BAFFLED SCHEMES.

A Novel.

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CHAPTER I.

A NIGHT AT WYCKOFF HALL.

Wyckoff Hall was the name of a large, luxurious, old-fashioned mansion, built of dark red stone, that stood many years ago delightfully situated, on the east bank of the Hudson, about forty miles from the city of New York. It had been the residence of a jovial old bachelor, and was a place noted for hospitality and good cheer. But on the night with which this story opens Wyckoff Hall was gloomy enough. Its owner was dead.

All the inmates of the mansion had retired to rest, with the exception of one gentleman, who, though he proceeded to his room, had no thought of sleep. A decanter of brandy and a box of cigars had been brought up to him. He carefully closed the window-blinds, adjusted the curtains, and lit several candles. A bright lamp was already burning, but the room seemed dim to him. He glanced at himself in a mirror, and turned hastily away with a shudder. His face was ghastly pale, his eyes wild, his hair disordered. His best friends would scarcely have recognized James Graham, the cool, calm, gentlemanly New York banker.

The night, that had hitherto been calm and fair, began to be vexed with the presages of a rising storm. Dark clouds hailed reached the zenith, and the fleet couriers of the coming gale shivered the mirror-like surface of the river and smote the bare trees. Graham heard a peculiar, solemn wail in the wind as it rushed through the wide, old-fashioned chimney. It seemed to chant distinctly, "Murderer! murderer!"

"Confound these nervous fancies!" he muttered, and, pouring out a tumblerful of brandy, swallowed it at a draught. He lit a cigar; it did not "draw" easily; he dashed it down with an execration, and took another. He then proceeded to remove his garments, and clothe himself in entirely different attire. There was a small log fire on the capacious hearth; into it he threw the clothes of which he had divested himself, and, piling fresh wood thereon, stood and watched them burn, with satisfaction.

He drew his chair to the table, and, opening a writing-desk, wrote to his wife in substance as follows:—He and his friend, Mr. William W. Moore, a merchant of New York, had come up to Wyckoff Hall, as Mrs. Graham was aware, to attend the funeral of its owner, Mr. Wyckoff. The will of the deceased had been read that day. To his intense astonishment, he found that Mr. Wyckoff had bequeathed the bulk of his fortune, amounting to nearly six hundred thousand dollars, to Mr. Moore and himself, with a distinct provision that in case of the death of either of the devisees leaving his co-devisee surviving, the entire property was to go to this survivor. Thus it had chanced, as Mr. Graham triumphantly summed up, that all of the late Mr. Wyckoff's wealth was now his own. The will was duly executed and attested, and he would take immediate steps to have it admitted to probate, and enter at once into possession of the property.

The cold perspiration stood on Graham's forehead as he finished the letter, and his lips were utterly bloodless. He had narrated the events, in the main, correctly, but he had omitted one circumstance,—Mr. Moore had not fallen from the river bank accidentally. Graham had deliberately shoved him off, as they two were walking there in
he sprang from the bed and paced the room wildly. Again and again he drank the fiery liquor, but he could not stifle his causes of terror. "Cowards die -

"Men of spirit never die!"

"Some men die twice," said he. He felt as if he had murdered his victim, and it would have wrecked him in Caligula's eyes.

He was smitten with the mous, and he had lately endured the terri-

"I have seen worse," said he. "But I have never seen a man die the way Harry Moore died."

"The deed in the silent watches of the night. He even recol-

"The night was long, and the wind's sad refrain, "Ev-

"guna droma! My God! what a book to read this night!" He flung himself face downward, on the bed, and buried his head in the pillows. He was smitten with the agony of remorse.

James Graham's commercial career in New York had been, apparently, successful. His family, consisting of but his wife and an only son, lived with every appliance of wealth at its command. But within the last eight months, he had undergone a change of speculation, and they had all disconsolately failed. His losses were enormous, and he had lately endured the terri-

"It's a new life, and I'm ready to start it over again," said he.

He led the life of Dampoles. Unpredictable, then, was his delight at finding himself the heir of a fortune. He was not a speculator, but he knew what it was to have a fortune. He walked over fires.

"I'll make a name for myself," he said. "I'll let Mr. Wyckoff's will. But he had many schemes, and he had recently endured the terri-

"He has passed a very pleasant night, and I don't wonder."
lying on the sofa, but, as the conductor ten-
lucky brat," "the old story," etc., were some
brakeman, who had been fortunate enough
now.

thing, Mr. Moore?

she asked,

open. Ier own eyes

perfectly quiet, with its blue eyes wide

conductor seemed considerably embarrassed

for a considerable distance back, thinking

train at once, and had the track searched

upon the rear platform.

meant to have carried away, and stepped

with a small reticule, which perhaps she

had left the child lying on the seat, together

had reached the last station, the woman

about her appearance, except a blue veil

Hartford, was a respectably dressed and

that among the passengers who had left

Six

enquiredi the conductor.

seemed much abashed as every one turned

crowd that, drawn by curiosity, gathered

deavoring to make his way through the

gentleman-looking little man, was

due, they would have cut the child as it lay

perfectly quiet, with its blue eyes wide

open. Her own eyes filled with tears,
as she asked,--

What can be done with the poor little

thing, Mr. Moore?"--

"It must be sent to a Foundling Asylum,
or Almshouse, I suppose."

"Almshouse! It ought to have some

nice, careful woman to take charge of it

now.

"Molly's the woman for that!" enthuzi-

astically exclaimed a pleasant-looking

brakeman, who had been fortunate enough
to gain an entrance to the room. He

seemed much abashed as every one turned
to look at him, but endeavoring to appear

uncornered, and ludicrously falling, he

emphatically repeated his statement.

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CHAPTER III.

A WOMAN OF THE WORLD.

Mr. Wyckoff's will was duly proved, and Mr. Graham came into possession of the entire estate. His first act was to advertise the Hall for sale. The servants had now all left, and the house was shut up and deserted. He succeeded in obtaining a purchaser in the person of a Monsieur Auguste Franchot,—a jolly old Frenchman, who had acquired an immense fortune during twenty-two years of an assiduous business-life in the West Indies. He was a bachelor, and, although it was whispered that the elderly but accomplished Miss Villiers, who bloomed a perennial belle in West Indian society, had laid a vigorous siege to the French millionaire's heart, and had, in fact, made him a love offer of her hand, he had yet escaped the "hymeneal noose." He bought Wyckoff Hall for the rather curious reason that Mr. William Moore had there met his death. He expressed the greatest affection for the unfortunate Moore, and the untimely grief at his untimely fate; and the foundation of this sentiment was the singular one that Mr. Moore had won the love of, and married, Miss Ellen Somers, a young lady whom Franchot, when a comparatively young man, and resident in New York, had madly loved and wooed. The fair Miss Somers had preferred young William Moore, a handsome young collegian, who had carried her maiden heart by storm, to the elegant and vivacious Frenchman. Young Franchot, in the vehemence of his Gallic nature, had given himself up to despair, on his rejection, and attempted to come to a rational conclusion; for a smile, not pleasant to see, lit up her wrinkled face. She rose and drained her glass, exclaiming, "It shall be done, or my name's not Maggy Jarvis!"

"Ah! no, no; not relatives, but dearest friends. I loved them both like brothers," said Mr. Graham. "I would have made them rich," he added.

At these words Mrs. Jarvis became all interest and attention.

"Yes," he continued, in a mournful voice, "my money is all—what you call it?—money," which Mrs. Jarvis supposed he meant cash.

"But they have a child!" he suddenly exclaimed. "Ah, they have a child! I will leave the son of such adorable parents all to you, Madame Jarvis!"

Mrs. Jarvis was about to speak, but checked herself. A sudden thought flashed upon her; she determined not to correct the Frenchman in the error he was under. "To a noble mother," he continued, "I shall weep all the nights," and, bowing, he hastily retired.

Mrs. Jarvis sat looking at the fire long after her visitor had departed. She seemed sunk in profound reverie. To assist her meditations she had recourse to her bottle of gin. For several hours she sat, sipping her potion and pondering over the fire. Suddenly, she started. She had come to a rational conclusion; for a smile, not pleasant to see, lit up her wrinkled face. She rose and drained her glass, exclaiming, "It shall be done, or my name's not Maggy Jarvis!"

Mr. Wyckoff took up his abode there with a numerical salutation, and drained his glass, exclaiming, "It shall be done, or my name's not Maggy Jarvis!"

