

# **The Odd Fellow; or, The Secret Association**

J. H. Ingraham



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# **The Odd Fellow; or, The Secret Association**

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## CHAPTER I.

‘You are certainly not going out to night, James,’ said a beautiful, dark-eyed bride, to her young husband, as he rose from the tea-table; ‘we have not been married a month, and yet you must go out to pass your evenings,’ and the young wife smiled and panted, and looked reproof and love in the same glance.

‘I have an important engagement, love,’ he said, smiling and tapping her cheek with his finger.

‘And now your engagement to me has ended in marriage, you must consider yourself freed from any to your wife, I suppose,’ she said, laughing. ‘But you will not go out such a wild, blustering night. You can have no business that calls you forth in such a storm of wind and rain! Stay in, James! See how comfortable our little parlor looks with its closely drawn curtains, its two nice rocking-chairs, its warm, glowing fire, and these books and newspapers, and engravings, to say nothing of my *own* society!’

‘It certainly must be a great temptation, or very pressing business that takes him forth, sister,’ said the bride’s brother, a good looking young man of twenty-one, who made the third of the little group about the tea-table. ‘I assure him,’ he added pleasingly, ‘I should not be so ungallant to leave my wife to pass her evenings alone before the honey-moon was over.— There is to be some city caucus, and I suppose James expects to be called upon to make a speech!’

‘No, I assure you,’ answered James Layton, laughing, as he buttoned his surtout to his throat; ‘I have a very important engagement, or I should by no means quit you, Catherine. I will be back in two hours. Let Lewis entertain you till I return. I know you will excuse me, wife!’

‘On condition you tell me *where* you are going,’ she said, holding him by the arm, playfully.

‘Well, it is to a meeting of my club.’

‘Your club!’ repeated Lewis; ‘what club?’

‘The Odd Fellows!’

‘Are *you* an Odd Fellow, James?’ exclaimed Catherine. ‘If I had known if I don’t believe I would have married you!’

‘No? Then I should have been an *odd* fellow all my life. But what is there so bad in being an Odd Fellow, that you both look so surprised?’

‘I am told it is a secret society: something like the exploded masonic fraternity, and I am surprised that any sensible man should belong to it,’ answered Lewis Foster.

‘And I don’t like to have a husband who has any secrets from his wife,’ said the bride. ‘Now, James, I shan’t love you half so well, that you belong to a secret club! and such an odd club!’

‘The name sounds rowdyish, and reckless,’ said his brother-in-law, with gravity.

‘I don’t believe any good can come of it,’ pursued his wife, with a slight cloud of disapproval upon her brow.

‘I don’t think it can increase your respectability in the eyes of sensible men,’ added Lewis, ‘and now that you are married and so have taken a new position in society, and have just gone into partnership in business, it would seem to me, James, speaking in all kindness and love, that you would be wise to break off your connection with this club, which perhaps might not have been so censurable in a young man and an apprentice, but which must certainly *now* detract from your character and standing.’

The young husband glanced from one to the other of the speakers, looking as if he was undecided whether to laugh outright, or to get seriously angry with them both. He however suppressed the expression of both emotions, and quietly resumed his chair at the tea-table, and with his surtout buttoned to his chin as he was, and then said quietly and gravely,

‘Catherine—Lewis—you neither of you know of *what* you are speaking! So far from being what you ignorantly suppose, the fraternity of odd fellows is a society, in which it is an honor not only to be enrolled as a member, but it is itself an association honorable to human nature. The peculiarity of its designation has misled you. So far from being a fraternity of buffoons, a band of merry-makers, a society of organized folly, as you and others who have not inquired into its character and pretensions, weakly pretend to believe, it is an association distinguished for its dignity, solemnity and moral majesty!’

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‘But what can be its object?’ asked Lewis, impressed by his manner.

‘To lessen the ills of mankind; to ameliorate its condition; to elevate the soul of man and restore its moral image; to advance the happiness of our race by drawing closer the ties of human affection, and strengthen the bond of brotherhood between man and man.’

‘You demand as much for your society as does christianity itself. It asks no more! It takes no wider range!’ said Lewis, with emphasis.

‘If you had said we demanded what christianity does *not*, then you had uttered what I should have denied. I do not deny that we aim to as wide a range, for our field as well as that of christianity, is the human society! It can cover no more; we can aim at no less. But we work for man as mortal and immortal! for both this life and the life to come. Therefore, we reject the comparison when made invidiously; admit it when made on the basis I have laid down. Without christianity this order would have been what it now is; for its principles existed thousands of years before the era of christianity.’

‘Where then did the order begin to exist?’ inquired Lewis, with surprise and incredulity.

‘I will reply to you in the language of an eloquent writer who has recently answered your question:—“When the Almighty Architect of the Universe spake, and this sphere which we inherit, burst into light and loveliness, every fundamental principle on which our order is based, was stamped with the signet of Omnipotence upon her young and unstained being, there to remain in legible and enduring characters, as constituent elements of her perpetuity and existence. Friendship then wove her silken bonds. Love breathed forth her strains of mutual sympathy and confiding tenderness; while Truth, above, around, beneath, shed forth her blaze of living light, as pure and unsullied as the rays that emanate from the throne of the Eternal God! Upon these three pillars rests the structure of our order; around them cluster our brightest hopes and fondest anticipations.”’

‘This is all very pretty, but it seems to me visionary enough,’ said Lewis. ‘Pray what legitimate good, what tangible benefit has it ever done, or can it do? It is very fine to talk about ameliorating the condition of mankind, enhancing human happiness, and advancing the human intellect; this is all very fine. But lay your finger upon a single good your order has done.’

‘Go with me to-morrow, Lewis, and examine the records of our doings only for the past year, and the inspection will be a sufficient reply. There you will find widows assisted, orphans protected and nurtured, the sick visited, the prisoner liberated, and the afflicted comforted and made happy. The principles of our society are those of humanity and religion. It not only prompts the common cause of philanthropy, but insures to its members in the hour of adversity, a source of safety and comfort that nothing can destroy. The affection of parents may change; the friendship of the world may turn to hatred, and even love may be transformed to loathing and disgust. But the ties that bind us together are never sundered; our claims of brotherhood are only dissolved by death! no, not death can destroy them! they descend to the widow and the orphan.’

‘You have led me to think very differently of your order, James,’ said Lewis; ‘still it seems to me that christianity, without this, would do all you pretend.’

‘All men, unfortunately, are not christians. The holy principles of the Gospel have an influence upon only a portion of what is called a christian community. A society then, that while it gives a new zeal to the christian who is a member of it, bends down to the observance of christianity, and a healthy morality to him who is not a christian, is positively a good and useful institution, and certainly does not militate against christianity. As I before said, our society is for Earth, christianity for Heaven.’

‘I am satisfied. Still I do not see in the daily events of life that you are better or I am worse for being an ‘Odd Fellow.’ If I could see that it made you more charitable than you otherwise might be, or that it aided a human being who otherwise would not be aided, I should be half-disposed to become an Odd-Fellow.’

‘Many is the penniless and friendless wanderer of our order who can attest to its holy charity!’ said James, with feeling. ‘Its hand reaches the wide world over. Its language breathes its eloquent tones in the ear of the wanderer in a foreign land, and his necessities are relieved. If sickness lays its paralyzing hand upon him among strangers, a brother of the ‘mystic tie’ administers to his wants, soothes his distresses, furnishes him with money; if he recovers, to go on his way, or follows him with honorable burial to the tomb. The sick amongst our own brethren are not left to the cold hand of public charity. They are visited by the members and their wants ascertained and provided for by funds, they themselves, in health and prosperity, had contributed to raise, and which, in times of

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need, to repeat the language of another, they can *honorably* claim, without the humiliation of suing for parochial relief.'

'But what moral influence does your Order exert over its members? A fraternity of Charity is not of necessity a school of morals. How are Odd Fellows in their intercourse with the world better than other men?' inquired Lewis, apparently interested in the conversation, while the wife of the eloquent husband sat gazing upon him with the most pleased and absorbed attention.

'We must know the character of him who applies to be admitted a member of our Order. It is our sacred duty to keep a watch upon the conduct of our brethren, even in the common intercourse of life, and in all their transactions with men, and particularly with one another; to remonstrate with those who wander from rectitude or trespass upon the rules of morality. In all ages and in all countries our Order has stood forth the champion of liberty and religion. Wherever she has erected an altar for her worshippers she has also dedicated a temple for science and refinement.'

'I am delighted that what Lewis and I have said has led to this conversation,' said the bride with a face beaming with pleasure. 'I am glad, James, that you are an Odd Fellow, and I shall always think well of all your Order. You *may* go to-night. But,' she added, looking mischievously, 'I have one thing to object to in it.'

'What is that?' he asked smiling and half guessing.

'That there is a secret in it. As a woman I must protest against *that*.'

'That is my objection, too,' said Lewis, 'I dislike secret societies. Their history shows that they have in all ages been productive of great mischief: been tools of depotism; aiding the cause of bigotry and the designs of the powerful and bad! If your deeds are so open and honorable why should your meetings be held in secret and your proceedings in session be veiled in mystery? Truth fears not the light.'

'It has been said, in opposition to it, that ours is a secret Order by those who think secrecy is incompatible with innocence. True it is, we are, in part, a secret society, but is secrecy a crime?'

'Most undoubtedly,' said Mrs. Layton with an arch look. 'What woman would deny it?'

Her husband smiled and then continued, 'Secrecy is rather an attribute of the *good*. The world itself, the universe, the God of eternal truth, are surrounded with an impenetrable veil that mortal eye hath never pierced! Shall their existence be denied because their arcana are not revealed at our bidding? Shall we pronounce them evil because their operations are hidden from our view and above our comprehension?'

'Yet what security has the good man who, won by your eloquent account of your Order, fain would join it that he may bestow and receive, if need should be, the blessings that emanate from it, what security has he that in entering within the mystic veil of your Temple he is not committing himself to an Order, and uniting himself with a set of men, whose outward charities are but the whitewash to cover all manner of wickedness within?'

'He can judge before hand. To be initiated into our Order is not as you suppose "to take a leap in the dark." The fundamental principles of the Order are before the world! Its deeds are not concealed from public scrutiny. The constitution and laws of our society are within the reach of all who wish to examine them.'

'Yet your proceedings are kept secret. You have certain initiatory rites that are secret! Your arrangements in your halls are mysterious and point to mysterious ceremonies.'

'Yes, there are mysteries within the inner veil of our altars that no uninitiated eye can ever behold. It is not the mystery of mere paraphernalia, but a moral mystery! Solemn and sublime truths are there inculcated that have never reached the ear of any mortal save he who has been proven worthy. They have remained there for ages, hallowed archives in the sanctuary of our temple; may they ever remain, unsullied and inviolate.'

'How enthusiastic, James,' said his wife with surprise. 'There must be good in a society that has so warmly enlisted your feelings,' she added, paying a deserved compliment to his virtues and worth.

'I am almost persuaded to become an 'Odd Fellow,' said Lewis, seriously, yet smiling at his own ardor. 'But I must wait first to have some practical demonstration of its usefulness upon its members. Who else are 'Odd Fellows' that I may as you say 'observe their conduct among men?'

'You will find many in Boston among the venerable as well as the youthful, among the rich and the poor, the humble and the eminent.'

'But who of my friends—?'



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James was about to reply when the street door bell was rung, and the next moment the maid came in and said a man wished to see the master of the house.

‘Ask him in?’ said James.

‘He says he is too wet—besides, sir, he is a poor looking man and looks as if he wanted to beg,’ asked the girl pertly.

Mr. Layton rose and went to the door, where he saw a man poorly clad, and looking very destitute, who handed him a dirty, wet paper, and said—

‘Read it if you please, sir.’

‘I have no time now, my good man,’ said James, whose hour to be at the club had already come. ‘I suppose from your appearance and the title of the paper, "To all good Christians," that you are in need. There is a dol lar for you. It will get you supper and lodging. Good night.’

‘Be so kind as to open the paper, sir; perhaps you might be one of—’ the man hesitated.

His manner led him to comply; and glancing over it his eye rested upon a mark near the bottom which at once arrested it.

‘Ah, my brother, I am very glad I read the paper,’ he said in a gratified tone. ‘Give me your hand.’

‘Thank God! now I am no longer a stranger in a strange land,’ said the man in a grateful voice. ‘I was in hopes some brother would see that sign and relieve me.’

‘I am glad you have come to me. Walk in, and while you are drying yourself and taking a warm cup of tea, I will see what you are in need of.’

This conversation had been but partially overheard in the sitting-room and left them in mystery as to who the guest was so cheerfully invited in. When they saw Mr. Layton usher in a young man about twenty six-years of age, dressed in a thin jacket, though it was the month of February, a ragged vest and sailor's trowsers and holding in his hand an old torn straw hat from which the rain was dripping, they started with surprise. He was truly an object of any one's compassion.

‘This is my wife—this her mother! Be seated close to the fire! Catherine pour out a cup of warm tea for him!’

‘You are too kind, sir!’ said the grateful stranger.

Catherine obeyed; but all the while was asking her husband with her eyes what all this meant. Lewis was also sorely puzzled. Mr. Layton sat down by him, handed the tea and ordered fresh toast for him. When the poor man had warmed and refreshed himself, he looked round with more confidence, and meeting Mr. Layton's eye, was answered by a glance of kindness and sympathy that brought a grateful smile to his pale cheek, and was not unnoticed by Lewis. Mrs. Layton now, by a side glance, saw that the man though pale had an intellectual face, and that his manners were polite. His voice too, though at first undertoned and humble as was natural to a person in his position, was agreeable and modulated by feeling.— he became interested to know who he was.

‘It is my duty to apologize to you and your family for my intrusion upon you in this guise,’ he said, understanding the lady's inquiring gaze. ‘I feel,’ he added, glancing at Mrs. Layton, ‘that I am among friends, and that my narrative will be listened to not only with courtesy but with sympathy.’

‘James,’ said Lewis addressing him in a low tone of voice, ‘before he begins, pray relieve my curiosity! is your guest an Odd Fellow?’

‘Yes,’ answered James with a smile.

‘This then accounts for this extraordinary benevolence and unusual hospitality.’

‘Yes, we are bound to relieve one another whatever the condition either may be in as brothers.’

‘How very singular the coincidence of his appearance with our conversation.’

The stranger then began, as in some sort to apologize for his claim upon Mr. Layton's hospitality, to narrate his story, to listen to which the latter delayed an hour his attendance upon the meeting of the society.

## CHAPTER II. The 'Camblet Wrapper,' of the Test of Good Faith.

The story of the Guest with the Torn Hat and ragged habiliments was full of interest to the little party of listeners, and was narrated in a pleasing manner, and was briefly as follows: He had been ship-wrecked on the coast of Maine, about six weeks before, with the loss of everything; and had been dependent upon the charity of persons in the towns he had passed through for means to reach Boston, where he knew he should be assisted to Baltimore, his residence, by the association of Odd Fellows, of which he was a member. He said he had left Baltimore six months before as supercargo of a ship bound to the North Sea, and was shipwrecked in her on his return voyage.

'I had no claim,' he said, proceeding on his narration, 'upon the citizens of the small towns I passed through, beyond the ordinary one of charity, which has become so often reiterated that I find it has got to be little heeded. I knew if I could find a brother Odd Fellow I should find a friend and a home. In Portland I inquired, but found there was no Order established there; and also in Portsmouth and other towns. Finally, this afternoon I reached Boston a stranger to every person in it. I had previously drawn up a paper stating my situation, in which I had put the secret designation of a membership in my Order, knowing that if by chance I should present it to a "brother" he would immediately recognize the "mystic sign," and extend to me, ragged and wretched as I was, the fellowship of his heart and hand.'

At these words James Layton turned slightly and glanced both at his wife and brother-in-law, while a quiet smile of prideful triumph sparkled in his eye.

