the drums were heard beating in the streets of Frankfort, and a vast multitude was hurrying toward the gibbet which was erected on a hill without the town."

At the sound of this ominous music, and the clamours of that hurrying multitude, Beauchampe smiled sadly.

"Strange! that men should delight in such a spectacle the cruel death the miserable exposure, of a fellow man. That they should look on his writhings his distortions his shame, and pain, with composure and desire. It will be cruel to disappoint them, Anna! Will it not?"

"I think not of them, my husband. Oh! my husband, could we crowd the few remaining moments with thoughtsof goodness, with prayers of penitence! Oh! that I had not urged you to the death of Stevens!"

"It was right!" he answered sternly. "I tell you, Anna, the wives and daughters of Kentucky will bless the name of Beauchampe!"

"They should, my husband, for your blow has saved many from shame and suffering, has terrified many a wrongdoer from his purpose. But though right in you to strike, I feel that it was wrong in me to counsel."

"That cannot be! Do not speak thus, my wife. Let not our last moments be embittered by reproach. Let us die in prayer rather. Hark! I hear visiters voices some one approaches."

"It is William Hinkley," she exclaimed.

The guard was heard about to remove the trap door. Beauchampe looked up, and, a moment after, he heard his wife sigh deeply. She then spoke to him, faintly but quickly,

"Take it, my husband. It is not painful."

He turned to her, while a sudden coldness seized upon his heart. She presented him the knife.

"Have you struck?" he asked in a husky whisper. The wet blade of the knife, already clotty with the coagulating blood, answered his question.

"Take me in your arms, quickly, quickly, dear husband, do not leave me. I lose you, oh! I lose you."

"No, never! I come! I am with you. Nothing shall part us. This unites us for ever!"

And with the words he struck the fatal blow, laid his lips on hers, and covered her and himself with the blanket.

"This is sweet;" she murmured. "I feel you, but I cannot see you, husband. Who is it comes?"

"Calvert!"

The young man descended a moment after. His apprehensions were realized. Margaret Cooper was dying dying by her own hands.

"Was this well done, Margaret?" he asked reproachfully.

"Ay, William," she answered, firmly, but in feeble tones. "It was well done. It could not be otherwise, and I find dying sweeter than living. You will forgive me, William?"

"But God, Margaret?"

"Ah! Pray for me pray for me. Husband I am losing you. I feel you not. This is death! it was for me, it was all for me! Oh! Beauchampe!"

"She is gone!" cried the husband.

Calvert, who had assisted to support her, now laid the inanimate form softly upon the couch. He was dumb. But the cry of Beauchampe had drawn the attention of the guard.

"What is this what's the matter?" he demanded.

"Ha! ha! we laugh at you we defy you!" was the exclamation of Beauchampe, holding up the bloody knife with which he had inflicted upon himself a second wound. "We have slain ourselves."

"God forbid!" cried the officer, wresting the weapon from the hands of the criminal.

"You are too late, my friend; we shall spoil your sport. You shall enjoy no agonies of mine to−day."

They brought relief, surgical help, stimulants and bandages. They succoured the fainting man, cruelly kind, in order that the stern sentence of the laws might be carried into effect. The hour of execution, meanwhile, had arrived. They brought him forth in the sight of the assembled crowd. The fresh air revived the dying man, awakening him into full but momentary consciousness. He looked up, and beheld where the windows of some of the neighbouring houses were filled with female forms. He lifted his hands to them with a graceful but last effort, while he murmured

"Daughters of Kentucky, you, at least, will bless the name of Beauchampe!"

This was all. He then sunk back as they strove to lift him into the cart. Before his feet had pressed the felon−vehicle his eyes closed. He was unconscious of the rest. Earth and its little life was nothing more to him. He had also passed behind the curtain.

THE END.