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Mr. Wyckoff purchased Wyckoff Hall. He renewed his acquaintance with several of his old friends in New York, and sent pressing invitations for whole families to visit him. The house was thrown open, and jollity and mirth reigned in the quaint old house by the river bank. The wife of Mr. James Graham was a "very superior woman." She was endowed with more than ordinary intellect, was large and stately, and might in younger years have rivaled the Queen of Scotland in the grace and dignity of her bearing, in the slight haughtiness in her mien repelled familiarity. She was a woman more feared than loved. Her husband stood in secret awe of her, although he did not own it even to himself. The truth was, she ruled her household as completely as ever master his slave, but with a dominion so insensible that he never felt the slightest pressure of her control.

When Mr. Graham was a young man, junior partner in an attorney's firm (in which Mr. Wyckoff had been principal, and William Moore counsel), and possessed of brilliant business talents, Helen Vincent determined that he should be her husband. She asciliated him to her own vanity and the brilliancy of her conversation. Observing this, she had suddenly become cool and reserved, thus infusing his passion. In a word, she succeeded, in a marvellously short time, in bogging down his feet. She had made him an excellent wife, and their union had been happy enough. Mrs. Graham was perfectly accustomed to be the mistress of her husband's affairs, and if a woman's tact and skill could pull him through his difficulties, he was safe. She was an ambitious woman, and the thought of descending from her present position of wealth and influence was unendurable. She had carried them, through the last few months a sickening anxiety beneath her smooth white brow. But no fault had been more brilliantly attired in the thronged saloons of fashion. A more constant attendant, and none had claimed her heart's more by the liveliness of graceful wit. To such a person the acquisition of Mr. Wyckoff's large fortune was simply an event of exquisite delight. Her joy at the reception of Mr. Graham's letter, acquainting her with the fact already related, was intense. Such a combination of fortunate events,—for such she termed them,—the death of Wyckoff and the drowning of Moore, was, she declared, unparalleled.

In spite of the exultant tone of her husband's letter, Mrs. Graham fancied that she detected an air of reserve. "Is he deceiving me," she thought, "in the extent of the-"
property? Absurd man! I could easily find out.” She wrote, urging him to hasten home.

That odious, silly Mrs. Fairfax will now perceive whether her kind conjectures as to our impending ruin are correct,” thought she, in triumph. She took pains to call upon that lady in the course of the afternoon, to inform her that she was about to completely refurnish her residence, and to solicit her company and judgment in the selection of velvet carpets for the drawing-room. Mrs. Fairfax was only too ready to comply, with rage in her soul, taking with her daughter Jessie, a pretty little girl of six.

Mrs. Graham stopped at one of the magnificent jewelry establishments that enrich Broadway, and selected a very costly diamond bracelet. Mrs. Fairfax looked on in wonderment.

"Mr. Fairfax,” she thought, "must really be mistaken about Mr. Graham's difficulties. I believe he’s been making money.”

Mrs. Graham’s taste was extremely fastidious in the matter of carpets. Several that Mrs. Fairfax, who indulged, after the manner of her sex, in hyperbole, pronounced "the loveliest things she had ever seen in her life,” were immediately rejected. Mrs. Graham launched the most deadly missives at her foes (whom she had that moment sweetly kissed) with a radiant smile, and in her lowest, gentlest, and most melodious accents.

CHAPTER IV.

VINCENT GRAHAM.

The only child of Mr. and Mrs. Graham was a son named Vincent—his mother's maiden name. He was, at the period at which we have now arrived—seven years after the death of Mr. Wyckoff—about fifteen years old, and gave promise of being a noble young fellow. He was tall for his age, with a noble bearing. His manner was as great as his looks. Vincent had that moment sweetly kissed) with a radiant smile, and in her lowest, gentlest, and most melodious accents.

Threw on his clothes as expeditiously, in fact, that he was suffociously dressed before the robber had reached the top of the long flight. He then sat quietly down to determine the best course to pursue. A large revolver, of the Colt patent, was presented him by a friend, who was a wholesale dealer in guns and other warlike paraphernalia—had he, in boyish pride, hung loaded, nightly, above his head; to his mother's intense alarm. Vincent smiled querulously as he took the murderous implement down, and carefully examined the position of his chamber and the state of the caps.

"Mother will now see," he muttered, "whether this is a dangerous toy or not. The gentleman in the hall, also,” he added, with a chuckle.

He now carefully opened his door and cautiously peered into the dimly lighted hall. The robber, who appeared to be a large, black-haired man in an immense overcoat, although it was a sweltering August night, was proceeding slowly down the hall with his back to Vincent, and trying the knob of each door he passed. Vincent saw that he had already rifled the plate-room, and forks sticking from his upper side-pockets, while the lower ones were bulged out by bulkier articles.

"A nice little boy. You’ve done well, my man,” muttered Vincent. "I can’t get into any of those rooms," he continued. And so it seemed, for the fellow, grinding his teeth at finding each door locked, seemed to make up his mind to depart. As he turned, Vincent darted back into his room. In a moment he heard the burglar slowly descending the stairs.

"Now’s my chance," said the boy in a low tone, and he ran noiselessly but quickly to the top of the stairs. The robber had nearly reached the foot of the flight.

"Hello! I down there; a word before you go," cried Vincent, in a rather low but perfectly clear voice, and at the same time cocking his revolver.

"Don’t fire, you infernal little whelp!" the robber instantly paused and recoiled a step.

"You’re a game young man, I must say. Come, now, my good fellow, let me off this time. I will take everything out of my pockets, and go quietly out. You won’t get a man into trouble now, will you? You have saved your master’s traps. Come, now, let me off—"
"O my dear sir," said Vincent, "I really can't part with you just now. I find your society so agreeable that I must insist on detaining you for some time. Really, you look so amiable, just at this moment, that I find great pleasure in contemplating your face.

Are you going to keep me here all night, you young scamp?"

"Now, my good sir," cried Vincent, in the mildest tone of his melodious voice, "do, pray, be more select in your expressions, if you expect me to converse with you. Do I intend to keep you here all night? Why, I wouldn't turn you out of doors at this hour.

"But you'll let me go before light, now, won't you, sir?" said the man, who grew respectful.

"I don't think I can; I have an idea my father would like to see you in the morning."

The rage of the burglar at this knew no bounds. He made a movement as if to rush at Vincent; but the six-mouthed pistol pointed pitilessly at him, and he recoiled.

"I don't believe that pop-gun of yours is loaded."

Vincent smiled.

"You seem to keep at a respectful distance from an unloaded weapon," said he, sneeringly. "I advise you to lie down and take a nap," he continued. "It is an hour or two daylight."

This remark put an idea into the wily burglar's mind; he lay down and rested his shaggy head on the step above, and re- entered into any of our seats of learning, his regular and loud breathing betokened polished scholars, to prepare his pupils for his "right hand man" was his daughter, in whom he had the involuntary tribute for entrance into any of our seats of learning, or to fit them for the counting-room of the merchant. But while their minds are trained, and the seeds of learning liberally sown, due regard is had, by Dr. Euripides Brown, to the moral and religious culture of the youths committed to his charge. The system that he has for many years successfully pursued is one of truly parental discipline. He looks upon his scholars as children of his own, and does not forget that he stands "in loco parentis."

The school was situated in the beautiful village of H-, in Massachusetts. The building was a great, straggling, red brick structure, originally erected for a Deaf and Dumb Asylum; and a more dreary exterior, perhaps, no structure ever presented. A bare square of ground, without a blade of grass, and trodden hard by the boys in their sports, surrounded the house, itself bounded by an ugly high board fence, from which the rain had long since washed away all signs of paint. The lower floor of the school-house, or Parnassus Hall, was devoted to the recitation-rooms and the dining-room. Upstairs were long, wide dormitories, each of which accommodating some forty or fifty boys. The principal, his daughter, — of whom more presently, — and the assistant teachers, had apartments in a wing of the building, as had also the servants. The staircases and halls, dormitories, recitation and dining rooms, were all unexempted. Rendered cheerless by this circumstance, they were made still more so by their great size and half-furnished appearance, with bare, whitewashed, and discolored walls. "The comforts of home" were certainly not apparent on entering the premises of Parnassus Hall.