'I had been to several houses,' continued the stranger, 'without obtaining even courtesy from the servant at the door, yet hoping Providence would at length bring me to that of a "Fellow" of our Order, of whom I knew there was a large number in Boston. I had inquired in the street of two or three, asking if any of them would tell me where I could find an 'Odd Fellow,' when taking my question as an *odd* one they called *me* an "odd fellow," and bade me walk about my business! I had passed by your door when something within me prompted me to turn back, and once more make an effort; for in finding a member of the order depended my hopes of sustenance and shelter to-night, as well as my return to Baltimore. I now feel that Providence prompted me to call at your door, and I cannot be too grateful for your hospitality and kindness to a stranger.'

'A brother of our Order is never a stranger,' said James, kindly. 'I feel happy in being the instrument of doing you the service you need. Our brethren meet to-night, and I was going out, when you called, to attend the meeting. I will lay your case before it to-night, and, as I have no spare bed, if you will put on this camblet wrapper and oblige me by wearing this hat—for the night is rough out,—I will accompany you to a comfortable inn which lies on my way, and find you a lodging. To-morrow at ten o'clock call on me here, and I will tell you what we have done for you.'

The friendly kindness of James' voice, and his manner in speaking to the wayfarer struck both his wife and brother, and his hearty and cordial hospitality and open-handed benevolence, made a deep impression upon them. They remained silent for several minutes after Mr. Layton and the stranger had left, reflecting upon what they had witnessed. At length Lewis spoke with great emphasis and feeling.

'This is, indeed, wonderful! Henceforth, Catherine, I am an "Odd Fellow."'

'How very extraordinary,' said Mr. Layton, speaking after a few moments reflection, that in a Christian land such language should ever fall from the lips of the destitute: 'in finding a member of my Order depended my only hopes of sustenance and shelter. Truly Christians should be ashamed that they are outdone in true charity by a mere human association.'

The wants of the wanderer were inquired into by two of the 'brethren' sent early the next morning by the Order, to the inn where James had left him; and in a short time, under their kind hands, there was a manifest change made in his wardrobe and external appearance. Money was also placed by them in his hands, and they parted from him with that fellowship and good will which is so beautiful a characteristic of their order.

'It is already past ten o'clock, James,' said Lewis, who had waited at home to see the issue of his brother-in-law's benevolent purposes towards the guest of the evening before; he was, also, after a night's sleep

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upon it, less zealous in becoming an `Odd Fellow.' The arguments of James had been partially forgotten and their impression in a manner passed away. `I should not be surprised, brother,' he said, laughing, as the hands of the clock indicated half-past ten, `if you never saw your new camblet wrapper more!'

`You will not triumph over me, Lewis,' answered James pleasantly; `he will yet be here.'

, You were so generous, too, as to loan him your new beaver, bought lately at Barry's. You had best call in to-day and purchase another—for your's is by this time at a pawnbroker's, or on its way to Baltimore or Symmzonia! Did you look, Catharine, to see if anything was missing from the front entry?'

`You laugh at me, Lewis,' said James Layton; `but rest assured you will not have the victory.'

`He may be a rogue though an Odd Fellow, and so deceive you.'

`No. The principles of our Order have an influence upon the moral man that no temptations can weaken or throw aside. If it were not, if he should prove a rogue, yet I have but done my duty in succoring a `brother.' I am free the guilt remains with him.'

`And so do the new camblet wrapper and the Barry. If you see either of them again I will become a member of an Order whose moral power is such as to bring men's vices into subjection to its principles.'

`Whatever motive, Lewis, may lead you to become an Odd Fellow, you would, believe me, find it greatly to your interest to be one, especially if you should travel. Everywhere you would find the hand of fellowship extended to welcome you, and in the face of a stranger find the smiles of a friend. But we never urge, not even invite any one. If you will be one of us, we will open our arms to welcome, love, cherish, defend and befriend you through weal and in wo.'

`If your friend returns I will offer myself at your next meeting. On *his* good faith, you see I have hung the faith and honor of your whole order.'

`And on it I am willing it should hang,' said James firmly. There is the door bell.'

`If it be your Barry and wrapper I am an Odd Fellow from this day,' said Lewis laughing.

`A gentleman wishes to see you, Mr. Layton,' said the maid.

`Show him in!'

`Are you sure it is a gentleman and not the man who was here last night?' asked Lewis.

`Yes, indeed. Don't I know a gentleman from a loafer like him! It took me half an hour this morning to get the mud from his heels off the rug! This *is* a gentleman Mr. Lewis you may be sure on on it.'

`It is not your man, James,' said Lewis with a look of triumph, as the girl returned to the hall.

`You are right,' said James, as she ushered in a very gentlemanly looking man who bowing politely stood as if he expected to be recognised.

`You do not know me, I see, sir.'

`Now you speak I do,' said Mr. Layton approaching and extending his hand. `Now, Lewis,' he said aside, `what think you of my camblet and Barry.'

His brother made no reply, but stood surveying the stranger with incredulity and surprise.

`You pardon my delay,' said he, `but I was taken in hand by two `brethren,' whom your kind mention of my misfortune, brought early to my Inn this morning; and they would not be satisfied till they had taken me to a clothing ware-house and provided me with a handsome suit of clothes besides other conveniences of which I stood in need. It is not a quarter of an hour since they let me go, when I directly hastened hither. Your hat and coat, sir, I brought and have left in the hall. I know not how to thank your hospitality and attention;' he continued pressing James' hand in both of his own; `I hope you will not fail to present my grateful acknowledgments to the society which had so generously contributed to my aid, and accept for yourself and family my best wishes for your happiness.'

`When do you leave?' asked James.

`In the cars this afternoon. I shall be in Baltimore probably in three days, when I will write you, and assure you that I have not been an unworthy object of the regard of my order.'

`Pardon my inquiry—but have you money?'

`Yes, furnished me by the two `brethren' sent to execute the will of the order in my behalf.'

Shortly afterwards Mr. Drumond, for he gave his name as Henry Drumond, took his leave, followed by the kind wishes both of Lewis and Mr. Layton.

`Now, Lewis,' said James, as the door closed on their late guest.

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‘I have sacrificed my prejudices to facts that I can no longer resist. I must yet ask one indulgence, brother. If the result turns out as I wish, I will be as strongly the advocate of your Order as I have been its opponent!’

‘Name what you wish.’

‘Frankly then, I have to confess a lingering suspicion that while it remains, will not leave me so free to act as I would wish, should I conclude to be proposed as a candidate for membership in your noble fraternity. He says he was shipwrecked six weeks ago on the coast of Maine.’

‘This can be proved, then, by reference to Topliff’s files.’

‘No; yet it would be well enough to look for such a shipwreck in the reporter’s list. He said the name of his ship was the ‘Trident.’ But this is not my object alone. If he was wrecked six weeks ago in Maine, and is a man of respectable connection in Baltimore, why did he not write from the first town for means, and there writ till he heard. Ten days would have broust him a reply and money if his tale be a true one. Instead of that he wanders from town to town and is six weeks reaching this city; I must confess this looks very suspicious.’

‘But he returned the coat and hat, brother—this was test enough of his honesty in his narrative,’ said Catherine, who had a moment before entered the room, and was listening with deep interest to their conversation.

‘It was his policy to do so—besides he had no further need of them, being well supplied both with clothes and money. This goes for nothing with me, I will wait until he fulfils his promise in writing from Baltimore. If he *writes* even I will advance no further objections and shall be ready most cheerfully to enrol myself in a society which is distinguished by benevolence so noble and by a code of principles so pure!’

That very day James took Lewis with him to Topliff’s; and after turning over a file of papers for several weeks back, saw under date of December 28, an extract of a letter dated Castine, Me., which read as follows:

‘We have had a South East gale blowing hard for the last forty—eight hours, and last night the ship Trident bound from Copenhagen to Baltimore, was driven ashore three leagues from— light. Out of a crew of twenty—one seven have been lost, including the captain and mate. Those who were saved came ashore with the loss of every thing. The ship is fast going to pieces and will probably with her cargo, be a total loss. No insurance. Among those saved are the supercargo and second mate, and one passenger, a Swede.’

The young men on reading this paragraph silently exchanged looks. Lewis saw the expression of triumph on James’ face and said, as if he were not altogether disposed to give up,

‘This is all very well; but he might have known of the wreck of this ship, and so told his tale.’

‘You are incorrigible, Lewis, I see plainly,’ said James, laughing. ‘I see you have little faith after all in our Order.’

‘Yes I have in *it*. I believe it now to be all you have said; but I am, I confess, suspicious of the person who has solicited its charity. It seems so strange that a perfect stranger to you should have been so handsomely relieved and suffered to depart. Surely, your open handed benevolence which admits no suspicion, must leave you exposed to deception.’

‘No—for none apply who are not of our Order.’

‘And you contend that all who are of it are infallible in morals.’

‘Yes, so far as the sacred character of our Order’s charity is concerned. There is not on the globe one who would make it the instrument of fraud or vice.’

‘If you get a letter from Mr. Drumond, I am silenced save in praise,’ said Lewis as they parted each to go to his place of business.

James Layton, it is time to say, was a junior partner in an extensive Jeweller’s establishment in Washington street, to which trade he had regularly served an honorable apprenticeship. His late employer had a few months before taken him into partnership, and as we have seen he did not long afterwards remain a batchelor. He lived in genteel style in a pleasant part of the city, and was prosperous in his affairs; while he was to be envied as we have witnessed, in the happiness and comfort of his domestic arrangements. Lewis Foster whose sister he had married, was also a junior partner in a respectable dry goods store. He was a young gentleman of strict morals and of considerable intelligence. The warmest friendship had long existed between the two young men, and nothing had ever occurred to interrupt the harmony of their fraternal intercourse.

A week—ten days—a fortnight passed, and yet no letter had been received from Baltimore. Lewis was about to declare himself the victor in his opinion of the shipwrecked stranger, and James’ hopes in his integrity to

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misgive him, when a letter mailed at Baltimore was brought from the post-office. Without opening it James left his store and went to Lewis, and exhibiting the outside, broke the seal. As he unfolded it hurriedly a bank note fell from it, and fluttered to the floor. Lewis caught it and exclaimed,

'A hundred dollar note, as I live!—Read the letter!' he cried eagerly.

James read as follows:— Baltimore, — *March 10, 183*—.

'My Dear friend and 'brother':—I am happy to inform you of my safe arrival here yesterday, having been detained in New York by illness. I am now quite well again and hasten to return you my acknowledgments for your kind assistance, and that of your Order. The amount of money generously advanced me, and the bill for my wardrobe is something under the amount I enclose, which I beg you will do me the favor to return to the society, for the aid of others of the Order who like me may be thrown by Providence in a condition to call for its benevolence. I pray you will present my regards to your family and accept the assurances of my grateful friendship. If you, or any of your friends should visit Baltimore, where I shall remain and engage in the mercantile business, I shall esteem myself signally happy in extending to you our hospitality. Respectfully, Your friend and humble servant,

HENRY DRUMOND.

To James Layton, Esq.' —

When James had finished the letter he looked up and met Lewis' eye.

'Forgive me James,' he exclaimed warmly and with much feeling. 'I will no doubt, after this, the purity of your Order, nor the principles of its members, than I do the goodness of your own heart and the excellency of your understanding. From this hour I am heart and hand with you. In your next meeting I hope you will not forget to propose me as a candidate for initiation as a member of the noble association of the 'Independent Order of Odd Fellows.'

### CHAPTER III. The "Odd Fellow's Widow," or the Year of the Epidemic.

The year 183— will long be remembered in New Orleans for the violence of the yellow fever. Hundreds died daily; and the sounds of wailing and the groans of the dying took the place of the light laugh and joyous voices that were wont to be heard in the streets of this gay city. The epidemic had been raging three weeks with unmitigated fury, mowing down alike native and stranger, the high and the low, the good and the evil. The living at length were wearied with nursing, or from habit became insensible to the calls of distress. Many died unattended, and their bodies were taken from the house by a man with a cart, and hauled to the grave yard and there thrown into a wide ditch excavated for their reception. No relative, no friend, no follower to the tomb! Death, terror and desolation reigned. The hospitals could receive no more, and the sisters of charity and benevolent Roman priests, though constantly engaged in administering to the suffering at the risk of life, could not meet but a small portion of the demands suffering humanity made upon their charity. The theatres and the masquerades, as usual at this season were closed, and instead the cathedral was thronged, and its floor was crowded from morning till midnight with kneeling suppliants for Heaven's mercy. The rich and all who had the ability had fled or were flying daily, and of those who remained, all were too much lost in their own fears of griefs to regard those of others.

In such a condition of things it is not surprising that many, even in respectable positions in society, should perish unattended, uncared for! Many a luxurious mansion whose last occupant expired attended only by a faithful slave, or perhaps a passing stranger, was locked and sealed by the city magistrate till some living heir should appear. The poor, 'the stranger poor,' were indeed sufferers in this day of terror and despair. Unable to leave the city for want of means, whole families, lately from the North, miserably perished.

It was about three in the afternoon of a day that had been most fatal to the victims of the epidemic, when a gentleman, about twenty-eight or thirty years of age, stepped from the verandah of a handsome Creole house in the Lower Faubourg. He was pale, his dress which was all of white linen, disarranged, and his manner restless. He stood still a moment, then raised his clasped hands to Heaven and said fervently and bitterly,

'Oh God how long shall thy terrible scourge afflict man? Death and not Life reigns! Spare, oh spare!'

At this moment an African slave appeared crossing the deserted streets. On seeing the expression of the gentleman's face, he asked,

'Is massa dead?'

'Yes, go and see that he is shrouded and I will send a coffin. Here is a load.'

At this moment a wagon turned the corner of the adjoining street half filled with coffins, many of them unpainted. The slow wagon as it rolled along the silent, sunny streets, sent forth a hollow sound that went to the soul. The driver asked if a coffin was wanted; and the black paid for one and took it into the house.

'Farewell, noble Vinton,' said he, as he glanced through the open windows of the verandah upon the dead body of a young man laying upon a sofa. 'When the sun rose you were buoyant with health and full of hope. Ere it sets you will be in your grave! I, too, must take warning! My head aches, and walking and want of sleep have made me feverish. I have done my duty in attending Vinton, and will now seek my home, for Mary will be anxious about me, as well she may be; for who goes out well at morn may never see the noon.'

The speaker was Lewis Foster! Five years have elapsed since the events recorded in the preceding story. During the interval he had married a lovely girl, James Layton's sister, and removed his business to New Orleans, where he had now been three years a resident. The summers of the first two years he passed North, where he went on business; the present summer he also intended to go on to obtain goods, when he was detained by his wife's illness, who having shortly before presented him with a son, his second child, had not recovered sufficiently to enable him to leave at the time he wished. It was August before she was well enough to travel, when as the season was so far advanced he resolved to remain through it. This was also necessary to give him an opportunity of examining his affairs, as intelligence had reached him that his clerk whom he had sent North in his place and entrusted with all his money, had proved unfaithful to his trust and taken passage for Europe. The loss, as his

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business had by no means been prosperous, was so great, that he found he should be under the necessity, unless he could obtain great indulgence from his creditors, of making over all he possessed to trustees, in a word that he must fail.

He had hardly time for reflection upon the condition of his affairs, with a wife and two children, when the yellow fever broke out and enlisted all his feelings and sympathies for his family and those of his friends who remained.