The doctor was a man of about sixty-two years of age, over six feet in height, and large in proportion. His features were large and coarse, with the exception of his eyes, which were small and twinkling. His face had a shrewd and good-humored expression, and his deep full laugh rang through the capitals of his school like a thundering bassoon. There was a large mixture of drollery in his composition, but, rather curiously, he was always funniest when angry. In fact, the boys quaked when he began to joke, well knowing that something had aroused his ire. Perhaps no teacher ever had a more thorough control over his pupils than Dr. Euripides Brown. His immense physical proportions inspired awe, and the impartiality and severity of his punishments secured discipline and enforced respect. He was without the vice of many masters,—he made no favorites,—but every boy stood or fell on his own merits. The boys knew him as a just and determined man, and gave him the involuntary tribute of their respect. Paradoxically speaking, his "right hand man" was his daughter, Miss Antigone Brown, an unmarried lady of about forty, the possessor of a capricious and violent temper. It is rumored that the sweetness of her disposition had been soured by a love-disappointment. Such was really the case. When about seventeen years of age she had been devotedly attached to the son of a well-to-do store-keeper in the village,—a large, coarse-looking fellow. He had heroically courted Miss Antigone, and won her an avowal of her love. We say heroically, for he had encountered obstacles that Leander would have shrunk from. He was forced to meet the sarcasms, witticisms, and mockery of all the boys of Parnassus Hall, to whom the courtship was indiscrimate, for they had not the highest opinion of Miss Antigone's charms. As for Richard Hoyt, the boys, with the least portion of prudence peculiar to youth, thought disparagingly of him as a selfish, hard-hearted cheat. In spite of these numerous obstacles, the love affair had progressed, and the day of the wedding had arrived. The perturbed Hoyt spent the evening before the momentous day with Miss Brown, and departed breathing vows of love. The next morning Parnassus Hall was thrown into consternation by the news that Hoyt had run off with a young Irish girl employed in a milliner's shop (with whom he had had a secret understanding all the time), married her in a neighboring town, and was then on his way to parts unknown. From that time Miss Antigone had devoted herself with great energy to her duties, working like a slave from morning till night. But the entire amiability of her character had disappeared, and she was fast becoming a shrew.

At this school, then, on a breezy April day, shortly after the commencement of the spring term, young Vincent Graham arrived. His coming was unheralded, but it caused a momentous era to the school. Young Graham was destined to cause great sensation in Parnassus Hall before many hours elapsed.

**CHAPTER V.**

**SKILL VS. STRENGTH.**

The doctor received Vincent kindly, asked him multifarious questions, and seemed pleased with his replies. He then took him in to supper.

It was rather an embarrassing thing for Vincent to encounter fifty pairs of eyes or be constantly gazing at him as he entered the long dining-room, but he walked in erect at the doctor's side.

"Vincent Graham, young gentlemen," said the doctor, by way of introduction.

Vincent bowed gracefully. Some of the boys nodded. Polite manners are rarely learned at boarding-school.

"A Miss Nancy looking chap," said young Simmons.
"I don't think so at all," said Tom Baxter, with the air of a connoisseur. Tom was the 'cock of the school,' and a great strapping youth. "I know he's plucky, from his mouth," he added.

Vincent's appearance made a favorable impression. The doctor assigned him a seat near himself, and a good-natured, mild-looking boy made room for him with a smile.

"My name's Jenkins," said he, "but the boys call me Jenks. How old are you?"

"Fifteen."

"Have you any brothers?"

"No."

"Any sisters?"

"No."

"Where do you live?"

"New York."

"Are you a rich or a naffy?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, are you going to take a classical or commercial course?"

"Both."

"What? why you aint obliged to take but one."

"I know it, but I prefer to take both."

"What a chap! Did your father send you here?"

"No, I came of my own accord."

"You don't mean so!" cried Jenkins, in the utmost astonishment.

"Why, certainly; what is there strange in that?"

"Just hear him, Robbins," said Jenkins, to his next neighbor; "here's this Graham come to school of his own free will!"

Robbins, who was a great, dull, heavy-looking fellow, paused a moment in his process of gormandizing, and cast a look near himself, and a good-natured, mild-looking boy as he passed in his wagon. Baxter was no less than that of Dr. Euripides, although he wanted to be on good terms with every one, he felt himself compelled to retort.

"My big friend, where did you learn manners? I don't wonder why you aint obliged to take but one.

"I know it, but I prefer to take both."

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Robbins, who was a great, dull, heavy-looking fellow, paused a moment in his process of gormandizing, and cast a look near himself, and a good-natured, mild-looking boy as he passed in his wagon. Baxter was no less than that of Dr. Euripides, although he wanted to be on good terms with every one, he felt himself compelled to retort.

"My big friend, where did you learn manners? I don't wonder why you aint obliged to take but one.

"I know it, but I prefer to take both."

"What a chap! Did your father send you here?"

"No, I came of my own accord."

"You don't mean so!" cried Jenkins, in the utmost astonishment.

"Why, certainly; what is there strange in that?"

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"You insolent young dog! Why did you prompt me?"

"See here, Baxter," said Vincent, now thoroughly aroused; "you are just as bad as you used to be. I'm not going to be put up with."

"I'll finish you off before dinner, my young dandy," said Baxter, bursting with rage.

"Well, then, the sooner you go to work the better," said Vincent.

The entire school proceeded in a body to the meadow in the rear of the school, hidden from the building by a small, but thick grove.

The boys hastily marked off a ring on the turf, and stood around in silent excitement. The decisive combat between tyranny and liberty was about to come off. Baxter was the embodiment of oppression and malice; Vincent the young champion of rights and freedom. All the boys felt a tremendous interest in the result. If Vincent was vanquished, they feared that the oppression of the few would become intolerable; while their hopes of future happiness were centered in young Graham.

"He's as cool as a cucumber," said Simmons, "but what's he doing? He's stripped bare to the waist, and fastened his handkerchief tightly about him. This un

"That fellow strikes like a sledge-hammer." "Why, you?" said Vincent, now you're quite hurt, sir," said Simmons.

"So it seems," said the doctor. "I must inquire into this affair; and he did so on the spot.

"Well, Graham," said he, "it seems you were the aggrieved party. You have sufficiently punished Baxter, I think, so I shall not interfere. But remember that you must not molest unoffending persons."

"My nose is broken, sir," whimpered Ethel Moore.

"Well, let the doctor attend to it," said Dr. Brown dismissed the fight, but not so the boys. Vincent was at once as fresh and composed as if he had never held up his head at the school again. The years passed away, and Edwin Moore, the son of Mr. Moore's leading house of Mr. Moore, had been

"So I shall do it thoroughly," he said to himself.

"Baxter, stunned for a moment, rose and glared about him. "You didn't strike me with your fist, you scoundrel. You've got a lead ring on your knuckles!"

"You lie!" said Vincent, quietly. This insult enraged Tom, and he took back that "I can punish him at my ease." once as fresh and composed as if he had been taking a morning stroll in the placid meadow.

The boys escorted Vincent back to school in triumph. They encountered the doctor standing in anxiety on the steps. On seeing Vincent's calm and cool appearance, he exclaimed, "Why, you've not been fighting after all!"

"Baxter is quite hurt, sir," said Simmons.

"Good! that looks as if he meant work," they said. Rejoicing at the decision, the boys roared with laughter, and at the same instant launched straight out with his left, hitting Tom an awful blow square and full in the face. Tom uttered a howl of pain, sank feebly to the ground, and round number two was over.

"eo

"I can't stand this, Jack," said he.

"That fellow strikes like a sledge-hammer."

"Stand on the defensive, Tom," said Jack, "and at the same instant launched straight out with his left, hitting Tom an awful blow square and full in the face. Tom uttered a howl of pain, sank feebly to the ground, and round number two was over.

Tom's second carefully wiped the blood from his face; but every time he touched Vincent, the young champion of rights and freedom. All the boys felt a tremendous interest in the result. If Vincent was vanquished, they feared that the oppression of the few would become intolerable; while their hopes of future happiness were centered in young Graham.

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As Ethel grew up, her rare beauty became more and more evident. There was a certain ineffable sweetness in her face, and grace in her movements, that rendered her indescribably lovely. "I don't think he is at all well," said Mr. Moore, with a great show of interest.

"I don't think he is all well. He has an unaccountable melancholy. I don't think he has sufficient occupation for his mind. He seemed very well when he first returned from Europe; but of late he has been much depressed. I thought this little excitement of Mr. Franchot's would do him good; but he will not listen to the police. "Never let me hear you mention Mr. Franchot again, said Mr. Moore; and he seemed terribly put out.

"I think," said Miss Jessie, returning to the theme, "that Mr. Franchot is perfectly kind and good; and then he flatters so, like all Frenchmen. Not that I like flattery, by any means. I detest it generally, but I do not mind it in him. He declared the other night, Mrs. Graham, that I was the perfect image of a Miss Helen Somers, who, he said, was an old friend of his, and, in her day, the most beautiful girl in America!"

"Why, Miss Somers was the wife of Mr. William Moore," said Mr. Graham.

"And was she so very handsome?"

"Why, I never thought so. Speaking of Mr. Moore, I understand his son Harry is coming home from San Francisco soon. Every one thought he was dead; but a Mrs. Jarvis, who was an old servant in the family, wrote to him, and to the surprise of everybody had a letter from him the other day. Mr. Graham mentioned that Mr. Franchot had determined to leave his entire fortune to this young Moore, as the child of his old love."

"How charmingly romantic," cried Jessie. "What sort of a young man is he?"

"I never saw him, but Mr. Graham says he is reported to be a coarse, vulgar fellow."

"But he will be rich."

"Yes," said Mr. Graham, "and I dare say the girls will think him good-looking enough; and the good lady, having uttered this illusion on her sex, smiled very pleasantly."

"Nothing could have been more magnificent than the appearance of Mrs. Graham's drawing-rooms and parlors on the night of the ball. It was a warm evening, and the conservatories and windows were open. The gorgeous chandeliers were dazzling jets of gas; the rooms tastefully decorated with flowers. A covered way stretched from the street to the front door, and over it youth and beauty passed in a resplendent stream till midnight. The rooms presented a grand coup d'etat, as the newspaper reporters say."

"Mr. Graham was, of course, present, but much against his inclination. He passed to and fro among his guests, and uttered complimentary phrases and smiled; but they were sickly smiles. His dark face was now hardened and he looked, as if he was pleasantly struck with gray, although he was yet in the prime of life. His eyes were ever roving restlessly about; his manner was quick and nervous. Dark streaks beneath his eyes betokened broken sleep. There was evidently something preying on this man's mind. An unaccountable picture was ever before him: a calm river, a young moon, a twilitly lovely valley with a drowning man struggling in the black water—this was what James Graham saw painted everywhere, in the variegated streets; in the darkness of his midnight room; on the angry sea; in the dim interiors of churches on the placid sky; in the purple nebulation of distant mountain tops; even there on the flowered walls of his parlors. This was the appalling recollection that music could not chase away, nor wine drown, nor the theatre's shifting scenes change, nor the gambler's fever overpower.

"I think," said Vincent to his cousin, Larry Vincent, in the parlor of a quadrille, "I think my danced a waltz with the most beautiful woman Mrs. Graham is!"

"When I nearly died of typhoid fever at college, Vincent devoted every moment to watching me. The doctor said I owed my life to his more than woman's tenderness and skill. But another act of his I shall never forget while I live. Perhaps you may have heard his mother mention a trip he took to Panama during his long winter vacation last year. I accompanied him. We found a great sport hunting and fishing. Vincent is a perfect marksman. I well know what it was. It was the fatal sign of malnutrition, common to that beastly climate."

"I am surprised that you should ask, that is Miss Fairfax."

"Quite pretty," said Vincent, carelessly, "so adroit to praise a lady's beauty to another."

"Do you think so? Gentlemen seem to admire her. Well, she is a nice girl, but her mother is a ridiculous woman—a perfect Miss Malaprop. That is she talking with your father.

"And much not to your father's delight, judging from the expression of his face."

"Your father does not seem to be in very good spirits," Vincent's face fell. "I have noticed lately that he is much depressed. He has retired from business, or I should say mercantile affairs troubled him."

"Yes, indeed. The old gentleman standing by the pillar, for instance. He is a merchant direct and immensely rich. He talks like an old sailor. He actually told me once I was a 'trim little yacht.'"

"A nautical compliment, truly," said Ethel, laughing. "It goes to speak to Mrs. Graham. I wonder whether he will address her in the same style. What an elegant woman Mrs. Graham is!"

"She was a great belle when young. I have heard," said Jason. "You and her son are great friends—are you not?"

"We ought to be. He has saved my life three times; once from drowning."

"What were the other occasions?"

"When I nearly died of typhoid fever at college, Vincent devoted every moment to watching me. The doctor said I owed my life to his more than woman's tenderness and skill. But another act of his I shall never forget while I live. Perhaps you may have heard his mother mention a trip he took to Panama during his long winter vacation last year. I accompanied him. We found a great sport hunting and fishing. Vincent is a perfect marksman. I well know what it was. It was the fatal sign of malnutrition, common to that beastly climate,—paradox the expression. The unhappy traveller, once called through with that, has not a hope of life. 'We are in for it, Nic!' said Vincent; and we were indeed. To light a fire with the soaked wood was impossible. We drained our flasks of whiskey, wrapped ourselves in our thin cloaks, the only protection we had; and lay down. I remember how we bade each other, 'good-night,' for we
never expected to awake a live. Well, I lay there shivering, unable to sleep. ' Are you cold, my boy?' said Vincent, cheerfully. My teeth chattered in reply. After a while I dozed. I remember waking several times in the night, feeling warm and comfortable, and hearing a dull noise around me. In the morning I was aroused by the bright rays of the sun, and, jumping up, I imagined my apartment and, as I gazed, Miss Fairfax, when I saw that I had slept with Vincent's cloak over me; and there was the dear fellow in his shirt-sleeves, thrusting the trees with a log to keep warm. This man had stripped himself of his only protection in the night, feeling warm and comfortable, I dozed. I remember waking several times breathlessly to the narrative.

"But there is no one worthy of such a sentiment, Mr. Moore." "There is, Miss Fairfax. At least, I know one."

"Shall we not rejoi the company, Mr. Moore?"

"Why not?"

"Why? I want to introduce you to some of those young ladies."

"Oh, not now!" cried Edwin, becoming sentimental. "The violet is a pretty flower, but tame beside the rose."

"Really, Mr. Moore, you speak in parables."

"Will you let me then, speak plainly?" Jessie grew alarmed. She knew the disasters of her heart were weak, and she dreaded an assault. She sought to parley with the besotter. "Would you not like to dance?" she said. "The set are full, and the music has begun. I find this little room so pleasant I should like to stay here."

"But will they not raise us?"

"Oh, every one is too much engrossed with the beauty of the hall to notice even your absence, Miss Fairfax."

"Jessie was fain to be content. She strove to distract the enemy till help arrived."

"Come, tell the some more anecdotes, Miss Jessie."

"Unfortunately girl! She opened the gates for the stormer to rush in."

"The story I have is short, but true, Miss Jessie."

"Let me hear it," said the unsuspicous maiden, rejoicing at her success. Moore knew that time was precious. It was a habit of his never to throw away opportunities, and his theme seemed to others to create them.

"My story," said he, "is in three words, - I love you."

At this sudden arousal, Jessie's glowing cheek showed a deeper life. She could not express her sensation. She plucked the mossing flowers, she held, to pieces, and dropped the fragrant fragments on the floor. "And there is a sequel to it," pursued Edwin. "Do you, can you ever love me, O Jessie!" he continued, "you have heard to-night of a love that could brave drowning, and malaria, to serve a friend. My heart is full of a love for you, beside which this sentiment sinks to cool insufficiency. I am not used to the phrases of the courtier, Jessie, but I say with the full force of my being that if you blessed you with your love, there is no so difficult, no danger so appalling I would not do for you."

"Faster fall the fragments of the flower. Her impatient lover could not see Jessie's arrested face."

"I know not whether you turn away in diffidence or aversion, but let me know my fate, Jessie,-will you not? Whisper the one word that will make me ever happy," he cried in a low tone, bending over her. "Do you not wish to speak? Place, then, that torn rose in my hand, and I shall know it as a token of your joy; let it drop to the floor, and my hopes will fail, too."

"There was silence. Jessie held the mutilated flower in her taper fingers. Edwin looked breathlessly. She raised it slowly. 'Is she going to drop it?' thought he, in terror. Slowly Jessie's lovely face turned towards the door, and, slowly, slowly, and swiftly draws her own away."