Night and day he devoted himself to the cause of humanity and up to the time we meet him again, himself and his own family had mercifully escaped. Vinton's (who was a young Bostonian, and had only been a few weeks in the city) was the fifth death bed he had bent over that day. James Layton, his brother-in-law, was also in New Orleans, and an inmate of his family; this gentleman was now a widower. He had also been unsuccessful in business, and allured by the rumors of fortunes easily achieved in New Orleans, had come out the preceding fall. Hundreds of others had also been tempted like him; and he found that the city was overrun with them, each in turn doomed to disappointment. He found he could do nothing, after remaining with Lewis during the winter, he proposed to return North in the Spring with him and his wife. But her illness detained him, and he now found himself as well as Lewis, in the midst of a raging epidemic. He was not one to flee at such a time and leave his friends in danger. He remained, and, like his brother, devoted himself to the care of the sick.

Lewis Foster took his way home through the solitary streets at a slow pace. He carried above his head a thick umbrella, for the sun was fiery hot. The pavements were so heated as to be painful to his feet. The air was still, and as difficult to breathe as if coming from the mouth of a furnace. Not a cloud was in the hazy looking sky; and the dust of the ground was so pulverized by the drought, as to float for hours after it was disturbed, and filled the atmosphere, made it still more difficult to breathe. As he went along, groans of the dying, or shrieks of the living over the just dead, alone met his ears; save at intervals, the voice of prayer. The dead-cart occasionally broke the stillness, as it rumbled along slowly with its disgusting load, ever and anon stopping at a door to add to it. At length, James reached his abode, a neat verandah cottage with a yard before it, once green and adorned with flowers; but now parched by the heat and dust. Mary was at the door and flew to meet him. She threw her arms about his neck and wept! For meetings and partings, though for a few hours, at such a time, were not without emotion.

'You are safe, thank God!' she said gratefully.

'And you, dearest Mary,' he said folding her to his heart. 'And the children?'

'Both well. How is Mr. Vinton?'

'Dead,' he answered in a tone that was methodical. This word of so fearful import was then too common in men's mouths to be uttered with the emphasis and feeling which belong to it at other times. 'Where is James?'

'A negro came for him to see Charles Wilbur.'

'Charles! I met him on my way to Vinton's not five hours ago, and he went in with me, laughed with poor Vinton, told him not to give up for he would get over it, and then left as he said to see a fellow clerk. Is he attacked?'

'James was sent for two hours ago to see him.'

'Poor fellow! I will go to him.'

'No, Lewis! you owe duties to me and the children! You shall not go again! You will be the next victim, and then what would become of me?'

'God!' answered Lewis, solemnly and impressively, pointing upwards. 'But I will remain with you! James will do every thing for Charles. I am quite fatigued, and need some rest!'

'Your cheek is flushed and your eyes heavy! Oh, James, if you should be ill!' cried the wife with anxious solicitude. 'How hot your hands are! your pulse is fearfully rapid! Oh God! what is this! He is ill!' she exclaimed as her husband suddenly grew pale and sunk into a chair powerless.

She spoke to him but he did not reply. He grew black in the face and violent vomiting confirmed the fearful suspicion of the poor wife! What relief was there? What aid? Whom could she call? No one! All around her were either dying or administering to their own sick! She gazed upon her husband a moment as if to assure herself of the horrible truth and then rang the air with piercing shrieks for help! Her voice penetrated a hundred ears, but produced no effect. It was heard with indifference and often echoed by the dying with insane wildness. She

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ceased her shrieks and administered to him whatever was at hand; and tried to shut her ears to his groans of agony. It was a terrible scene and hour for that young and loving wife and mother. At length she heard a foot step. She looked up. It was James—her brother! But oh, horror! he was staggering along and his countenance betrayed the fatal signs of the epidemic.

'Mary,' he said faintly, 'I have come home to die! As he spoke he fell at his length upon the floor.

The cup of the poor wife was full. She shrieked not now! She flew to him and raised him up! She kissed him and bade him live for her! He embraced her and looking towards Lewis, bade her with his eyes to look only to him. How dear to her were both. Which could she least regard? Which could she resign?

But we will not dwell upon a scene so full of pain. After enduring six hours of suffering, Lewis Foster breathed his last in the arms of his wife, who the next moment fell in a state of insensibility upon his body. An hour afterwards she was roused by the dead-carrier, who came to remove the body; for the red cross had been made upon the door by an officer who had just before passed in his rounds. She rose up and gazed upon it as if in a dream. She stood silently in a stupor of horror and saw the men bear him forth, and then, forgetful that her brother lay dying in the same room, forgetful of her children, she followed and threw herself upon the corpse. By main force the men removed her and then drove on. She stood like a statue till the cart was out of sight, when the sound of her infant's voice within the house recalled the mother to herself. She clasped her hands in silent anguish, and sought her fatherless children. James lying on the floor in the agonies of death, first met her sight. She flew to him and he soon breathed his last upon her arm.

Again the dead cart came and the body of her brother was borne from her sight. She sat upon the floor and moved not—nor scarcely breathed as the men went tramping out. She had her two children firmly clasped to her bosom as it she feared they would return and deprive her of them!

From this day the plague abated. The number of the victims was each morning reported less and less, and hope began to take the place of despair and horror. The widow lived! She had been saved from the pestilence by the stronger fever of her brain. Life was a blank to her, save that she realized that her children lived and looked to her for nourishment and life. In affection for these she strove to forget the past. But the blow had been heavy! It had stunned her at the first; and now that she could realize it the anguish of her heart was terrible. A month elapsed and the city authorities reported the cessation of the pestilence. At once, as if by magic, a change came over the late city of the plague. The streets were once more thronged with the gay and the busy, the good and the evil, and the theatres, masquerades, and gambling chambers again invited their votaries. The cathedral was less thronged, save by the few humble and grateful; and the city had thrown aside its veil of mourning and assumed the cap of mirth and folly. Yet eight thousand beings had been swept from the city in the seven weeks past!

The tide of business, of pleasure, of vice and human variety once more rolled on as before. Men began to look after their interests, and the creditors of Lewis Foster divided his goods, save the furnishing of a single apartment allotted to his wife. With this furniture she removed to a small apartment, which she rented. Here she waited for health, for she had been sick both in mind and body, that she might seek employment in sewing—for she had nothing. Her only relative was her brother James; and she had none but Heaven to look to—a blest and blessing trust to all who have faith so to look. But instead of growing better she became worse and at length she incurred debts and her physician learning her state, sued and got judgment for his bill. It was a bright sunny forenoon in December—the most delightful month in the year in this climate, that Mrs. Foster, who was lying ill of a fever, with her two babes beside her, both weak and suffering from want of proper nourishment, was disturbed by the entrance of an officer. He civilly but firmly made known his business and proceeded to make an inventory of the furniture of the room.

She made no reply but gazed on him with a vacant look as if not believing such evil could come upon her and her children. Her eye followed the motions of the officer with a bewildering gaze, while she pressed her children closer to her bosom. At length recollection and a proper appreciation of the truth flashed upon her.

'Surely, you will not leave me destitute?' she cried in an imploring voice.

The officer paused, gazed upon her face still lovely in its pallor and despair and replied in a tone of sympathy, 'I am sorry ma'am, but I have no discretion!'

She fell back upon her pillow and for a few moments seemed to lay in silent prayer. The officer suddenly roused her by an exclamation of surprise, while he held up to her a paper to which was attached a ribbon, which had fallen from a box he was handling, to the floor.



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`Whose is this, ma'am?'

`Do not take that sir—it was my husband's.'

`What was his name?'

`Lewis Foster.'

`The same that is here. Are you aware of his being a member of any society?' asked the officer respectfully yet with earnestness.

`Yes—of the `Odd Fellows,' in Boston.'

`And he died here of the fever in the fall?' pursued the officer.

`Yes,' she replied, covering her weeping face with her hand.

`Then, dear madam, take heart?' he said approaching her and speaking kindly. `I am an `Odd Fellow' too; and as the wife of one your misfortune is sacred to me and my brethren! Take heart, madam! Your debt to this Doctor shall be paid before night and you and your children shall be made as comfortable as you can wish. You shall have a Doctor, too, and a good one, that wont trouble you with any bills, and he shall get you all well too! Come brighten up! You will hear from me again before noon.'

Thus speaking the officer bade a kind good morning and left her, with a heart overflowing with gratitude. At twelve o'clock, the officer was good as his word and made his appearance. He was not alone. A lady and gentleman (he a wealthy member of the Order) came with him. Their carriage was at the door and Mrs. Foster and her babes were removed at once to a luxurious abode. There every comfort was administered to them, and in a very short time she was entirely restored to health. The smile once more beamed in her eyes and cheerfulness and serenity took up their abode in her heart. She is now governess in one of the most desirable families in Louisiana, and a widower who is a neighbor and a man of great wealth and refinement of mind and heart, has already proposed for her hand; whether she will so far bury the memory of Lewis as to accept his hand will probably soon be decided, probably in the affirmative, for it is very rare that widows, especially the young and beautiful, remain long unmarried in the chivalric land of the `sunny south.' *THE END.* – Blank Page. ]

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**FORAGING PETER.**

## CHAPTER I.

The facility of acquiring wealth in this country; the numerous ways and means by which the enterprising, the ambitious, the skilful the cunning and the bold may rise; the countless fields for the display of every kind of talent, keeps in constant agitation the elements of society, and prevents the formation of a fixed aristocracy the foundation of which is stagnation and repose. In this ocean-like restlessness, the lowest are thrown to the surface, and every successive wave of fortune heaves up new aspirants for wealth and name. While the elements of society are, with us, in a state of suspension, like the alluvion of a disturbed stream, in England they have been for centuries settled, and society there, to pursue the figure, is like a strong rock composed of a succession of strata, presenting a formation immovable and imposing. Time will yet effect with us what it has in all older nations, and produce a social formation, composed of independent strata. This will not be a recognised hereditary aristocracy, (for society is not without an aristocracy) like that of England, but it will be the same thing virtually. It will not be an aristocracy of wealth so much as an aristocracy of name. That species of aristocracy based upon wealth, so long as our laws do not recognise the right of primogeniture, will correct itself. Its existence is intrinsically temporary, and generally expires with the individual founder of it. But the aristocracy of which we speak will be based upon precisely the same foundations as that of England. The starting point of England's proudest names is the conquest. Noble, indeed, is that family which can trace its pedigree to a knight of the train of William the Conquerer. This is an aristocracy truly of birth and lineage in their purest and highest acceptation, and one which is universally recognised.

Likewise, those who attentively observe the aspects assuming by America's best society, will not have failed to discover that there is a class forming and daily strengthening in influence, power and wealth, the individuals composing which trace their lineage to the old colonial governors; to exiled cavalier families, and, by far the largest number, to the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and the distinguished Generals and officers of rank prominent in our revolution! What man, of whatever state he be a citizen, cannot point to many such families as composing *the* aristocracy at this time of their own state. It is unnecessary to mention names, which have only to be given to receive the unanimous acquiescence of the people at large, in proof of our position. Now of this class of eminent names there is in germ one of the proudest aristocracies to which any nation now existing can lay claim. It is forming and will be powerful, and universally recognised a century hence as The American Aristocracy, a name which will be as significant of high meaning as 'English Aristocracy' is now.

But we are not about to give the reader an essay, but a story; so, leaving the next generation to look after the republican aristocracy which is coming down to it, we will turn our attention to an individual of a very common species of aristocracy of the present day, a class to be found in every city in the land, and in every country village where there is 'a rich man,' self-made.

On the ragged outskirts of a little village down east, (by which be it understood we don't mean the State of Maine, but the region about Cape Ann), lived a clever poor man, who supported himself and a large family by 'doing chores,' that is, ploughing about for farmers in the spring, helping the hostler at the village Inn during the summer, mowing at harvest time, and chopping wood for his neighbors in winter. His name was David Dalton; but he was better known by the soubriquet of 'Lame Davy,' his gait being an extraordinary compound movement between a limp and a jerk. His dwelling was a low wretched, unpainted, black tenement, with a broken roof, a tumble-down chimney, and windows mended with shingles and old clothes, a panel was out of the front door, and as the back door had fallen from its hinges and been cut up and burned in a stormy winter's day when Davy was out of wood, the space was now closed by rough boards nailed together. Davy's wife was a 'managing' woman for a poor body, and managed to keep her children patched up, and give them something to eat every day, notwithstanding Davy scarcely ever brought a four-pence-half-penny into the house; for those he worked for generally paid him in a 'meal' victuals' and cider and rum.

One blowy, blustering night in January, in a wretched apartment eight feet by ten, Davy's wife gave birth to her sixth child who in due time was named, (for we cannot asseverate that he was ever christened) Peter, in honor of Peter Drew the village grocer; in return for which Davy looked to receive on occasion sundry favors, such as a quart of molasses, a quarter of tea, a pound of candles, or a string of herring. Contrary to the custom of thriving

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people where poor children are named after them, Peter Drew took it kindly and every little while would delight his father by asking after the welfare of his 'little namesake.'

Little Peter throve through his weaning as his brothers and sisters had done, after his eighth month taking pretty much all the care of himself that ever was taken of him. His favorite companions were the pigs, chickens, and an old tabby cat of the next door neighbors; and as early as his fourteenth month he had so initiated himself into the favor of Farmer Cowden's barn-dog 'Bolt,' alongside of whom, after tottling up the yard to kennel, he would lay stretched in the sun half of a long summer's day, when the genrous mastiff would always leave a bone of his own bountiful dinner unpicked for him. Besides this assistance little Davy managed very adroitly to abstract half of tabby's supper every day, and to cheat the poultry out of a good share of the crumbs the farmer's maid threw to them. Thus he throve mainly, and began early to take lessons in personal independance; figurative to look after number one.

By the time little Peter had attained his third year, 'Lame Davy,' so far as his maintenance was concerned, may have considered his hopeful son as fairly entered upon the world; that is, having taken upon himself his own maintenance. The young forager knew the precise moments of meal-time at every neighbor's table within houses either side of his father's; and what with getting a slice of bread and butter at one, or a chicken's leg at another, the gift accompanied with 'Here Peter, there's a bone!' to the naked-legged infant as he poked his carroty head in at the door, the little scamp of a pensioner grew fat and flourished.

At length when he had reached his ninth year his father sent him to the town or free-school, to keep him out of mischief; on which occasion Peter Drew, the grocer, presented his namesake with a spelling book, the boy was smart, and shrewd, and intelligent enough, and learned fast. At the age of fourteen, the grocer took him into his store as an assistant, and the result showed the judiciousness of his choice. From this period young Peter began to distinguish himself by an extraordinary ambition to be rich. Acquisitiveness was one of the largest of his phrenological organs, next to self-esteem. He became a valuable adjunct to the grocer, serving him and making him no small portion of his income.

As the moral and religous education of our hero had been little regarded by his parents, he had very little reverence for practised honesty; he cheated, when he could safely, the immorality of it consisting in being "found out." At the age of twenty one Mr. Drew took him into co-partnership, by which time Peter's father and mother had paid their debt to nature, with all of his brothers and sisters, who, less skilled in providing for themselves, had pined and starved, became diseased and died ere the eldest had had reached his twelfth year. Peter, therefore may be said to have saved his own life by his superior skill in foraging. This talent he carried with him into his business, and by picking here and picking there, driving sharp trades, and taking advantage of men's ignorance, he soon began to lay up money. By and by Peter Drew fell sick and died, without a will. His business and property being all in the hands of his partner, the settlement showed greatly to the surprise of every body (for Peter Drew was thought to have accumulated great riches) that the heir, who was a poor widowed sister, would not realize more than fifty dollars; which sum Peter Dalton paid over to her in person. People shook their heads, and Peter finding that he was not only unpopular, but that men had no confidence in him, and that he was too well known there, from his origin upwards, ever to hope to get into 'good society,' which he now aspired to, he resolved to dispose of his store and stock, and move to Boston and there establish himself in business.