"Oh, this is heaven!" cried Edwin. "Creakers and fools! there's no such thing as sorrow on the earth!" And he encircles her with ardent arms. The blushful girl does not draw away; she yields to his caress, and her violet lips meet lips in the first thrilling kiss of love.

"Lovely relic of paradise; privilege of gods! Let me come! So then art not absent, every other joy may go; every grief come in!"

The soft notes of the music still are heard. They were fine before, but they are strains of heaven now, sweeter than ever thrilled angelic wreaths, to those two lovers.

CHAPTER VII.

MIDNIGHT ADVENTURES.

In one of the dirtiest and most dismal streets that lie like a vast morass on the east side of New York, where beggary shuns and thieves 'most do congregate,' there stood at the period of which we write, and perhaps now stands, a small, two-story, wooden house, whose appearance was dilapidated and forlorn. The old, wooden steps were worn-cast and broken, the windows were mostly destitute of glass, the clumsy shutters hung precariously on one hinge, or were altogether gone. The interior was what one would have expected from the outside. A broken floor, uncovered by oilcloth or carpet, a decrepit pair of stairs, rough, unpainted plaster walls. The lower rooms were vacant and unfurnished. Uphairs there was but one apartment that gave any evidence of habitation. In this wretched room there were a few incomplete chairs, a low table, on which were scattered writing materials, and on which sputtered a solitary, miserable lamp. In one corner stood a large safe, which had once been very handsome, but whose vescer and gilt were almost completely knocked off and rubbed out; the ceiling was discolored by the rain that had made its way through the leaky roof; the bare floor was uncarpeted with mud; a melancholy fire smoldered in the rusty grate,—in short, an air of complete discomfort prevailed. There were two occupants of this room. In the short, walloform man, with red hair and brutal mouth, had changed this man's physiognomy. The old, wooden steps were worn-cast and broken, the windows were mostly destitute of glass, the clumsy shutters hung precariously on one hinge, or were altogether gone. The interior was what one would have expected from the outside. A broken floor, uncovered by oilcloth or carpet, a decrepit pair of stairs, rough, unpainted plaster walls. The lower rooms were vacant and unfurnished. Uphairs there was but one apartment that gave any evidence of habitation. In this wretched room there were a few incomplete chairs, a low table, on which were scattered writing materials, and on which sputtered a solitary, miserable lamp. In one corner stood a large safe, which had once been very handsome, but whose vescer and gilt were almost completely knocked off and rubbed out; the ceiling was discolored by the rain that had made its way through the leaky roof; the bare floor was uncarpeted with mud; a melancholy fire smoldered in the rusty grate,—in short, an air of complete discomfort prevailed. There were two occupants of this room. In the short, walloform man, with red hair and brutal mouth. His shoulders were very broad, his arms huge; he was evidently possessed of immense strength. His companion, who sat smoking a short clay pipe, was a man of about fifty years of age. He had a head of coarse black hair matted down upon his narrow forehead. His eyes were black and piercing, his full lips were Memento-looking. He was evidently a great drinker; he had gone beyond the stage that makes the face flushed and

BAFFLED SCHEMES.
"Yes, I do mean. What's the use of mining matters? Knock the old dog on the head."

"I don't like the idea," said the other (who was Ezra's father). "Why not? To do myself. I ripped a fellow open in St. Louis once, and I'd do it again.

The fellow's face looked like a fiend's, as he uttered this brutal thrust. His Frenchman instinctively drew back.

"But suppose we should kill him before he had made his will; then we should be cutting our own throats," said Richard Hoyt.

"That's true. Well, we must find out whether he has made it or not; and Mrs. Jarvis must do that job."

"Do you suppose I never thought of that before? Mrs. J. has been at it for a month, and year after year, without getting any centre in time."

"Mrs. Jarvis says that; ha! ha!"

"I have you tried garroting, lately?"

"Yes, I do mean. What's the use of dulling, then?"

"Suspend your principled matters? Knock the old dog on the head."

"Not in a pleasant fix, Graham. That ugly craft can probably gather a fleet in no time."

"Yes, I do mean. What's the use of dulling, then?"

"Assault, with attempt to kill," said the policeman, gruffly. "Assault and battery, anyhow. Some years in the jug, if Judge Mack Dunn don't let you off."

"Well, what do you want?" said Vincent. "What time of night is it?"

"About quarter of one."

"Let's see your watch."

"No, sir."

"Till I'll take it; and he rushed at him with fury.

Vincent visibly dodged beneath the man's arm, and the fellow brought up violently against a lamp-post. Uttering a cry of pain, he turned suddenly towards his antagonist, and then stood quietly by with his cane uplifted.

"Assault, with attempt to kill," said the policeman. "I'll stand back, or you'll repent it!"

"Curse you!" roared Ezra, "do you think to frighten me with a twig? Give me your watch and money, and I'll let you go.

"I'm very generous. Come with me quietly to a station-house, and I won't hurt you."

"Curse your insolence! Come, forcible!"

"And then, I say, what have you got in that safe?"

"Oh! some very interesting little documents."

"I dare say. Can't I see them?"

"Not to-night. Some time?"

"Soon?"

"Yes."

"Well," said Ezra, rising, "I came here to-night to breach this plan of finishing the old Frenchman. Now tell you, it must be done. Think over it. I will see you soon again."

"What does she say about his health?"

"She says he's got the gout bad."

"That's nothing. Men live for years with the gout. I tell you that man ought to die, and not be made to die."

"Just suppose he won't."

"Then," said Ezra, stretching across the table to his companion, and lowering his voice to a malignant whisper, "he ought to be made to die."

The other started, and his glass stopped midway to his lips.

"You don't mean—"
thought, plunged the sharp blade into the unfortunate man's side, dashed the cane into Vincent's face, and ran like a deer down an obscure side street.

The affair was so sudden that Vincent, who was at some little distance, had not time to reach them with a rapid bound, before the man was off.

Doubtful for an instant whether to pursue the assassin, or succor the wounded man, he stood still, poised by the two opposite forces, and the fellow was beyond the reach of pursuit. Vincent bent over the unfortunate policeman. A red stream was running swiftly from his side. He tore his scarf quickly off, and with difficulty, passed it around the man's side. He twisted his hands into it, and thus improvised a tourniquet on the spot.

"It's no use, my friend," said the policeman, faintly; "I'm a goner. Leave me alone!"

"What is your name, sir?" asked the injured policeman.

"Vincent," said the man, "if you ever want Jim Parker to do anything for you, I'll esteem it a favor if you'll let me know."

"I'll remember," said Vincent, smiling.

"I think I'll walk home, after all," said he, "if you'll allow me to arrange my dress."

"Certainly," said the man, who wore now a very respectable appearance; and Vincent, with all traces of blood removed, went out into the cool night, and walked briskly up-town.

"My blood has been nicely stirred," said Vincent, "I should like a row. I'd now like a row. I'd give a good deal to come across my treacherous acquaintance of Catharine Street just now."

He reached the quiet up-town streets, and began to think he should meet with no more adventures that night. As his steps echoed down the dismal avenue, he saw a tall man, with long hair and clear light complexion, she possessed.

"There's life in him, Dexter," said one of the men.

"Oh, he's as good as ten dead men yet." They carried him into the station-house. Surgical assistance was soon procured, and, to Vincent's joy, the wound was not mortal. Vincent gave his name and address and rose to leave.

"You'll better not walk home," said one of the men.

"Why not? I don't think I shall be molested again."

"Perhaps not, but your clothes are splattered with blood, and you may be arrested. A man covered with blood, and walking the streets at this time of night, isn't the most innocent-looking object in the world."

"That's so," said Vincent, laughing.

"Let me send mail you get you a carriage."

"Thank you, I would be obliged."

Now this was a race to detain Vincent till the wounded man revived sufficiently to talk, which he did soon.

This chap all right?" asked a captain of police, in low tones.

"Well, I should rather think he was. He's the gamest chap I've seen for many a day."

"Yes," said the man, as if talking to himself, "this must be James Graham's son."

"It is," said Vincent.

"A fair blossom for so foul a root." "What do you mean by that?" Vincent.

"Buck you, boy!" said the man; "does your father live?"

"Yes, sir."

"In wealth and honor?"

"Yes, sir."

"The lightning has never stricken him, nor the earth swallowed him."

"Most doubtfully not."

"It must be so! There is no God in heaven!"

Vincent, thoroughly puzzled, was determined to investigate this mystery.