He came to Boston with seven thousand dollars in cash, and worth in real-estate situated in his native village, to an equal amount. Here he soon found a person well established in the wholesale grocery business, who was willing to receive him as a partner. The new firm with the additional capital and force extended its operations. Peter, whose ambition to rise in the world was ever uppermost, soon found on looking about him, that 'merchants, ' must own vessels before they can take rank among the leading men of business. He therefore entered into the shipping business, and freighted a brig to St. Thomas. His enterprise was successful, and he next chartered and dispatched a ship to New Orleans for cotton to freight to Liverpool. The frofits of the home cargo was beyond his expectations. He now, with his partner built a ship and sent her to India.

His business now grew upon his hands, and his ship returning after a prosperous voyage, he resolved to build a second, and also to transfer his business from Long Wharf near the T, to Central Wharf; as being a more 'respectable' location, and, as he said, offering greater facilities for his extended business operations.

Six years had now elapsed since Peter came to Boston, and he found himself already a richer man than any body he had left behind in his native village. But he found that he was by no means rich for Boston. He was of an

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aspiring spirit, and inwardly resolved that he would yet be called RICH on `Change.' He therefore brought all his genius of acquisitiveness into action to contribute to this desirable result. Successful voyages to India, and round the `Horn,' were sure and pleasant ways of adding to his eighty thousand dollars, which he now set down as the minimum of his wealth; but he was ambitious to increase it yet faster by some bold enterprise. The idea of marriage happily came into his head, and he resolved to look out and marry a rich wife. Peter was now in his thirty-fourth year, and though by no means an Adonis, was presentable. It is true his manners were rather vulgar, and he was rather sanguinary with the king's English, and he seldom washed his hands or cleansed his teeth; but gold is a rare refiner of vulgarity, a panacea for wounded grammar, and will adorn unwashed hands and gild filthy teeth. Therefore when he offered himself to Miss Appollonia Bulley, the only daughter of his friend Ira Bulley, of the firm of Bulley & Broadnax, Ship Chandlers, India Street, he was accepted, and in due time led the fair maid to the altar. Peter, however, was too wise, foolishly to marry a fortune still in the father's pockets; for the match being every way desirable in the eyes of Mr. Bulley, who foresaw in his future son-in-law one of the richest men in Boston, he settled upon his daughter on the morning of her marriage, fifty-thousand dollars.

This was a very handsome `operation,' for Peter, and he himself thought so as he came out of the Suffolk Bank after having transfered this amount from Ira Bulley's name to his own.

It now became Peter to look out for a dwelling house; and as his ambition was to get into good society he determined to take one in Colonnade Row, this being in his estimation a very stylish part of the town. His wife thought so also; and accordingly a house was rented there, and furnished in a very showy manner for Mrs. Appollonia Dalton was, in her own notion a very fashionable person, her great aunt, who was an English woman, having been first cousin to a Sir George Somebody. It this connexion, and her own and her husband's money, did not make her rank among the best society in Boston, pray what considerations should we ask? But it was a long time before the Boston aristocracy could think so, and then only when Peter had got to owning several ships, stores and dwellings, and so identified himself in business with the first merchants of wealth and intelligence that they could hardly avoid extending to his family (for he had several children) the courtesies of social life. So at length, therefore, Peter got to the top bent of his ambition, and was called rich on `Change,' and his wife was invited to parties in Beacon Street.

To Mrs. Dalton the day on which she received the ticket to her first party in that aristocratic quarter was an era. She was by no means a lady of natural refinement, though she had advantages of birth and education to which Peter had no pretension. Her mother had been a lawyer's daughter, and her father was a Deacon's son, and he himself had been a colonel in the militia. Miss Appollonia, therefore, had some pretensions. She had received the usual "piano-forte education" of her class, and considered herself quite "accomplished," and no doubt with her money, she thought herself "as good as any." She had certain country cousins, and other poor relations, to whom she made it a point never to allude to nor hold and correspondence with. Among these was a Mr. Henry Decker, a poor bookloving young man who sixteen years ago, just before she married Peter, had come up to Cambridge and entered as a beneficiary at Harvard. Though proud of having a cousin in college, she was mortified at having a relation educated from a benevolent fund, and when he called to visit his uncle, as he did once or twice during his first term, they treated him with a rudeness that marked their ill breeding and contemptible pride. He went through his course of studies with great credit, and after he graduated, paid a visit to Boston, to say farewell to his rich cousin who had now been two years Mrs. Dalton. Peter had been already informed of this poor relation of his wife's, who had been educated by a charity fund, and when his wife now took him aside in the hall and told him that he had probably come to ask him to do something to start him in the world, and that the best way to get rid of him was not to ask him to dinner, he took her spirit and entered into her wishes so fully, that the insulted young graduate, a very amiable excellent man, left the house in disgust, resolved never to enter it again.

They heard of him from time to time, as keeping school in his native town and studying law, but truth to tell, gave themselves very little trouble about him. In the meanwhile they waxed rich, and, by degrees got themselves claimed among the "rich people" of Boston. By this unnatural elevation above their suitable and natural condition in life (for claims to good society, should be measured by mind and refinement, and not by money and impudence) exposed them both, to innumerable mortifications consequent upon their ignorance of the laws of their present condition, and their grovelling affinity with their previous one which embittered their triumph and made them contemptible in the eyes of those whose favor they were nervously solicitous to obtain. Peter also had visits from poor relations, whom he had never heard of before, but who were keen-scented in finding him out

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now that he had got rich; but as he aspired to be thought of good family and hated whatever was calculated to remind him of his low origin, he gave them such reception as left them little inclination to call again to see him. In everything Peter and his wife were well mated, but in nothing did they more cordially agree than in their hatred of their poor relations. They lived in horror of their country cousins, and one day Peter seeing the `poor student', on the opposite side of the street, hastened home and bade his wife shut the front of the house and see herself whenever the bell rang, that he was not admitted; for they expected an alderman and his wife, and the rich Mr. F— and his wife to tea that evening; and they trembled lest Henry Decker's presence might disgrace their gentility in the eyes of such stylish people. When, however, Mr. Peter Dalton, got back to his counting room, who will paint his surprise and displeasure at seeing there his wife's cousin, in a well brushed seedy hat, and black threadbare coat (the very personification of a poor scholar) waiting his arrival. But the events that followed this meeting, are of sufficient importance to deserve a place in a part by itself, which will be found below.

## CHAPTER II. The Schoolmaster and India Merchant.

'How do you do, Mr. Dalton? How is cousin Appollonia?' was the salutation of the threadbare scholar to the rich India merchant, as, doubtful whether to turn about and run away or enter his counting-room, he stood hesitating upon its threshold.

Now, to a man so purse-proud, and who was at all times so solicitous to 'cut' poor relations, whether his own or his wife's, as Peter Dalton, this was a familiarity of address, coupled, as it was, with the levelling word 'cousin,' which was exceedingly distasteful to his pride and self-respect. Looking furtively round to see if his clerks had overheard the word, he seemed relieved to observe that they were all busy. He then, without replying, stepped back towards the outer door, and beckoned Henry Decker to him. This person slightly smiled and obeyed the sign, well understanding its motive. Mr. Decker was now a pale, intellectual-looking man, about thirty-eight years of age. Born of poor parents, educated as a beneficiary, he was, up to this time, poor. He had studied the law, keeping a school at the same time, after quitting college, but a natural diffidence and sensitiveness deterred him from ever practising at the bar. He, therefore, continued to keep school, and had now for sixteen years been teacher of the academy in his native village. His income was small and afforded him few luxuries of life; but these to him were books, in selecting a library of which he expended every dollar his sustenance and wardrobe did not necessarily lay claim to. Fond of study, and happy in his profession as a teacher, this poor but respectable person passed his life without care, and commanding the respect of all whose regard was of any value. Though, like Peter Dalton, of an obscure family, education, as it ever does, had refined his manners and made him a gentleman intuitively.

As he now appeared before the rich merchant, there was nothing in his appearance that Peter need be ashamed of. It is true he looked like a decayed gentleman, but GENTLEMAN he evidently was to every eye but Peter's. But Mr. Dalton knew him to be poor; and as poverty in any one, much more in a relation, was unpardonable in his eyes, he believed all others would look upon him just as he did, and that their contempt for him would be reflected upon himself. He therefore resolved to get rid of him as speedily as possible. So, after glancing his eye over his neat but well worn and often patched attire, he said in a pompous tone, as if a man's gold should make him superior to him who possesses a mine of intellect which eternity will ever be working and never exhaust.

'So, Mr. Decker, you have come to Boston again. I should suppose for a poor man a trip from Framingham to Boston so often would be expensive.'

'It is something so, cousin,' said Mr. Decker, with an emphasis on the last word; for he was not blind to Peter's failing, and having a vein of quiet humor in his composition, he was willing to indulge it; 'but I cannot be said to come often, as this is but the fourth time in twelve years. I am glad to find you looking so well and are prospering.'

'Humph!' ejaculated Peter to himself; 'he thinks I am prospering for the benefit of his pocket. But he'll get no money of me.' And he involuntarily buttoned up his coat, and looked a whole Board of Bank Directors refusing to discount paper for a man they suspect not to be 'good.'

Henry Decker smiled, for he plainly read his thought: and Peter replied aloud,

'Hard times, sir! no money! Banks refuse to discount! Pray excuse me, sir, I have to see a broker on 'Change, and I am five minutes past the hour;' he added, taking out and displaying, ostentatiously, a massive gold watch, loaded with seals.

'I—I am sorry to detain you, cousin, but I have a small favor to ask of you.'

'I thought so,' growled the merchant in an under tone. Poor relations are natural beggars—born to annoy and disgrace people. 'I have no time!' he said gruffly.

'But, it may be for *your* interest to listen to me a moment,' said Mr. Decker, unmoved. 'But, if you are now so busy, I will call another time.'

'The word 'interest,' coupled with the individual personal pronoun, when aimed at Peter's ears, never failed to penetrate. He stopped, and said in a tone less caustic—'Oh, if it be a matter of business, Mr. Decker, that alters the case,' and at the same time he wondered what could be the nature of any business which the schoolmaster

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could have with him. 'I will let the broker wait, if you will be expeditious.'

'As this is a personal family matter, perhaps it would be as well to be where we could be uninterrupted for a few moments,' said Henry Decker in a quiet way; for hitherto they had been standing in the door in front, and through which busy people were continually hurrying.

The rich man stared at the boldness of such a suggestion from a poor relation, but his acquisitiveness being awakened by the word 'interest,' he said, apologetically for his supreme condescension, as he led the way to an inner counting room—

'This must be some extraordinary matter, Mr. Decker, to require this privacy;' and then the idea came over him that he wanted to borrow some money of him; but it occurring very reasonably to his mind that such an operation could not be mutually for their interest, he rejected the suspicion and closing the door as he was wont to do in consultation with men of business, he waited with a serene eye for the schoolmaster's communication. To a spectator too distant to detect the threadbare condition of his black suit, Mr. Decker was the gentleman of the store, and Peter some vulgar fellow in his employ, dressed up in a Sunday coat, for Peter always wore shining broadcloth, as well he might; it was all the gentleman he could lay claim to.

'You are aware, Mr. Dalton,' said Henry Decker, after he had taken the chair Peter directed him with his eye to occupy, 'that my cousin, Appollonia—'

Here the wealthy India Merchant gravely interrupted him:

'Mr. Decker, it might be very well, perhaps, if you were a brother, even in your humble situation, to make use of the term signifying the relationship; but for one who is but a cousin to Mrs. Dalton, and in such a different condition in society, to be constantly dragging in his cousinship by the ears and tail, is going a little too far.'

'I beg your pardon, sir, and that of Mrs. Dalton,' said Henry Decker, successfully assuming the look of a man who felt the reproof; 'I trust I shall not so far forget myself a second time.'

'I hope not. You know riches kills, or ought to, all relationship. I would not acknowledge my own father, if he were alive and should come into my counting room in open day, and any body was in it.'

'No? I have heard your father was poor and humble, but I did not know before that he was such a very low fellow.' said Henry dryly, and with the keenest irony, yet looking as simple as a child.

The merchant colored, and tried, though not very successfully, to correct the impression made by his unlucky speech. He felt deeply the sarcasm of the poor scholar, and for a moment there was an awkward silence, during which the student pulled from his coat pocket a well-worn newspaper, which after opening, and laying his finger on a paragraph, he said,

'As I began to remark, you are aware Mr. Dalton, that your wife and myself are cousins—german.'

'I need not be reminded of it, sir,' replied the merchant freezingly.

'She is the daughter of Ira Bulley, and I, the son of Ann Bulley, his sister who was married to Edward Decker, a sea-captain.'

'No doubt your genealogy is very interesting to yourself, Mr. Decker,' said Peter coldly, 'but I beg to remind you that a merchant's time is his money. You were to show me something for my interest.'

'And if you will be patient, Mr. Dalton I will redeem my pledge,' said Henry Decker quietly. 'Ira Bulley, who is now deceased, and my mother who is with God, were the only children of James Bulley, who was the only child of Andrew Brown Bulley, who was an officer of the customs under the colonial government. His father was Thomas Bulley an English—'

Here Peter sprung from his chair with indignant contempt.

'What are your Tom Bulls and your Brown Bulls, and your English Bulls to me sir? If you have nothing better to entertain yourself with this folly, I beg leave to bid you a very good morning!' and Mr. Dalton made three decided strides towards the door and laid his hand upon the knob. Henry Decker did not move, but looked as if he expected to be heard out. Peter saw his manner was imposing as if something did really lie at the bottom of all this, and resuming his chair with a force that nearly dislocated it, said peevishly:

'If you have anything to say of importance to me, pray out with it.'

'If you had not interrupted me, I should now have got through.'

'Then go on, and the better speed to it will make better welcome.'

'This Thomas Bulley, the GREAT grandsire of your wife and of myself, (I beg pardon for this necessary conjunction of my name with hers) we have been taught by an indistinct tradition, was the younger son of a



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nobleman, but of what rank or name was not handed down.'

'Yes, yes, I have heard something of the relationship of my wife's to a noble family,' said Peter trying to look indifferent to the honor, which it was plain he hugged to his bosom: 'but he is the true nobleman, sir, let me tell you, who has made his own fortune, and inherited nothing from posterity.'

'Ancestry, doubtless you mean,' said the school master dryly, 'well sir, this may be the opinion of some men, especially those who have been the builders of their own name,—who like you have risen from obscurity and the dregs of society.'

'Do you mean to insult me in my own counting room?' said Peter angrily.

'I am but commenting upon your own text, and did not mean to give offence. You were boasting of making your own name, and certainly did but little while ago, give me to understand that your father was such a disreputable person that you would not openly recognise him, were he living. This was spoken so calmly, yet so firmly, that Peter could say nothing; and Henry Decker having succeeded in his wish of humbling his purse-proud relation, continued:

'My object in now coming to Boston is, as we are mutually interested, at least in the honor of the annexion, to show you this paragraph, and consult with you as to the steps necessary to be taken in the premises.'

Here Peter's eyes brightened up, and he began to show signs of being interested, and the scholar read as follows from the newspaper, which Peter saw to his surprise was a copy of the London Times.

'We learn that the recent decree of Lord Aylmer has left this ancient title without any lineal representation, his lordship having died a bachelor. The vast estates and title of this Earldom will, therefore, have to pass collaterally. It is not yet ascertained at the Herald's College who will inherit, but it is certain the descent will be to a remote branch, of which we learn there is no representation left in England. The family name is Bouillie, the origin being Norman. The line failing in the person of the late Earl, will have to reascend to a younger brother, five descents back, who, on account of some difference of his elder brother with him, for marrying beneath himself, quit England in disgust, and, it is known, went to the New England Colony, where he died about the time of the revolutionary outbreak, leaving heirs of his body. Some one descended from this Thomas Bouillie; if any in the male line shall be found by the College of Heralds, will succeed to the vacant Earldom. It is said the Lord Chancellor is pursuing measures to have the true heir brought to light, and that the primary steps usual in such cases, are already taken.'