"Pray how did you know me, sir?" he asked.

"Thank God! he still lives," said the stranger, continuing his soliloquy, utterly ignoring Vincent's presence, "the greedy grave has not devoured me." Then looking at young Graham, he added, "And this is a human being. You have no claws or cloven feet, young sir!"

"Really, sir," said Vincent, "if you wish me to stand out here at this time of night, to talk with you, I beg you to be more intelligible."

"Parbleau," said the man, recovering his spirits.

"What is the cause of your agitation, sir?"

"Oh, ask me not! God grant you may know!"

"But how did you know me?"

"By your resemblance, slight indeed, but unmistakable, to your father."

"Then you know him well?"

"Again the stranger's eyes alight. "What mystery is here!" thought Vincent. "I know him slightly," said the stranger, with an effort; "but he does not know me."

"What is your name, sir?"

"Morris."

"Do you want to see my father?"

"Not now, not now, but soon, but soon," said the man, rapidly.

"Do you live in the city, sir?"

"I arrived to-night from Australia."

"Well, Mr. Morris, I will not detain you."

"Stay; where does your father live?"

"I am obliged to you. Do you believe in ghosts?"

"I believe in the possibility of ghosts," said Vincent.

"Well, you have talked with one to-night."

"Angels and ministers of grace defend us," cried Vincent, in pretended alarm.

"Do not jest, young man," cried the other, sternly.

"Have you any idea who the chap all right?"

"None now; I glide my time."

"Well, my supernatural sir, good-night." Vincent walked home. He went into his room.

"Good-night," he said, "there is no God in heaven!"

"What in the name of sense have you been doing, Vint; what's become of your father?"

"Oh, I've been told 'stand and deliver' on the mayor's highway, have cut down the gentleman of the road, have bounted the wounds of an assassinated man, have met and talked with a ghost."

"Really, you've done well. I pray you when you those unholy deeds relate, nothing exterminate nor set down night's hour's effect. I know from your looks you've been up to something, and just my luck to be out of the way."

Vincent thorncroft told him of his eventful walk from the Brooklyn ferry.

"This Morris passes my comprehension," said one to the other, "calling himself a ghost and me a devil."

"'Tis strange," said Edwin.

"As I do live, my honored' chum, 'tis true."

He and Moore were soon asleep. Had they looked into the street they would have seen the black-bearded man pacing up and down on the opposite pavement, and gazing with glaring eyes at Graham's house.

CHAPTER VIII.

"SWEET SIXTEEN."
sessed, too, a very pleasing voice, and a
laugh that was the embodiment of light-
hearted merriment. Until the time when
Mr. Moore reluctantly revealed the story of
her infancy, nothing had occurred to
shade her face or dampen her natural gay-
ety. And, though she heard the recital
with many tears, the sorrow was eas-
ier, and her elastic spirits soon recovered
from the depressing effect of the revelation.
She perceived the few lines her dead mother
had written, over and over, and kept them
among her girlish treasures.

Kavanagh?...They are beautiful. I have travelled
over a large part of the globe, seen Swiss
Alps, Italian champagne, Sicilian vine-
yards, and after all, Miss Moore, I think
nothing is more lovely than any other land.
The Ilidiana ought not to be considered in
the same breath with this river at our feet.

"But did you not think the intense culti-
vation of English lands produced a much
more beautiful effect than the picturesque
wildness of our own?"

"Well, certainly, trim hedges and smooth
lawns, as evidencing taste and refinement,
are very pleasing; but I was only speaking
of what nature has done for us. I should
be glad, indeed, to see the hand of art re-
move some of our American roughness.

"Is there not here a want of the elabo-
rate perfection of Old-World life,—a want
of finish, a sort of repulsive newness?"

"A freshness and newness, indeed, but
not repulsive to me. The newness of abun-
dant and unused material, the freshness of
removed obstacles. When our coun-
try has grown ripe and mellowed, as it
were, there will be a 'perfection' beside
which the polished beauties of Europe will
seem commonplace. Our universities, our
art, poetry,—all are young. But really,
Miss Moore, we are so very.

This scene, the sound of music, the laughter of revel-
ors, are poor accomplishments to such a
great and universal consciousness."

"A most abrupt change would be to
poetry."

"And a happy one. You are a poetess."...

"I knew my uncle was drowned in the
Hudson, but did not know it was at this
place."

"He was drowned the day after Mr.
Wyckoff's funeral. The old gentleman's
will had just been read, leaving his fortune
to your uncle and my father, half to each,
and if one died, the other to have the whole.
Within an hour your uncle was drowned, and
my father left sole heir."

"So, by the melancholy death of two dear
friends, your father found himself pos-
essed of a large fortune," said Ethel.

"I gray, I thought these facts related, had often thought of them; but the way
Ethel presented them, by her casual
mention, distraction, and by her manner,
as if she tried to see her. I could not hear the full effi-
cence of her beauty, and retain my sight."

"Upon my word, Vint., the apparition
must have been a rare one. I never saw
you so excited."

"The awful conjecture rushed with such
vigor on my mind, that I staggered as
if a powerful blow had taken him, and
his face blanched to an ashy paleness. Noth-
ing but the marvelous power this man
had over his nerves prevented him from
falling.

You are ill, Mr. Graham," cried Ethel,
in alarm.

"It is nothing," said Vincent, recovering
himself with an effort. "A sudden faint-
ness! It is very curious; I never was
affected this way before. The room
was warm; will you come out on the piaza, Miss
Moore? You could hardly have o'erved the
view on entering, and it is really fine."

They went out and sat upon a rustic seat
on the veranda. The night was cloudy, but
a quiet light, for the moon was full. The
hinging brolie was held in light from
the eastern moon, though the nearer
side was buried in gloom.

"You can see the distant peaks of the
Catskills up the river," said Vincent. "I
should like to have an opportunity, Miss
Moore, of showing you the country about
here; you are an enthusiastic lover of
nature.

Ethel smiled at the quiet way in which he
took this fact for granted. "I have seen
nothing in the way of country other than
the rural suburbs of Boston."

"They are beautiful. I have travelled
over a large part of the globe, seen Swiss
Alps, Italian champagne, Sicilian vine-
yards, and after all, Miss Moore, I think
nothing is more lovely than any other land.
The Ilidiana ought not to be considered in
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here; you are an enthusiastic lover of
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CHAPTER IX.

THE FIRST CHARACTERS.

The day of the fête was a glorious one. The forecast was spent in busy and delightful preparation, and, at about one, the party proceeded in a joyous procession to the grove, where the music of a band was already astoundings the birds. The green was had been trimmed, and rolled into a smooth, classic dancing-door, and the fantastically attired guests were soon merely at work. It had been Mr. Franchot's desire that each one should assume a character, and the most appropriate costume, although not maskable, so, on this pleasant summer afternoon, the shady grove was filled with lords and ladies, shepherdesse and maid, angels, devils, countess, quakers, -- in short, everything that whimsical fancy could devise. Vincent -- a bold outlaw and archer in Lincoln-green -- looked with impatience through the throng for Ethel. He saw, at length, a gracefully attired -- no longer finer than Cupid. A tall, slim young apostate, apparently gotten up as a baboon, was talking with her, making a combination exceedingly ludicrous and absurd.

Vincent approached.

"Fair nymph?" said he, "sweet goddess, sprung from fountain, not from sacred groves, and holy streams that flow into the sea, will attend me in the chase today?"

"Nay, bold archer, these trials will wear the timid down.

"Then will I forsake the hunt, and stay to attend thee, fair Oreal."

"Be thou constant then, and I will show thee "springs of streams and verdant grassy shades," where the rose mistahus of the law cannot molest thee.

"That will I. Come with me and add thy graceful figure to the dance."

"I am bespoken now."

"What, dost creature! to that cari-ature of man?" "Really, Mr. Graham," said the inside shield, who did not at all enter into the spirit of the scene, "I am no express, sir."

"Upon my word, Mr. Landingstone," interrupted Vincent, with a light sneer. "do you expect me to take off my hat and bow to a baboon; or did you assume that tasteless costume with an intention of supporting the character?"

"Oh! aw! beg pardon. I forgot I was rigged up so. I believe I shall take this off; it is not at all comfortable."

"Oh, do not, Mr. Landingstone," said Ethel; "you are really a second Martinetti."

"Yes," said Moore, "a division of labor. We will pull, but you amuse. Come, Jessie!"