Henry Decker having finished reading this announcement, cast his eyes upon the merchant, who had listened with evident interest, and who when he had done said,

'Let me see that paper, Mr. Decker. Ah, this name is spelled Bouille,' he said with a look of disappointment; 'your mother's was Bulley. At the first I thought you and my wife might be interested in this business. But the two names are very different.'

'In spelling, but not in sound. And nothing is more frequent than to find the orthography of old English names changed after their importation to this country.'

'Poh, poh! there is nothing in it,' said Peter, contemptuously. 'But where did you come by that London paper?' he asked, his commercial eye running over the 'Shipping' and 'Price Currents.'

'In our village is an English gardener, a very intelligent and respectable person, who has a London paper sent to him occasionally by a brother who is living there. He has always been so civil as to send me the paper after reading it; and last week as I was perusing this copy of the Times, my eye lit upon this paragraph, the reading of which gave me no little surprise, and excited in me some ambition to make an effort to climb to the promised distinction—for I am the only male heir to Thomas Bulley.'

'If this should be so, of which I do not believe a word, and the descent is in the male line, how, I want to know, my Lord Bulley, is my wife to benefit by it.'

'By elevation of rank. She would become a countess by right I think certainly in courtesy as being an Earl's sister! Besides, should I die without an heir, your eldest son would succeed to the title!'

For a moment Peter's head was giddy with the vision presented to his ambition and pride. The idea that his wife might become a countess, and his son a lord, dazzled him! But it was only while the titles were tinkling in his ears. The schoolmaster, in his threadbare coat before him, had first to become an English Earl before these dazzling dreams would be realized; and when he thought how little probability there was of that, he laughed with a sardonic aspect, and said contemptuously—

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‘This is all very well to amuse children with, Mr. Decker, and you had best go back and astonish your scholars with the tale. So long as Bulley and Bouillie are two different names, Henry Decker and an English nobleman will be two different personages.’

Thus speaking the merchant rose and was going out, when the scholar detained him:

‘I am positive the names are identical.’

‘But how can you prove your title to the Lord Chancellor?’ retorted Peter, scornfully. ‘I will have nothing to do with it.’

‘I shall have no difficulty if—’ Here the schoolmaster hesitated.

‘If what?’ growled the merchant, half guessing what was coming. If,’ continued Henry Decker, without regarding his chilly manner, ‘if I could obtain a loan of sufficient funds, say three hundred dollars, to enable me to take passage to England and lay my proofs before the proper court.’

‘I would have sworn *money* was at the bottom after all!’ snarled the merchant; ‘but I have no money to spare, Mr. Decker, and if I had, I have no faith in your pretensions.’

‘But—’

‘What security can you offer?’ he demanded with a malicious sneer.

‘None save that the chances of my success more than counterbalance the risk!’

‘I have no money to give away! If you want money you must go to them as can afford to heave it away on fools. You have no more chance of proving yourself heir to that dead lord than I have of being king of Congo. I have trifled away too much time with you, or rather you have trifled too much of it away with me, and I bid you a very good day *my lord*.’

Thus addressing him, he threw open the door of the counting room and stood by it until Mr. Decker came out. He then accompanied him to the door and bade him good day, adding:

‘I will not fail to remember your lordship to the countess at home, and especially to my son the hopeful Lord Isaac.’

Henry Decker took all the rudeness of the rich man, with that quiet dignity which consciousness of superiority made him feel, and without showing anger or cringing fear, calmly left the store of the India merchant.

He took his way directly towards the Probate Court for the purpose of examining its ancient records, where he was confident from the coincidence of facts studied in the Times paper, he should find his mother's name spelled differently from its present modern orthography.

He obtained access to the records he wished to examine, and after a long search as far back as the year 1764, and to his delighted surprise, he found the name of Thomas Bouillie as the executor of a will. An *e* was wanting to make the name similar to that in the Times. It now occurred to him that if Thomas Bouillie was of sufficient condition and estate to be appointed executor of a will, he might have had property, and left a will himself. At length after a long and laborious search he found such a will and appended to it in a good bold hand, the signature of Thomas Bouillie. On reading it, he saw that the testator declared himself, ‘of Aylmershire, England, Gent.’

‘This is clear enough,’ exclaimed the school-master. ‘This Thomas Bouillie was that brother of Lord Aylmer named in the paragraph in the newspaper. Now to prove myself his lineal descent. I am no lawyer, and have little means to pay one, nevertheless I must consult one; for though I am certainly his only living male descendant, I must prove the fact before the Chancery Court of England, for which, I shall not certainly apply to my purse-proud ignorant cousin!’

It so chanced that there was an eminent lawyer in Boston whose son during a summer's visit at a relations in the country, had been a pupil of Henry Decker. Of him he now thought, and knowing him to be as honest and upright as he was learned and able, he determined to call on him and lay the whole matter open before him. With this resolution, he left the Court of Probate, taking with him a brief minute of what facts he there gathered in relation to Thomas Bouillie, and was soon closeted with the intelligent lawyer he had selected for his legal adviser.

The reader who is sufficiently interested in the progress of the events of this narrative is referred for their result to the sequel of the present story, which will be found in chapter III.

### CHAPTER III. THE "POOR COUSIN," OR THE COUNTESS IN PROSPECTIVE.

The slumbering family pride and innate female ambition of the wife of the India merchant, when she was informed by him at night, of the business upon which her cousin had called at his counting room, was at once awakened; and so far from mocking with Peter the high pretensions of the poor scholar, she at once expressed herself sanguine of success.

'Why should'nt I get to be a Countess, I should like to know,' she said warmly, 'as well as other folks in America have done who have inherited titles? I always told you we ought to hold up our heads with the highes of the Otis's, and Quiney's, and Sears's, for I had come of a noble family.'

'All ever I heard of your nobility was, that you have had a great aunt that was first cousin to Sir—somebody,' said Peter, not a little vexed to find his opinion opposed.

'Yes, but we did'nt know *certain* about it. I *thought* it was a great aunt; but now as you say, my cousin says, it must have been my great grandfather, who was youngest brother to this dead Lord —, Lord who was it?'

'The Lord Harry for that matter,' retorted Peter kicking his boot off with vehemence, for this conversation took place as the couple were preparing for bed; if he had tried to gull me with the belief that he was heir to the British throne, you would in some way have managed to make out your relationship with the royal family.'

If Peter had not got angry, but had quietly argued the matter with her, she might have entered fully into his notions of the vanity of Henry Decker's hopes. But opposition only made her more determined to take up the position her husband opposed, merely from the spirit of contention which sometimes possesses loving wives.

'You are *low* in birth and breeding, Mr. Dalton,' she said passionately, 'and it is not to be expected you should have them high `spirations which elevate the minds of them as is born with some blood in their veins. I married beneath myself, I did, when I married *you!* I am sure if I ever should get to be a countess I should be ashamed to acknowledge *you* for my husband in English society!'

'The devil you would,' said Peter in great rage, and elevating the boot—jack, it was the turn of a penny that he did not let it fly across the hearth at her head which she was adorning with *papallotee* for the night. But it in time bethought the irratated husband that it would not read very well in the morning's paper, how that 'Peter Dalton Esq. East India merchant was bound over to keep the peace, having broken his wife's head with a boot—jack.' And Peter let the weapon fall, as his wife, said significantly:

'I guess you'd better.'

Here open war ceased, and silent sullen hostilities continued for the rest of the night.

The next morning while Peter was waiting for his breakfast, his wife entered with looks of pleasure and triumph, lugging in an old escrutoire which, after thrusting aside the plates from the breakfast—table she laid upon it with an emphasis. Peter looked up from the newspaper he was reading, with a surprised and enquiring glance at her, and then at the writing desk, and not a little gratified to find that this eruption was now new demonstration of hostilities; for since the last night peace had not been restored. But as Peter was always willing to hail and recognize the first signs of returning peace on his wife's visage, no sooner saw that she was smiling, and had evidently some important and pleasing matter to communicate, which a certain paper held in her hand was to aid, then he laid down his paper, and said in a cheery tone:

'Well, what now wife?'

(Here be it parenthetically recorded, that long—trained, old, broken couples, do not resort after a squabble, to a sort of treaty of peace, to mutual explanations, tender criminations, kisses and embraces, and the ten thousand loving endearments which signalise the 'making up,' of younger married folks, and which such seem to think is always necessary before things will flow on with their former unruffled current. Peter and his wife had had many a hard quarrel in their day, and five minutes after Peter would ask for a little more sugar in his coffee, as if nothing had happened; and in this wise way peace was restored without any foolish treaty. Let younger couples follow their example!)

'Well, what now wife?' asked Peter cheerily.

'You said,' responded the lady with a smile, and placing her finger on the packet of papers before her, 'that we

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had no claim at that lordship in London, because that name was spelt different from my father's! Now I knew I had in this old desk, some old letters, some of which grandmother said had been written by grandpa's grandfather to his wife. I have never had time or cared to read 'em, and so they have laid in the desk till now. But when you said if it could be proved that the family name was Bouillie, we might stand some chance, I thought of these letters; and here all the morning I have been looking them over, and what do you think I have found? That the name signed to all these letters is Thomas Bouillie! Now look for yourself, Mr. Dalton.'

Thus speaking the happy countess *in futuro* placed in his hands the packet of old letters. The merchant took them with a look between hope and surprise—for his ambition was awakened to be proved the husband of a countess. His quick mercantile eye went over the letters with rapid inspection, and after a few minutes silent examination of them; the signature contents, and marks of age, he rose from his chair with a hop, and turning a pirouette on his heel, sat down again. But he said nothing for the lapse of some seconds, and then exclaimed emphatically:

'Upon my soul, Mrs. Dalton, this begins to look like a pretty fair business operation! After all, your schoolmaster cousin may not be the fool I took him to be. This certainly looks as if it were likely to turn out a profitable speculation!'

'Then you think Henry will get it?' exclaimed Mrs Dalton delightedly. 'Oh! wont this be a triumph! I the first cousin to an English lord!'

'And if he should chance to die without marrying, our little Isaac will be a lord,' continued Peter, carried away by the glittering visions of greatness with which this discovery of the proper way of Bulley filled his mind.

'How I will crow over the aristocratic Mrs. —, and the proud-headed Mrs. —, and the haughty Mrs. General —'

'I think we will move to England!' said Peter.

'Oh would'nt that be heavenly!' exclaimed the Countess Appollonia clasping her hands and lifting her white blue eyes enthusiastically heavenward. 'Oh, we must ask cousin Henry to dine with us. Lord! I wonder what will be his title?'

'Lord Aylmer, the paper said.'

'And I the Countess of Alemare? How aristocratic! We must certainly have my cousin Henry to dine with us!'

'I shall have to loan him the money if I do,' said Peter suddenly looking very grave, as he always did when money was directly or indirectly the subject.

Here Mrs. Dalton's countenance also fell six degrees; for it there was any one who loved money next to the rich India merchant it was his wife. She was close, avaricious, and meanly parsimonious. Money was the means by which she and her husband had got into society; it was their title of honor; their testimony of worth in the world's eyes, to diminish it was in the same ration to fall. It was their escutcheon; and a knight would as soon have blotted out any one of the insigna of the exploits of his ancestors graven on his shield, as the pillars which supported his own name and rank, as Peter Dalton or his wife to consent to the withdrawal, without 'undoubted security,' of a single dollar from the pillars of their own respectability. As the nightly noble could point to his coat of arms for the ground of his pretensions to rank; so could Peter point to his bank books as the basis of his own!

'Mrs. Dalton's countenance fell, therefore, when Peter alluded to the appalling condition upon which they could purchase the honor of the future lord's company at dinner. She was silent a moment:

'Then he really has no money to go to England,' she at length asked scornfully;—for to have no money in her eyes was to be despicable. 'I did not think of that!'

'The money will have to come out of me, if we encourage him. He may or may not be the heir. He firmly believes he is; and I begin to be inclined to the same opinion. He will, therefore, being so earnest, find some other way of getting money. I will not risk it to him.'

'But if he should not be able to get it, then I might lose the chance of proving myself relative to this noble family,' said she, pride and avarice struggling together at her heart. 'It would be a pity to be noble and not have the world know it!'

'I should like it as well as you, wife, if I could bring it about without risking anything. It is a difficult matter to prove descent back five generations. He will have to take with him the strongest possible evidence; and that will cost him something to get beforehand! He will want at least five hundred dollars; and I positively, this matter aside, would not loan him five dollars to keep him out of the work house.'

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‘Nor would I, Mr. Dalton; for a man has no business to be poor and shame his rich relations! But then *if* it could be managed without our advancing any thing! But I don't see that it can! I wouldn't ask him to dinner.’

‘No—its best to let him alone! There may be a mistake all about the matter, and give once an invitation here, we shall never get rid of him; and so if there is nothing in this at least, we should be the losers!’

‘That's true. But I am sure there is no mistake! I always told you I was descended from a noble English family, and I know there is no mistake. Now, if Henry could only prove it all!’

‘There's the rub wife,’ said Peter emphatically.

‘I hope he'll get money and go to England,’ she said sighing as she thought of the little possibility there was of her ever being saluted by the agreeable title of Countess of Alemare. ‘I confess with you it would be a risk to advance it.’

‘I assure you I never loaned a dollar without security and I never will;’ said Peter with mercantile firmness ‘It is no way of doing business I assure you!’ and thus speaking the merchant rose to go the wharf. ‘Let us leave this matter with Decker,’ he said he was going out; ‘he'll find somebody to loan him the money. I think he had best see these papers, at any rate; they will help him and may drive him ahead to gain his object. I will take these with me, and find him and give them to him. It will show that I take an interest in his success and he may forget my refusing him the money.’

The foregoing communication has, perhaps, sufficiently illustrated the characters of the India merchant and his wife; it exhibits avarice and niggardly parsimony struggling with ambition of a distinction' which can only be purchased at a slight sacrifice of their sordid love of gold. But (to moralize for a couple of paragraphs) the same principle of action though on a scale immeasurably greater—the same narrow motives sway half mankind who that it may hold on the present world risks its hopes of one more glorious! who rather than sacrifice a little here to gain much there, hold on to their much gain here, and there sacrifice all!

On his way from his counting-room in the afternoon Peter met Henry Decker, who had first terminated a long consultation with his friend the lawyer, was now seeking his lodgings at the Elm Tavern.

‘Oh, ah, Mr. Decker,’ said the merchant blandly and taking him by the button familiarly; I am sorry that the hard times will not let me assist you in your views with a loan; but to show you that I am not indifferent to your success I have at your disposal certain papers, discovered by my wife, which I find establishes the identity of the name of Bulley with that of Bouillie. They were original letters of Thomas Bouillie my wife's ancestor.

‘I am greatly indebted to you,’ said Henry Decker after glancing his eyes over the letters and discovering that they would serve to strengthen the testimony he was accumulating.

‘If you succeed, I hope you will not forget my little assistance in this way,’ said the merchant.

‘I shall not fail to remember you,’ said Henry with ill-concealed irony. ‘I am happy to inform you that through the assistance of a friend I shall be able to leave for England in the first packet!’

‘Ah, indeed!’ exclaimed Peter with astonishment, and wondering how a man so manifestly a poor man could borrow a dollar any where. ‘Who has advanced you?’ he asked curiously.

‘Mr. — —,’ replied the scholar quietly, yet watching the effect of his answer upon the surprised and mortified visage of Peter.

‘What, the great lawyer?’

‘Yes; I went to the records of wills after leaving your counting-room and found there the will of Thomas Bouillie my ancestor with his name appended to it spelled after the English fashion. I then waited on Mr — and laid before him my claim and the facts I had gathered to substantiate it. He examined the papers and was so sanguine that I could prove my pretensions that —’

‘He advanced you the money.’

‘Most generously and freely.’