"A stirring air was sung melodiously, and a vision fairer than Calypso. A tall, slim, graceful lady, loomed up through the throng, and, at the First, with long, flowing wig and ruffles, velvet doublet and small-sword dangling at her side." I thank thee, fair Undine, that thou hast strayed away from thy native stream, to visit the haunts of mortals. Do not frighten me with that honest archer."

"What, shinest thou and bite the dust?"

"Peace, men!" cried Jessie; "put up your weapons."

"I yield to thee, sweet nymph," said Vincent.

"I sheathe my thorny steel at thy command," said Harry, with so much exquisite that they all laughed. A comical contrast was now presented by the appearance of a gentle shepherdess, Miss Schuyler by name, in the escort of a Italian bandit, Edwin Moore. He was very fine and handsome in his plumed hat, mask, and jacket, and immense topper. Behold gentleness and fury side by side, said Vincent. "Sweet shepherdess, may I not seek thy wandering lambs?" said Edwin. "Nay, bold robber, you would alarm the timid flock."

"So I do not frighten the shepherdess, I am content. Ah! Holin Hood, and you, my gallant lord, why join ye not the merry dance?"

"This spirit of the stream has charmed us forth," said Kavangh. "Graceful Undine, release thy spell over these; let me be thy slave."

"What, false one!" cried the shepherdess, "wouldst thou desert me?"

"Nay, I would shew allegiance to both."

"But I will not have a divided homage. I renounce thee."

"And I," said Undine.

"Then bold bundle," said Vincent, laughing, "in striving for each, thou hast lost both."

"I see. Then will I seek other charmers;" and he went away merrily. The evailer has deserted me for the shepherdess."

"Loveliest of maidens," said the archer, "may I presume to be thy slave?"
BAFFLED SCHEMES.

"I fear me thou art bewitched by a wood-nymph."

"Nay, goddess of the stream, thou dost me wrong. A dweller in her own wild woods, a hairy monster has borne her off. Ah!" he added, forgetting his character in his earnestness, "was she not, Miss Fairfax, beautiful as she sat in the boat last night with the moonlight on her face?"

"I thought at the time you watched her closely," said Jessie, slyly. "And, moreover, she is worthy of her."

"You are in doubt? Then you may be certain that you are."

"Oh, well, you must know all the signs of the sweet passion certainly. Experience is the best teacher, as the copy-books say. How does it feel to be in love, Miss Fairfax?"

"Try how you know that I am in love?"

"Why, are you not engaged to that fierce bandit over there?"

"I do not wish it; but is that your only proof?"

"Is that not sufficient?"

"Innocent archer! Simple dweller in the wood! Dost suppose that all who marry, love?"

"Not. I. Sad to say, I see the fact is otherwise, but Cupid be praised in your case."

"Why think you so?"

"Because you are Jessie Fairfax, and your lover Edwin Moore."

"And consequently?"

"Each irresistible to the other."

"Well answered. Therefore you love Ethel Moore because she is worthy of her."

"And I trust the remainder of the proposition is correct?"

"I do not know; but I do not bid you despair."

"If you'll win the love of Edwin Moore, I must despair; may I speak not. I am not angling for compliments. No one in my opinion is worthy of her."

"Well, but if she doesn't think so, it is all right. But what is this wild approaching?"

It was Ned Temple who was dressed and really looked like a devil; but he was a very graceful and polite fiend. He came to summon them to take part in a dance. The cavalier and shepherdesses were partners, while Moore, the bandit, had secured the hand of an angel, Miss Lucy Vincent.

The gay revellers danced on, the merry masqueraders shouted. All was mirth and music.

Some few of the party whose characters demanded it were masked, although by far the greater part of the gay throng were not. There were two masked figures whom no one seemed to know,—both men, dressed as bears. They kept together and did not join the dance. Franchot had tried in vain to speak to them; they invariably avoided him when he approached. They stood in a retired spot remote from the dancers, talking together in low tones.

"Jolly times these swells are having, Ethna," said one, who was no other than Dick Hoyt.

"Curse 'em," muttered Ethna. "See that fancy cove in green with a bugle stick around him? He's the infernal rascal who knowed me down with an iron stick in Catherine Street."

"Mrs? what?"

"The same. I'd like to serve him as I did the other."

"He looks game."

"Never saw his equal—but I'll be even with him. The old woman's sure it's all right about the will?"

"Yes, you. She read it and copied part of it for me. Here it is."

He pulled a crumpled letter from his breast, and read,—

"I enclose a copy of what you wanted."

"Well, I thought at the time you watched her?"

"I trust you're not engaged to that fellow?"

"Because you are Jessie Fairfax, and your lover Edwin Moore."

"And I trust the remainder of the proposition is correct?"

"Of course the copy, Ethna?

"Lastly I give and bequeath the full name, W. and E. Moore, formerly of the city, county, and state of New York, and both deceased."

"Hasn't got the blank filled up?"

"That's nothin'. I spose he didn't know the full name, but the will's good as it stands."

"Let me keep the extract," said Ethna.

"Don't talk so loud. They'll go to best."

"Yes," said Ezra, "one's that fancy cove in green."

"Well, that is frank. Know, then, she bandit over there?"

"Well, I thought at the time you watched her."

"I didn't know you."

"Why, no. Yonder nymph has robbed thee of thy heart, and thou art her slave. Do not despise the charge."

"But did you here me plead guilty to the soft impeachment? Really, you women have a marvelous discernment in these matters. You know that we love before we know ourselves."

"Yes, but discernment is necessary in your case. You look and talk and act the lover."

"What now?"

"Yes."

"Then Edwin will be jealous."

"Absolutely! Do not pretend to mis...

BAFFLED SCHEMES.

The gay scene grew gayer as the day passed away. The fete was a success. In the interior of the hall a thousand colored lamps were lit, causing a gay effect as the variegated figures passed to and fro. But on the broad lawn outside, the full moon shone upon the dancers. The night was so warm that the tables were spread in the open air, and there the merry throng had supper.

Not till long past midnight did the music and dancing cease; but at length the lamps in the woods were wound up, the weary musicians put away their cornets and violins, the dancers sought their several apartments, and only two figures remained outside the house,—the ruffian Hoyt and his son.

Edwin Moore and Vincent went to their room and sat down to smoke a quiet pipe, and talk over the incidents of the day. Vincent was eloquent on the subject that lay nearest his heart.

"Spare me a lover's rhapsodies!" cried Edwin. "I give you joy,—you shall win. I will use all my brotherly influence."

"Which will be very efficacious, doubtless. Shall we turn in?"

"To sleep? Oh, no! Let's sit in that moonlight and smoke. Put out the light, Ned; that's right."

"How quiet the house is!"

"Yes; every one will sleep to-night. But I heard footsteps in the lawn just now."

"Some of the servants, probably."

"I think not. Listen, Ned."

CHAPTER X.

A BLACK DEED.

While the lights glimmered in the windows of Wyckoff Hall, the ruffians still lingered in the shadow of the wood. Only one the lamps went out. They've closed all the doors but one," said the elder Hoyt. "I see two swells up in that room smoking."

"Yes," said Ethna, "one's that fancy cove in green,—curse him."

"Don't talk so loud. They'll go to best."

"Yes, I saw him through the blinds just now, and his light's out."

"Well, then, balance for a while."

"God! this bear's skin's a good idea, for it's getting chilly since it's closed up. Rain before morning."
"All the better." The light in Vincent's room at this moment disappeared.

"Now's our time," cried Ezra.

"No; wait till they get asleep," answered Moore.

"Not till I have that ring," said Ezra, raising the ghastly head of the murdered man.

"Death! Are you going to wait for that?"

"I'm not going to do anything else. Curse it, the thing won't come off!"

"Oh, let it go!"

"Curse me if I do. This way will answer," said Moore.

Ezra lightly pulled the slight covering from the sleeper's chest. The movement paralysed the man. The noise was uttered as Ezra plunged his knife low, leaped and caught a limb of an old maple.

"You're set for artepresent, men," reiterated the cruel thrust. said he. "We'll have hot-headed boxers, and for a time Hoyt could not break through his guard; but at last he rushed in, receiving a fearful blow as he did so, and grasped Edwin in his brawny arms.