‘You did not show *me* papers and proofs. Mr. Decker, or I might *not* have refused you!’ said Peter apologetically. ‘All I had was a newspaper account and your own word that you was the man.’

‘It is of no consequence, Mr. Dalton, said Henry, not concealing the proud smile that mantled his fine intellectual face.

‘Then you leave in the next packet?’ remarked Peter sorry that he had not let him have the money; for as he had that day thought about his claim, the firmer was his belief that, if proper steps were taken that he might

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substantiate them; and now when he found that through the kindness of a stranger these steps were entered upon and the requisite money advanced he felt very sure.

To make amends for it he invited Henry to come and dine with him the next day; but the schoolmaster civilly declined, pleading an engagement to dine with his lawyer! Peter was vexed and after again reminding him that he had placed these important letters in his possession, he left him (Henry Decker first taking the leave) muttering that `he didn't believe Lawyer— would ever see his money again, and that in his opinion (Peter well knew he lied against his conscience) he did not believe any thing would ever come of it, and he was glad he had not risked his money like that fool Mr. —

The papers given Henry Decker, on being examined by the lawyer, proved of the last importance. They were he said of a character that would be, aided by collateral evidence in possession of Mr. Decker, admitted into any court in christendom as proof of the facts desired to be substantiated.

The third day after his first interview with his lawyer, Henry Decker had got ready all the legal documents necessary not only to prove the identity of Thomas Bouillie of Boston with the Thomas Bouillie the younger brother of the Lord Aylmer; but also the proofs of his own lenial descent from the Thomas Bouillie of Boston.

A few mornings after the wealthy merchant's last dissatisfactory interview with the poor schoolmaster, his eye which had been nervously watching for the announcement for the last two or three papers, lit upon the following paragraph:

`Sailed yesterday the ship Kentucky, Rogers, for Liverpool. Passengers, Henry Decker, Esq., and others.'

`Well he's really off at last,' he said with a long drawn sigh as if relieved from a state of suspense. He *may* get it, and then I think,' he added elevating his forehead, and trying to look like a gentleman (for he was only an aper.) `I rather think I shall hold up my head with the best of 'em!' And Peter Dalton took three strides across the breakfast room, and once more read over the name of his wife's cousin. For ten minutes the newspaper seemed to contain nothing else but `Henry Decker, Esq.'

`Well, wife he's off,' said Peter, Mrs. Dalton at that moment coming into the breakfast room in a flowery looking cap and with a novel in her hand; she having read in Godey's Lady's Book that the Countess of Blesington used sometimes so to make her appearance in a morning. Poor Mrs. Countess Appollonie Dalton Ale—mara! her head had been completely turned ever since her husband had told her cousin had succeeded in getting the money to take him to England.

`Gone! sailed to England!' she almost shrieked theatrically! `Let me see the place!' and she snatched the paper and fixed her eyes upon the printed announcement of the fact of her cousin's departure with intense inspection! She at length seemed to realize the truth and for a moment was quite overcome. She let the paper drop gently to the floor, sunk as prettily as she could, for her weight, for she was a fat body, into a chair and fanned herself with the novel.

`Oh, oh! this—this, oh! This is too—*too* exquisite!'

`Why wife, what now has got possession?' exclaimed Peter alarmed— ignorant man! not to know it was aristocratic to faint— and that all Countesses fainted! She sighed gently, blowed a little, and then recovered herself without having lost in the pretty experiment one tint of her fiery red visage.

`Oh, Dalton you will be the death of me! `wife!' call me no longer by such vulgar terms! call me `my countess,' Dalton.'

`My ninneniss!' roared Peter! `wait till your cousin gets to be a lord, which I think he will get to own an Indiaman first. It is true he has gone and I suppose has taken the proper papers with him! But I have been asking Mr. —, the English Consul about their lordships that have no heirs, (not letting him know my motive) and he has told me that the lord chancellor is made guardian by law of the Realm of all such `hereditaments,' as he called 'em; and that if no heir be found within a certain period the estates *escheat*, as he terms it, to the crown. Now as the chancery court representing the crown interest, is one party in this affair, in which Henry Decker is the other, it is in my opinion, pretty clear who wins! The court will have it all its own way, and will manage to throw such obstacles in the way to Decker's claim, that he will have to return defeated as sure as he is now saugine that he will succeed. The estates of this Lord Aylmer, as the consul told me, (for I asked him about them) cover almost a county and are immensely valuable; the deceased lord being accounted when he lived, one of the richest noblemen in England. Now, this is too pretty a farm, wife, for the king to give up, when he can take it as I can

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turn a copper, and send poor Henry Decker whistling for his ragged nobility. Therefore,' added Peter very decidedly, 'I am of opinion, your cousin, be he lord or lacquey, will get his trouble for his pains, and you will be about as much Countess as Betty the kitchen maid will be Mrs. Dalton.'

'A fine comparison, you make, sir,' roused up the offended lady; 'I would have you to know if I am not a Countess, I am not to be compared with a cook, sir! Mrs. Dalton! yes, I dare say, if I was out of the way she'd be liked to be Mrs. Dalton very soon, sir; for she's just low enough for such a low bred fellow's taste as you, sir!'

Thus speaking, the offended lady stalked out of the room with a lofty movement which was a sort of travestie of Lady Macbeth's tragic walk, even as her short dumpy figure travesties the majestic person of that queenly woman. Mrs. Dalton was truly wrathful; but her ire was produced as much from grief and disappointment, at the probable downfall of her castles in the air, as at Peter's introduction of Betty the cook, by way of illustration. But poor Betty was a very good vent to carry off her vexation and disappointment, and was therefore made serviceable.

From that day the subject of the lordship was not alluded to by either; though both were on the tip toe of expectation when they should get, by some means they knew not how, intelligence of Henry Decker's movements.

## CHAPTER IV. The Return.

The impatience of the wealthy India Merchant and also of the 'Countess Ale-mare,' increased as the time drew nigh, when judging from the length of their 'poor relation's' absence they might reasonably expect some news. The more the former reflected upon the difficulty of substantiating such a claim in the Lord Chancellor's Court, the more assured was he that he would (should he even be the true heir) fail of succeeding to the princely inheritance; while his wife grew more and more sanguine. Henry Decker had now been ten weeks away and of late Peter had been observed very attentively examining the London files.

'You have a ship expected into the Thames, Mr. Dalton, I suspect?' said a Central Wharf merchant who had observed him closely examining the files of the Times brought by the last arrival.

'No,' replied Peter starting and coloring as if caught doing something wrong; 'but I—that is, the state of the London market is very interesting just now.' And Peter smiled and half-bowed as he turned away to look at a New York paper.

This feverish interest to hear of the 'Schoolmaster' (for he expected any step taken in such an important matter would be made public and put into the prints) grew upon him daily, and made him so nervous that the words 'London' or 'England' which he chanced to meet with in any of the city morning papers made him start with a quicker beating of the pulse. His wife on the contrary, grew more and more confident every day, and committed a hundred ridiculous follies in anticipation of her cousin's success. One day Peter came in cross from having heard ill news from one of his ships, and as dinner was not ready he sat down grumbling by the centre table and began to turn over a book of prints. From the leaves a parcel of freshly embossed cards fell out and his astonished gaze was rivetted on the name,

'The Countess of Alemare, Collonade Row.'

'What in the infernal name is this?' he exclaimed addressing her 'ladyship' herself, who was reclining at her length on the sofa reading 'Byron.'

'My card,' she said slightly turning pale at his stern looks, but speaking with considerable confidence.

'Your card!' he repeated with indignant contempt; and taking them he tossed them into the grate and then by way of enforcing the act flung the book of prints after them! 'I wish your cousin had been at the devil! You are making a fool of yourself and of me too! Let me tell you once for all there is no chance for success. Lawyer — may whistle for his five hundred dollars. Now mark my word!'

'But,' interposed the lady with timid hesitation have you any doubts of Henry's being the heir?'

'I confess I have very little,' he said candidly after having made a short pause.

'Then whether he get it or not I am clearly discarded from this noble family of Alemare and it is becoming in me to assert my dignity. If he fails, it will not effect my descent; and I shall not be backward in letting some upstart people here in Boston know *who* I am! Not I!'

'They will set you down as a fool! Take my advice and let the matter alone! If your cousin succeeds you will have honor; if he fails the least you say about it the better.' Thus giving his opinion Peter sat down to dinner,—the Countess Appollonia Ale-mare in the sulks!

Week after week passed by and Henry Decker had been absent four months, when hearing nothing from him, and the lawyer of whom they would have inquired being a member of Congress and absent in Washington, they both quietly gave up the subject. Mrs. Dalton gradually settled down into her former state, content with her present condition, (though not without a second hope) and Peter ceased to examine the files of the London Times. His opinion was that Henry had failed and privately returned and gone back to his village and school to bury there his disappointment and disgrace. And he secretly cherished this hope.

At length when six months had elapsed and Henry Decker was almost forgotten, the merchant was electrified by opening his morning paper full upon the following paragraph:

'We learn by the London Times received by yesterday's packet that there is at present in England an American gentleman, who lays claim to the title and estates of the late Lord Aylmer. 'This person,' says the Times, is a well bred man and has a highly intellectual look, combined with a pleasing amiability of manners. He is said to be



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poor. His claims are reported to be very strong, and the Court which is engaged in examining his proofs of heirship will shortly decide upon the merits of his claim to succeed to this ancient title and vast possessions. We suspend our own full opinion, but there is more probability that the estate will escheat than pass in succession to the claimant.' 'We know something' adds the Boston paper, 'of the merits of the claims of this gentleman, having been informed of them some months since by his attorney here; and in our opinion as well as in that of this eminent lawyer, his claims to the succession are incontrovertible, and he can only be ousted by an act of flagrant injustice, by a tyrannical abuse of power.'

The merchant having read the paragraph to its close exclaimed emphatically,

'And to this abuse of power will he become the victim, just as I prophesied! Well, he has really gone into the lists with the Chancellor! He deserves credit for his perseverance. I am reconciled to myself now that it is clear that he will be ousted, for not lending him the money! He will come back penniless and I should never have seen a dollar of my money more! This paper says that the decision was to have been given in a few days. I may then expect Henry Decker back in the next packet, if he does not shoot himself, or can get money to pay his passage! It is just as certain, as the London paper hints, that his claim will not be recognized as that he will come to me when he lands to borrow ten dollars to take him down home to Framingham!'

Peter withheld the paper from his wife, for now that her Countess-mania had cleverly passed by, he did not choose to revive it; for he knew a spark would rekindle it.

He now watched very closely the lists of passengers on the arrival of any packet from England. But several weeks passed in fruitless expectation, when one morning as he was going down State Street, a Liverpool packet was telegraphed as being upon the beach beneath the lower light. The evening paper as he opened it in his counting room gave the following item of intelligence.

'The ship 'L'Abri,' twenty-five days from Liverpool, went ashore on— beach at day-light this morning. She will be lightened and got off without material injury. Her passengers will be brought up to town by a steamer that has been despatched to her. Passengers; Robert Eckhart, and lady; Henry Deland, lady and servant; B. A. Davis; Charles P. Dewitt; J. Drummond; Capt. Dresback, *Guards*; Mr. Hornbook; Mr. Ackerman; Mr. Decker; Mr. Flemming; George Robinson, bearer of Despatches; the Earl of Elliston; The Hon. Capt Crockford, British Army; Lieut. Blakeley, and twenty-nine in the steerage.'

'As I thought,' exclaimed the merchant so emphatically as to make all his clerks stare; 'he has come back as he went, or worse, for he had a debt on his shoulders he'll never pay. I knew it! I was as sure he would not succeed as I am sitting here! It is well I have not to lament the loss of five hundred dollars, as of my wife of her expected nobility. Not but I feel sorry for the loss of it too! It would have been a feather in my cap to be the husband of the cousin of a lord! It would have opened all the best society to us, and made Isaac and the children hold up their heads with the best. Besides, there was a chance of Isaac's inheriting! Well the thing's up now! Here's the schoolmaster come back again schoolmaster!' It must be he thought the printer has made a mistake in the spelling of the e. 'Now I hope Mrs. Dalton will rest content and tease me no more with her relationship! I shall perhaps have a visit from her cousin! but he don't get a dollar from me, I'll assure him. I wonder how he managed to pay his passage! There was quite a respectable lot of them too, and he came in the cabin! Poor and proud! But set a beggar on horseback he'll ride to the devil! The Earl of Elliston! Here's a true nobleman for you after all! though the schoolmaster didn't come back one. This will take off the wire edge of my wife's disappointment; it is something to be in the same city with a live lord!

A faint footstep interrupted the India merchant in the midst of his meditations and looking up he beheld standing before him Mr. Henry Decker! He had expected him, but he was taken by surprise as well as astonished at his boldness in coming unannounced, into the sacred inner counting room which the merchant was then occupying alone. The schoolmaster stood before him in proper person, holding respectfully in his hand the same seedy hat, and habited in the same thread-bare, greyish black suit. He had not changed a particle save that his complexion was browner and healthier from the sea-voyage, and his pantaloons something more worn in the knees.

'So, Mr. Decker you have come back,' said the merchant coldly; 'I just saw the announcement of your name among the passengers of the L'Abri.'

'Yes sir, I came in her! I hope you are well, sir, and my cousin Appollonia also,' said Henry humbly, and blushing withdrawing his hand which had held out to the merchant but which the other did not seem to see; for

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he kept his own in his pockets, and threw himself back upon the hind legs of his chair in a pompous way he had when he wished to repel undue familiarity.

'Mrs. Dalton is well,' responded Peter with an emphasis on the hyphenal designation of his better half, as if meaning thereby to resent the poor schoolmaster's familiarity. He deigned no reply to the inquiry after his own health.

'I suppose,' ventured Henry Decker, 'that you would like to know how I succeeded in my matter.'

'I have no need to inquire,' retorted Peter, eyeing significantly the threadbare suit of his wife's relation; 'sometimes eyes are as useful as ears.'

'Yes, sir,' responded Henry quietly sliding himself into a chair and placing his hat deferently upon his knees. The merchant stared. 'I hope you will excuse the liberty I take in sitting down unasked, Mr. Dalton,' he added, apologising for his freedom, 'but I have not quite got my land legs on yet, and I find it is quite fatiguing to stand on shore!'

'I dare say,' growled Peter devising in his mind some way of relieving himself of him. 'I am sorry you have not succeeded Mr. Decker; and now the result is as it is, you must acquit me of being unfriendly in refusing to loan you the money.'

'Oh, yes sir,' answered Henry.

'I presume you have not brought much back with you.'

'Expenses in England are very great, and my passage was high and I must confess it is pretty low with me just at this moment, he, he!' And the schoolmaster laughed as if he had said a very witty thing. But Peter could not see any thing in what he said to laugh at, and looked very stern and dignified.

'I hope you have got enough to take you to Framingham,' said the merchant loftily.

'Why, cousin—'

'I beg, Mr. Decker, that you will be so good as to drop that term altogether, interrupted the merchant severely and frowning a thunderbolt.

'I beg ten thousand pardons,' cried the schoolmaster hurriedly and seeming much mortified, 'but I quite forgot myself, Mr. Dalton.'

The merchant was mollified by the profound humility of the apology, and said kindly, or what he meant to be so,

'I should be glad to invite you home to tea but we are going out this evening.'

'Oh, it makes but little difference, I can amuse myself with the children,' said the schoolmaster meekly; 'you and coz—I mean Mrs. Dalton needn't make a stranger of me. I can find a book to read till bed-time!'

The merchant opened his eyes and suspected his ears! Did the 'poor cousin' mean to go home with him!

'By the by, England is a great country, Mr. Dalton,' suddenly exclaimed Mr. Decker in quite a self-complacent tone, as if there had existed the best understanding between them. 'The sea also is much wider than I had conceived, and the king is like any other man only a little portly like and well-fed. But this reminds me of my supper. The sea sharpens one's appetite amazingly.'

The merchant was confounded at this audacity of a 'poor relation,' and all too with such a meek look and deferential manner, fumbling his greasy hat between his knees and looking so awed and timid.

'This is the top-touch of impudence,' he said to himself; 'the fellow is without means and intends to *cousin* on me for tea and lodging, hoping I'll let him have money to get rid of him. But he'll find himself mistaken.— Not a dollar of mine will he finger.'

'You seem to have grown something fleshy, cousin, since I left,' said Henry Decker, interrupting his thoughts, and, as if getting bolder, he threw one leg across the other, and gave at the same time such a confident ahem for a poor man that the India merchant's astonishment and displeasure were complete. He rose up and said sternly,

'Mr. Decker, I am engaged and must go to my house. I have told you I cannot invite you to tea.'

'Oh, very well, I'll come and dine with you to-morrow, as I should like to see Appollonia before I leave town.'

Mr. Dalton it so happened was to give a dining party the next day to several India merchants, three or four aldermen and even the mayor was to be a guest. He therefore turned round to the schoolmaster and with decision commensurate with this circumstance, said,

'To-morrow I am to have a select party of gentlemen to dine, and it will be impossible for me to receive you.'

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It seems your voyage to England has not improved your modesty. I never was so annoyed, sir. I have little regard for people that invite themselves. I wish to lock my door and bid you a good day, sir.'

Here the merchant went out, and Mr. Decker, very meekly as became a poor relation rose and followed him, and slowly passed out to the street, while the merchant was giving some instructions to his clerk. In a few moments Peter came out, thinking him gone, and encountered him on the side-walk.

'I was waiting for you,' said the schoolmaster, quietly.

'The devil you were! I thought you had taken the hint I gave you.— Now once for all Mr. Decker, I do not wish to have you a guest at my house. I am used to better dressed men, rather! You presume too much on being a cousin of Mrs. Dalton. She would be mortified to own you as a relation and you know it! Once for all I do not want you at my house.'

'Oh, I am sorry to have incurred your displeasure, Mr. Dalton, indeed I am;' replied the schoolmaster abashed; 'I thought Appollonia might like to see me, as I have just got back from England. I've got some little presents for each of the children—they did'nt cost a great deal but coming from England, I thought they might be pleased with 'em.'

Peter was too close to buy toys for his children, but had no objection to other person's making them presents. The holidays were at hand and he had that very morning been importuned by them to buy them something. The word 'presents' spoken by the schoolmaster, therefore, vibrated not unpleasant upon his ear, and the idea to him that if they got these presents, it would be quite unnecessary for him to purchase any, and so much would be saved.

'Presents, ah? Are they pretty?'

'Yes, I think the children will like them. If you will permit me to call to-morrow some time I will bring them with me.'

'Oh, very well. Let me see—we dine at four—do not come then or near that hour. Say one o'clock; the children will then be at home from school and Mrs. Dalton will no doubt be glad to have you spend a quarter of an hour at the house, for relationship's sake.

The schoolmaster was plainly made happy by this permission, and cheerfully bidding the merchant good day he let him proceed alone towards his mansion, not a little gratified to get so cleverly rid of his poor relation, whom he began to believe had determined, through a persevering impudence which feigned humility, upon him for a home.

'Has Henry Decker been here with the children's presents?' inquired Peter on coming from his counting-room at three o'clock the next day.

'Yes,' said the wife scornfully, 'and pitiful presents they were too! A tin whistle for Isaac, and a sugar rooster for each of the other children!'

'The whole not the value of a fourpence, I dare say.'

'No: but what better could be expected? He had on the same thread-bare suit you said he had and looked as poor as a church mouse? He boasted too, he was acquainted with that great Earl the paper this morning says has taken rooms at the Tremont, as if an Earl would speak to him! He deserves to die in the poor house or in the jail, as he will, if this lawyer he owes sues him, for making me think I was a Countess!'

'Did he tell you that he could not prove himself the heir?'

'No, did he say so to you?'

'Not in so many words. The fact is I believe he is no more one of the Bouillies than I am a Mooley. I should like to have seen him when the Lord Chancellor gave him his quietus! But he has the impudence of a highwayman with all his seeming bashfulness, and would have spunged on me yesterday if I would have let him.'

'I had hard work to get rid of him to-day, and was afraid he would stay he lingered so—'

'Was you speaking of the poor gentleman who was here to-day, marm?' interposed the nurse who came into the parlor at the moment.

'Yes.'

'Well, he asks Thomas, he does, at the door, if there is to be a dinner party, and Thomas says yes. He then asks the hour, and when Thomas says four, he said he believed he would 'drop in,' he did, marm.'

'He did, did he!' almost screamed Mrs. Dalton.

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‘Let me catch him,’ retorted Peter, putting his thumb and finger significantly together if he had a man by the ear.

‘The imperence!’ murmured Mrs. Dalton with rage.

‘The beggarly pedagogue!’ thundered Peter.

Mrs. Dalton bolted from the room to give Thomas orders, on pain of losing his place, not to let him in; which orders Peter came out and reiterated with the additional penalty of having a broken head. Thomas of course promised faithfully and with that sincerity which became a footman who stood in fear of a broken head and dismissal from service.

The lady was at length composed again, for as she was already in full dress for her expected guests, it being half an hour to four, she was too discreet to let her face get flushed with anger; and taking a seat where she could conveniently superintend the preparations for dinner, while Peter at a mirror near by rolled up his ‘pudding’ into a new white neckcloth, she said rather in a soliloquy than absolutely addressing her husband,

‘I should feel proud enough if I could have this earl to dinner with the mayor and the rest. It *would be* a triumph! An earl and a mayor and three aldermen, besides half a dozen rich India merchants! But there is not time now—and it would require management to get him as the bigbugs will be fighting for him. But if he stays here long enough I’ll make a party for him, and it shall be a splendid one. He puts up at the Tremont. Dalton shall call on him and leave his card. I wonder if he has a wife with him. No, or it would have been mentioned. Dalton shall call on him first and I’ll secure him to my party. It is done!’ she said emphatically.

‘What is done, wife?’ asked the merchant, turning with surprise at the emphasis with which she closed her monologue.

‘That I give a party to the English Earl! It will make me the tip of the ton if I can get him to come. You must manage to get at him. Such great folks I know keep very close and are hard to get introduced to! But you must try and find out who is going to call, and call with him. I must have him here, that is settled.’

‘I am willing. I should like to know an Earl. I have never seen one.— It would be a grand operation to have him here to a party, I agree with you!’

‘Yes, and I am glad I thought of it. I shall then choose my society! I shant invite the —, nor the —, nor —, and they will be mad enough. Let them try and play aristocrat above me, and their children above my children. I am not going to be second to any of your Boston families!’

There was in Boston a coterie comprising several old families of high breeding and great refinement, whose names were associated with the ancient *noblesse* of the colony, and which added lustre to the literature of the day, from which the Daltons were to their infinite annoyance rigidly excluded; an aristocracy of *mind* united with birth, to which money could purchase no ticket of admission. It was to individuals of the exclusive set to which the merchant’s wife alluded.

Peter was about to make some remark which had reference to the probability of any of the guests soon dropping in, when a ring at the door bell announced, as a glance through the curtains told Mrs. Dalton, no less a person than his Honor the Mayor himself, accompanied by one of the Aldermen. Peter hurried and blundered at the tie of his neckcloth; Mrs. Dalton took a peep into the mirror and then seated herself in great state in a scarlet velvet arm chair which she filled, though her neck being something short, her head did not quite come up to the top of the back; and the next moment the distinguished guests were announced.

But we leave the account of this great dinner and its events to another portion of our story.

## CHAPTER V. THE INVITED AND UNINVITED GUEST, OR THE BANQUET AND BALL.

The dinner at Colonnade Row was given by the India merchant on the occasion of the formation of a new company for pursuing a certain mercantile enterprise, in which his guests were the co-partners. Peter as well as his Honor was largely interested in it, and as he was ambitious of being made its President, he resolved on giving the company a dinner at his own house, hoping much from the kindly influence of turtle and generous wines upon their suffrages.

The drawing room of the merchant was profusely ornamented rather than furnished. Crimson curtains faced with saffron-colored satin and bordered with a fringe of gold-silk, shaded the windows; the marble mantles were crowded with Chinese ornaments. India shells and oriental curiosities, presents to the merchant from the captain of his ships. The chairs were of the glossiest mahogany with red velvet seats. There were scarlet sofas with scarlet fringes, scarlet ottomans and scarlet foot-stools. The carpets were of the richest and gaudiest colors, and the mirrors were large and costly, and the pier-tables elegant and heaped with plate and china. There was every where the eye fell, a lavish display that told that the master of the house was rich! But taste, which goes as far as gold, there was none. All was gaudy, ill-arranged and gairish. But taste is one of the graces of refined education, and this Mrs. Appollonia Dalton could not boast of. Every object in the room was put there to speak the opulence of the owner. There was no needle work which every gentle-woman has in her parlor, no flowers in vases, or a geranium or a camilla in the window. There were no books on the centre table that showed they were reading people, and no pictures to show that they were people of taste and education. That well arranged elegance, that rich harmony of things, that just selection and adaptation which characterises the abodes of refined and well-bred rich people, was wanting here; and as the Mayor cast his eyes round he needed no foreign information to tell him that Peter Dalton and his wife had not always been accustomed to the luxuries of high-bred life.

'So, Mr. Dalton,' said the alderman, looking round after he had seated himself, 'you have very handsomely furnished rooms; very elegant, all this, very.'

'Yes, pretty well,' answered Peter, who, had he been a true gentleman, would have taken such a speech as an insulting one, and an evidence of the speaker's ill-breeding. But the alderman was by no means ill-bred; he knew 'his company,' and was assured Peter would take his remarks as praise. The merchant did so. And glancing round with a secret smile of proud satisfaction, as if he would pass off such things with lordly indifference he added,

'I, however, leave these things to Mrs. Dalton. Women like to make a glitter. I have only to write out the checks and hand them to her. She's my check-mate, Mr. alderman. Check-mate, your Honor. Did you hear, ha, ha, ha! A good one wife, eh?' And Peter again laughed at his capital pun, looked at the mayor who smiled, and at the alderman who laughed aloud and said,

'Excellent. You are a wit, Mr. Dalton.'

'Not much—I only keep my jokes for my friends,' responded Peter in admirable humor.

'Yes, Callers' have told me my rooms is furnished elegant,' spoke up all at once Mrs. Dalton, on whom the alderman's compliment had not been thrown away, and which she had been digesting till now; 'them mirrors is eight inches one way and five another bigger than them great French ones of Mr. Sears'.

'Indeed, madam!' repeated the alderman with well acted astonishment, and using his neck to take a second look at them. They are very tall!

'Yes. It is so pleasant to see one's whole length, from the shoes to the feather's when one is dressed, and know exactly how one looks when walking in the street.'

'It must be madam,' said courteously his Honor, whose eye the lady caught as if for him to reply.

Mrs. Dalton was then about to draw their attention to the beautiful picture on her rug, of Diana hunting a Doe, which she described as a young woman a-chasin' of a reindeer, when the street bell announced other guests.

With suitable ceremony the merchant and his lady received them as they were shown into the room by Thomas; and it being now four o'clock and all the company having assembled—save one of the merchants who sent an excuse for his absence—the drawing room doors were rolled back and dinner was announced.

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‘Your Honor will please escort Mrs. Dalton,’ said Peter, taking his wife’s fat hand and leading her to that gentleman, and the lady with suitable dignity took the mayor’s arm. Peter then waived in the other guests, standing in the door like a gentleman–usher, and followed last.

The table made a brilliant and glittering display, and the guests took their seats full of that pleasing expectation which characterises the sitters down to a good entertainment. In number, including the host and hostess, they were nine, with a tenth plate made vacant by the delinquent guest, who had sent his apology. The napkins were unfolded and laid upon the lap, and Mrs. Dalton had just began to help to the turtle soup, when the street door bell rang with an emphasis.

‘There is Peterman, now, go to the door Thomas!’ cried Peter with pleasurable expectation; ‘I thought he would get here if he could notwithstanding his note said business might keep him away altogether.’ And he was getting up from the table, to go out and meet him in the hall, when the adjacent drawing room door opened, and the ‘schoolmaster’ closely followed by Thomas entered to the surprise and consternation of Peter and his wife.

‘It makes no kind of difference my good man,’ said Henry Decker speak—to the footman who was trying to prevail upon him to turn back. ‘I can just take a plate with them, tho’ I have dined! I like company especially pleasant company.’

‘But the mayor is there and—’

‘I never dined with a mayor, and this is lucky,’ said the poor cousin with manifest pleasure. ‘Pray don’t hold me!’

‘I did not mean to let him in sir,’ said Thomas in a low voice apologetically to Peter as the latter came into the drawing room with the determination to thrust his relation out; ‘but as soon as I opened the door he pushed right by me and here he is got into the drawing room!’

‘How do you do cousin!’ said the schoolmaster, as pleasantly and self–possessed as if he had been an invited guest, and was only apologising for his delay; ‘I am just in time as I see the soup is not served!’

‘You infern—’

‘Oh yes, I know you said four o’clock! I never forget an invitation to dine! I am always fortunate.’

‘I told you sirrah, I was to have a private dinner.’

‘Yes—I distinctly remember! I prefer private dinners! Something so social in a private dinner! But I beg your pardon. I will not keep you here talking, as I see my cousin is looking anxious for us to take our seats, as the soup will cool.’

‘You are cool enough the devil knows,’ muttered Peter, who finding he could not mend the matter without an absolute *row*, and seeing that he could not otherwise be prevented dining with him, he thought it best to put a good face on the matter, and winked as much to Mrs. Dalton. The guests had not heard all that passed and really believed that this was some friend of Peter’s who was foolishly detaining him in the room while the soup was waiting to apologise for his tardiness.

‘Behave yourself, then, if you will thrust yourself here, and thank the company present that you are not kicked out of my house,’ said Peter sternly; and he led the way back to the table, and sullenly pointed to the vacant seat, but introduced him to no one.

Mrs. Dalton looked like a masked fury as the schoolmaster politely bowed to her, and then as he met the eyes of the guests inclined his head respectfully.

She was however gratified that he was dressed so well, and really thought he might pass for a gentleman, if people didn’t know who he was. And so Peter thought; and when they found he was unknown to all present they both felt relieved. But both did in their hearts, determine on revenge when opportunity should offer. No offence in their situation, could equal this. A poor relation to take such airs upon himself!

Having taken the liberty, Henry Decker now that he had secured a seat at the rich man’s table, quite dropped his ‘airs.’ He was once more the same humble, diffident, deferential, poor man! Soup was at last handed to him, and he took it bashfully, without lifting his eyes, and said to the waiter who gave it to him:

‘I thank you kindly, sir.’

He made no use of his napkin in the silver ring, and, taking it up, seemed to examine it with much speculation as to its possible use. The guests were too much occupied with their soup to give a second thought to the quiet gentleman in black, supposing his not being introduced owing to a forgetfulness on the part of the host. Their attention was drawn to him, at seeing him look up from his plate and suddenly, yet respectfully address their host

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as cousin.

‘Cousin Peter, I suppose you find it quite a contrast between living in this house, and that one-story black ten-footer you were born in! It must have been quite a change from the old pewter spoons to these silver forks! You’ve been a lucky man to get up in the world as you have, Peter!’

The guests started! Peter could have jumped down his own throat to have stopped his mouth; while Mrs. Dalton nearly exploded with rage. But what could they do? Wisdom and discretion they felt were the better part; and Peter said to his guests:

‘Oh, ah, I had forgotton to introduce my wife’s distant relative—a country schoolmaster!’ said Peter, as if he had just now recollected himself; ‘schoolmasters are sometimes very respectable persons, he, he!,

‘It is said John Adams and Dr. Franklin once kept a school,’ said Mrs. Dalton, wishing, now the secret was out, to gloss over the disreputable features of the relationship. ‘Mr. Decker, however is *not* exactly a *cousin* but only has the habit of calling me so, from our having been to school together when little children.’

‘It is pleasant to be thought to be related to rich folks, you know,’ said Peter trying to laugh, apologetically addressing the mayor; but at the same time thoroughly astounded at his wife’s lie, told so directly in the face of what he had just before acknowledged. ‘A poor man, your honor,’ whispered Peter to the mayor, ‘that sometimes drops in upon us, when he comes to town. He probably did not know I had gentlemen to dine with me.’

‘He seems to be a very inoffensive person,’ said Alderman Maddox, who had overheard the apologetic whisper.

‘Oh, quite so. Perfectly harmless,’ repeated Peter patronizely. ‘His only fault is he is poor.’

‘A very common crime among schoolmasters, I think,’ said, with a laugh Jacob Hicks, a grocer and shipping merchant, who was supposed to be very rich.

Dinner now went bravely on, amid the clashing of knives and forks, the clattering of plates, the popping of corks, the gurgling of decanted wine, the flurry of servants and the compound movement of nine pairs of jaws talking and eating at once. They were in mid-dinner, and no farther notice had been taken of the poor schoolmaster, who quietly ate what was set before him, not forgetting to thank the waiter very politely and gratefully, and looking as if he was greatly awed (as Peter thought) at the great people he had got amongst. Seeing him so, the India merchant felt his self-love healed, and felt disposed to be generous and forgive him, and was about to put some condescending question to him about ‘his school in the country,’ when as fate would have it, the schoolmaster took up a silver tankard of water that by some means was left near his plate, and seeing a shield engraved upon it, said innocently:

‘I didn’t know you’d got to have a coat of arms! well this is being aristocratic! They said down country, cousin Appollonia, you were among the first in Boston; but I didn’t know you’d got to this.’

Mrs. Dalton stamped one foot with vexation under the table and looked as red as shame and anger could make her. Peter looked daggers of displeasure at him, and a suppressed smile was seen to steal over the features of more than one guest; while Henry Decker became an object of special interest to every one. The mayor thought he saw in his countenance an appearance of quiet gentlemanly refinement that by no means harmonized with his rude language, and curious to know something of him, he addressed him a common-place question. Hitherto the schoolmaster had not been addressed either to the host or hostess, and with the corresponding look and tone and language of a poor country pedagogue, who felt awkwardly his position, and had striven by saying something to relieve himself. But at the question of the mayor there was an instantaneous alteration, as surprising as it was sudden. He threw aside his humble abashed manner, as if it had been a cloak assumed; his head became manfully erect; his fine dark countenance beamed with blended courtesy and intelligence, and as he politely and gracefully replied to the mayor, he sat in the presence of all the guests a gentleman confessed! Never was such a transformation! They forgot the thread-bare costume in the *man*, and each exchanged glances with each other, expressive of their mutual surprise and pleasure. The change was visible even to the prejudiced eyes of Peter and the hostess; but *they* wondered, indignant how a ‘poor man,’ *dare* put on such high airs at a rich man’s table and in such a presence. The question put to the poor schoolmaster was a commonplace one in reference to the adventures of youth. Henry Decker in reply, held his honor, and all the guests for tea minutes delighted listeners to an eloquent dissertation upon the subject, pleasingly illustrated by anecdotes, well told and appropriate, at the same time charming them by his refinement of language and captivating manner of speaking. When he had done, the mayor and the rest expressed their gratification with such genuine admiration that Peter and his wife thought they

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were not educated enough to comprehend all he said began to think that the schoolmaster was something after all; and the former thought, as the mayor had noticed, him, he himself could do so, without disgracing himself. He therefore, waiting a pause in the conversation, condescendingly invited him to take wine. But the mayor had just solicited the same courtesy and Mr. Decker declined Peter's invitation with a cool politeness that chilled the merchant and made him feel himself at his own table inferior to his thread-bare guest. The conversation in which the other guests joined, was continued for some time (for the desert was now on the table) on the subject of education, and the public schools of Boston, when the mayor chanced to refer to a school system on the new plan lately organized in London of which he had heard.

'Yes,' said Henry Decker, 'I have examined this plan, having recently visited the school of which you speak.'

'You have been to England then?' responded his honor with a little surprise.

'I have been only two days back. I had some important business, which took me there last year, and I returned yesterday in the packet *L'Abri*.'

'Ah, I had thought you had just come up from the country,' said his honor looking towards Mrs Dalton, who quickly turned her head pretending to say something to Thomas, who stood behind her.

'The *L'Abri*! She was the ship that got ashore on the lighthouse beach,' said Alderman Maddox.

'And the same one in which the Earl of Elliston came passenger,' said the mayor. 'Did you chance to see much of that nobleman, Mr. Decker while on board?'

'I had no particular conversation with him,' answered the schoolmaster quietly, as if he thought he was not sinking any lower in their estimation even in frankly confessing he had come fellow passenger with a nobleman and had not talked with him.

'I expect noblemen choose their own society,' said Mrs. Dalton somewhat sharply. 'Has your honor seen the earl?'

'No madam, I have not yet had the honor, I understand he is at the Tremont House, and I shall not fail to wait upon his lordship, and extend to him the courtesies of the city. The title is of an ancient and powerful family, largely concerned in agriculture, and some of the name have distinguished themselves both in the field and the forum.'

Mrs. Dalton now fidgeted till she drew her husband's attention, and then signified to him by a wink, that he must speak about the proposed introduction. Peter understood her, and said with a slight degree of hesitation:

'What time does your honor think of calling on the earl.'

'It is uncertain. I shall try and drop in in the course of the forenoon,' said the mayor.

'I should esteem it an honor, if you do not object, to call with you,' said the India merchant.

'I have no doubt his lordship would be most happy to see you, Mr. Dalton,' said his honor, 'but I fear I shall have to decline the pleasure of your company. I shall only make a formal official visit,' and the mayor courteously smiled and bowed, as if he had dismissed the subject.

'I shall, probably, call upon the earl, cousin and will be most happy to give you an introduction,' said Henry Decker, with an assurance and freedom, as if, thought Mrs. Dalton, he had been hand in glove with lords all his life.

Peter wanted the introduction, and wished to have it under good auspices. He did not think that he now proposed the best he could obtain, and politely, to the eyes of others, yet contemptuously, as he meant it should be to his eyes whom he addressed, declined the offer, saying:

'You are very kind, Mr. Decker; but as you will probably go down to the country to-morrow, I will not take your time and so delay your departure.'

'Oh, not at all; I shall remain in the city some weeks, said the 'poor cousin' in a careless manner.

Mrs. Dalton rolled up her eyes, and Peter swore inwardly that if he came near his house after that day he would shoot him!

'He will of course see me if I call alone,' ventured Peter to the mayor

'Of course, Mr. Dalton, and doubtless feel flattered by the attention.'

Peter and his wife interchanged glances of triumph, and the lady soon after rose from the table and took her leave, giving her 'poor cousin' a terrible look of mingled rage, pride, scorn and contempt, as she swept by towards the drawing room, to the door of which she was escorted by the gallant alderman Maddox. In a few moments afterwards Henry Decker rose and took a polite leave of the guests and a very deferential one of Peter who felt not



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a little relieved when he heard the door close behind him, which by the peculiar `slamb' he knew was by his wife's hand!

`A very intelligent and well bred man, your friend Mr. Decker is,' said the mayor.

`A scholar and a gentleman,' said the merry alderman Maddox, tipsily; `let us drink his health and wish him a better coat!'

`The next hour was devoted to discussion of the mercantile affair that had brought them together and Peter to his great gratification was chosen President of the board. It was decided by them, before breaking up, that suitable honors should be paid to the noble English guest then in the city, and that their ladies must give parties for him.

This decision was overheard by Ms. Dalton, and she resolved to be foremost with a party, for reasons already given in a former part of our story.

## CHAPTER VI.

At twelve, or little before that hour, the next day the wealthy Peter Dalton was seen making his way up the granite portico of the Tremont. Arriving at the office he promptly inquired of the Deacon in a loud tone, that all might hear, 'it the Earl of Elliston was in!'

'He is! but there goes his Honor the Mayor now to call on him.'

'I will then just go up at the same time,' said Peter, hurrying after this dignitary whom he saw going up stairs.

'Pardon me sir,' said Olmstead in his most courteous and polite manner, 'but his lordship has sent down word that he is at home to-day only to the mayor if he should call. You can leave your card sir.'

The India merchant growled as he did so, and as he went away began to think about putting his name up for the next mayoralty, if it gave a man such privileges; for the mayor was not a quarter so rich as he was! The mayor, whom, leaving Peter to grumble his way home, we will follow, was ushered to the door of a large, handsome apartment, one of the *chambres distingues* of the Tremont, and announced by a servant in plain blue livery who stood in attendance.

'I am happy to see you, Sir, and feel honored by your kind attention,' said a well formed, dark complected man, about thirty-eight years of age, with a fine intellectual countenance, laying down a book and coming forward with a hand extended. The mayor was about to take it when he started back. A smile on the other's face seconded his surprise:

'Mr. Decker?' he exclaimed half in doubt.

'Yes,' answered the nobleman smiling.

'And *not* the Earl of Elliston?'

'Both, sir. I was Mr. Decker yesterday, (for I chose to be) to-day I am what I truly am, Lord Aylmer, Earl of Elliston.'

'I must confess, myself mystified! Yesterday I dined with you, and you were said to be a poor schoolmaster, now I find you to be Lord Elliston.'

'I owe you an explanation! But here now enters a gentleman who will himself explain.'

And the mayor turning beheld familiarly entering, the Hon. Mr. — who had been Henry Decker's lawyer, who being called upon by the Earl in a few words explained what is known to the reader of the claims of Henry Decker, and what is *now known* to the reader of his success in substantiating them. Mr. Decker, or rather Lord Aylmer, then in a lively manner, informed him of his connexion with the Daltons, of their pursepride; of his interview with Decker in his counting-room; and added,

'You will readily appreciate how I enjoyed, in my cousin's ignorance of my success, the opportunity of letting him show his true character, which the dinner of yesterday held out to me. I felt that I owed him a return and think now I have nearly paid him. But I have got to have the full bent of my humor upon him. My cousin hinted, when I took the sugar plumbs to the children, that she should give the 'lord' a party; this was to show me how high she was in society. Mr. Dalton will probably call on me, but I have arranged to have his card sent up to me, and then will follow the invitation, which I shall not fail to accept. I must take care that the poor cousin and the English lord are not one and the same before them!'

The gentlemen were highly amused at the whole affair, and the mayor promising to keep the secret, congratulated Henry Decker on his accession to his title. He also commended him for his admirable tact at the dinner. While they were speaking, the servant entered with Peter's card.

'I shall ere to-morrow night get a ticket of invitation to a party at his house,' said the Earl. 'I am too well acquainted with my cousin if I do not have it to-night, as soon as she knows Mr. Dalton has left his card.'

While Lord Alymer was dining at evening with his friend the attorney, true to his prognostication, a card from his cousin Appollonia was handed to him. He read as follows: Collonade Row, No.—, — *Friday Afternoon*.

Mr. Peter Dalton and his Lady most earnestly request the high honor of his lordship's, the Earl of Elliston's noble company at a sworree to be given by them in his honor Tuesday evening next.

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P. S. Commence at 9 o'clock, and *very select*.

To a man of satire and humor like Henry Decker, the invitation was highly gratifying as well as sufficiently amusing. He had lived a poor man, but he was a scholar by education and native refinement had made him a gentleman. He had always felt his poverty, and he had been keenly sensitive to his treatment by his cousin and husband. But the restraint of poverty was now gone and he could smile, laugh and be witty, as if he had never been in humble circumstances; so soon does a man change with his circumstances; or rather how do circumstances make a man show or conceal his true nature. A pleasanter, wittier or more humorous gentleman, courteous and dignified withal, as became his high rank, the Mayor and the Honorable lawyer thought and said that they had seldom met with. Poor Peter Dalton and his poor wife! They had got themselves into very bad hands!

The next day Mrs. Dalton saw a plain carriage drive to the door, a footman in livery ring and leave a card, when the carriage drove off. Thomas came in bearing a note on a salver.

'It has a cost-of-arms on the seal!' she exclaimed, seeing an Earl's coronet on the seal. She tore it open in great flutter, and out fell a card. It was that of the Earl of Elliston. Beneath it was written, simply the words, 'Invitation accepted.'

'Short, but this I dare say, is aristocratic,' she said with unbounded delight! and she began to feel how she should lead the ton!

Tickets were sent every where to the houses of the rich and great; and the Dalton party was the talk of the rich parvenue portion of society. At length the expected night came, and by ten the rooms were filled: for it was understood the English lord was to be there. Mrs. Dalton was in a fever of expectation. So was the India merchant, whose impatience, however, was restrained by the mayor, who was present, who kindly invented a score of excuses for his lordship's delay. At length he was announced. Mrs. Dalton pressed forward from the crowd of dancers, to her post where she received her visitors. Peter pressed forward to meet him, wiping his forehead, which had been covered with perspiration all the evening at the idea of speaking to and entertaining a lord.

'The Earl of Elliston!' announced in tones that showed that Thomas did not have a lord to announce every day.

Mrs. Dalton stretched her neck and stood a-tip-toe, and trembled with vanity and triumph. The crowd retired to make way for his lordship to present himself to the hostess. He appears in full view!

'That infernal poor cousin of my wife's has thrust himself in here as I expected!' exclaimed Peter, 'but I see he has had the grace to get a new suit of clothes!'

'Mercy! That Henry Decker here as I live!' murmured the next lady as she saw him; Oh, how mortified I should be if he should come up and speak to me and the Earl just coming behind him!'

Henry Decker advanced with great dignity and grace directly to the hostess and bowed low! Peter Dalton was hurrying with indignation to see him stepping in before the lord whom he was popping his eyes out of his head to discover behind the schoolmaster, and was advancing sharply, to thrust him aside, and Mrs. Dalton was turning her back to him in contempt, when both were electrified by seeing his Honor the Mayor approach him and salute him aloud with the title of 'my Lord!' and then turning round to Mrs. Dalton, says,

'Allow me to present to you our city's noble guest, at this present *yours*, Lord Aylmer, Earl of Elliston!'

Dear reader! we have no more to add. Pen cannot increase, imagination cannot conceive, truth hath not language to utter, the overpowering, overwhelming absolute confusion, consternation and horror—(yes horror is the expressive word) of Peter Dalton and his wife at this announcement! The lady shrieked and Peter swore! and the company was thrown for a few moments into the most mystified confusion! But things resumed their course again; the music and the ball went on; and Lord Aylmer was the lion of the hour; but something to say, rather, had Peter Dalton and his wife have had the honored Devil for a guest that night, than Lord Aylmer, Earl of Elliston.

In conclusion we will add that Lord Aylmer now resides on one of his estates in England, and that he is recently married, (out of spite we think) and that 'Isaac' has no chance of succeeding to the inheritance.

Having so publicly denied the relationship to the poor 'schoolmaster,' the Daltons could not *now*, to the lady's intense mortification, acknowledge it without shame, even for the *eclat* of being related to an Earl! Mrs. Dalton has never forgiven herself, therefore, and we seriously fear her life will be shortened ten years, through vexation, she having lost much fat already; nevertheless it is a solace to her to reflect that she is, after all, first cousin to an

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Earl though the world may not know it; save that they get the information by means of our story; before ending, which we would seriously warn all wealthy, self-made Lane Davy's 'sons' and *other* rich folks, not to treat with disrespect a 'poor relation,' because he carrieth a seedy hat and hath thread-bare habiliments. *THE END*