It was indeed a bear's hug, and a hug so fierce that it would soon have been fatal, had not Moore observed the fall of his knee with force, and striking Hoyt, drove the breath from his body; but he retained his hold and Moore could not free himself; however, he raised blows fast and heavy in the fellow's head. All at once the man abandoned Edwin, and, running a rod or two, picked up the club that Moore had brought and dropped. With this he sprang with fury at his antagonist and knocked savagely on the head. Poor Moore staggered, groaned, and fell insensible. The man raised the stick to finish him.

At this critical juncture Vincent rose from the vanquished Ezra. In a second he saw the situation. There was his friend stretched upon the turf, while the burly Hoyt was raising the club to dash out his brains. Like the rush of a whirlwind Vincent was upon him. With wonderful speed and might, with the fury of horror, with the rags of grief, with the eternal depth of friendship, with an arm moved by the greatest passion that answers human nature, the young athlete dashed his clubbed fist — harder than adamant — into the villain's face. Had a Titan struck him with his hammer, the effect could not have been greater. The man staggered in like a piece of paste-board; the uplifted club fell harmless, and Hoyt rolled over on the ground, with his skull fractured, senseless. Vincent at this moment looked like an avenging fury, like a demon-god drunk with battle. He bent over poor Moore who lay unconscious. "My brother, thou art killed," cried he. The words were scarcely uttered when there rang the sharp crack of a pistol, and Vincent fell, shot through the body, at his friend's feet.

Had there been a spectator he would have seen Ezra, who had revived, slowly rise to a sitting posture on the grass, level his revolver and fire.

"That score's wiped out," said he, calmly. "Time for me to get out of this. Oh! but I thought I was a goner. How many more men will you choose, you dogs?" he added, with a grin of exultation.

He rose and glanced at the prostrate...
The report of Earn's pistol did not arouse the sleepers in Wyckoff Hall from their sound slumbers. There was one whom no earthly sound would ever again awaken. Through the lingering hours of early morning the murdered man lay staring at the ceiling with a fixed gaze of horror, while his heart's blood soaked slowly through his breast and fell dripping on the floor.

Ethel opened her eyes at early dawn and awakened Jessie, her companion, with a kiss. "What say you to a morning stroll and the unutterable love sprang from them, that the peerless creature loves me. This is no time to come to.

But Ethel felt the warmth return to her lover's lips. "He is reviving; God be praised!"

"O Ethel!" cried Ethel, grasping her master's room. In a moment he was back, and, as the words were uttered, in came Dr. Parkes. He was a skilful practitioner and a gentleman. The ladies reluctantly left the room at his request.

At these words every one started, and looked about. "Are any of the ladies or gentlemen up?"

"No, miss," said the man. "Well, carry him into one of the out-buildings; and you, Thomas, ride over to the inn and acquaint the magistrates at R._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._._.
"Yes, sir," said Vincent.

"And is this true, that poor Franchot is murdered?"

"Too true."

"And you boys were hurt in trying to arrest the murderer, I understand."

"There were two of the members, sir. I struck one over, and I think I must have hurt him. I never struck so hard before."

"Where is the fellow?"

"They have carried him into the carriage-house, I believe."

Poor Edwin was out. In about ten minutes he returned.

"Poor Franchot is dead, indeed," said he:

"three stabs directly through the left ventricle and cardiac region. But I say, Graham, what did you strike that fellow with? He is dead."

"Dost!" cried Vincent. "Is it possible! Well, I'm sorry. I struck him merely with my fist."

"With your fist!" cried the doctor, in blank surprise. "Jove! are your hands made of iron? You have crushed his os frontis, sir, and driven a piece of bone as big as your fist into his cranium."

"I meant to hurt him, sir, when I struck.

It was a matter of life and death. He would have killed poor Moore in another moment."

"Well, I must not talk to you any more," said Vincent, "Dead!" cried Vincent. "Well, I'm not sorry. I struck him that way."

"Where is the fellow?"

"I have seen the young man, Mrs. Graham."

"No, I believe not," said Mrs. Graham. "He has always happened to prevent their meeting. I have not been as near the view of Mr. Franchot as I was when she heard Mr. Franchot was dead. She cried as if her heart would break."

"Did Mr. Franchot ever see this young Moore?"

"No, I believe not," said Mr. Fairfax. "Something has always happened to prevent their meeting. Mr. Franchot has often expressed his disappointment at not being able to see him. Several letters have passed between them, however, he told me."

"Have you ever seen the young man, Mrs. Graham?"

"No. I understand he is not very good-looking, but a very intelligent man, and well-educated."

The melancholy guests, with a few exceptions, dispersed that day, and went their several ways. Jessie would not hear of such a thing as leaving. It was necessary that Moore should return to Boston; he went, leaving Ethel under Mrs. Fairfax's charge. Moore, of course, remained with her son.

A coroner's jury decided that Franchot had been killed by some person, or persons, to them unknown, and that the slaying of the assassin by Vincent was an act of justifiable defence. Dr. Parkes, as an intimate friend of the deceased, took upon himself the direction of all necessary proceedings. He telegraphed for a detective to come up from the city, and by the afternoon train he arrived. The officer was a small and gentlemanly-looking man, Alexander Conger by name. He was dressed with extreme neatness, and wore kid gloves on a small hand. His eyes were gray and bright and exceedingly restless; his teeth were white and regular; his complexion was a deep olive.

He walked up quietly to the house, gave his card to the doctor, heard the details of the affair, and then asked to be shown the murdered man's room. He looked at the corpse, examined the window and door, and instantly detected, what no one else had seen, the bear-skin cap of Hoyt. It had rolled beneath a sofa. He also found the assassins knife in the folds of the bed. To the cap was the scrap of paper that enclosed the extract from the will. All these articles he took into his possession.

"Can I see young Mr. Graham?" he asked.

"Do not talk with him long."

"I have cut a few words to say."

He was alone with Vincent about ten minutes. He then went out and looked at the spot where Franchot had long and carefully. He then sat down on the front plaza and smoked his cigar quietly, thus ruminating,

"That dead man's Dick Hoyt. Yes, sir. Enough of him, when he was old Peter Vincent's secretary, to know him again. Now the question is, who's his pal?"

"He called Francois."

"What did your master wear on the finger that's cut off?"

"A diamond ring, sir."

"Yes."

He got up and went into the carriage-house, and carefully examined the dead man's costume. The bear's suit contained no pockets. He pressed open the man's mouth.

"The diamond's not here," said Conger to himself. He called the doctor.

"Who have touched the dead man in the carriage-house since he was found?"

"No one but the man who carried him in and myself. The door has been locked all the time you came."

"Yes. That's all, doctor."

"Humph," cogitated the detective. "The same chop cut off his finger that killed the man, I've no doubt. Hoyt did not do it, that's clear. I know him well enough not to imagine for a moment that he would part with the trinket if he once got hold of it. His pal's the man who did the business."

A strong, heavy man with pale face, red hair, and a bad cast, Mr. Graham says. Yes, a neat case, a very neat case, very. Mr. Conger took the scrap of paper and looked at it carefully. "The Frenchman's desk, he must have been written in the house. Could these devils have done it? Francois?"

"Et! bien, monsieur!"

"Your master was a nice man, wasn't he?"

"Indeed he was, sir."

"Yes, How long have you lived with him?"

"Two years in Jamaica and sixteen in this country."

"So long! You must feel bad at his death," and indeed the poor Frenchman's red eyes and woe-begone face plainly evidenced his grief.

"What are you going to do now, my man?"

"I know not, monsieur."

"Can you write?"

"No, nor read, monsieur."

"Can you not write at all? That's pity. If you could only write a little, I might get you a good billet."

"I cannot write a word, sir."

"Well, well, I am sorry. Has your master had any company here lately?"

"He has had all the people who were here to-day."

"He has not had a visit from two men lately, has he?"

"Yes, sir. There were two queer-looking men that shut up with him all last Monday afternoon. They went away the same night, and monster seemed to be much excited at what they told him."

"No, sir."

"Wasn't one a large man with a squat?"

"No, sir."

"What sort of looking fellows were they?"

"One was a tall man with black beard, the other, an old, common-looking fellow, seemed to be a Scotchman."

"Humph!" said Conger to himself, "not to the party."

"What servants are there in the house?"

"The butler, coachman, hosier, waiter, and cook."

"Nobody else?"

"There is madame, the house-keeper."

"Yes. Who is she?"

"Mrs. Jarvis."

"Yes. Well, that is all, Francois."

"Mrs. Jarvis."

"Yes."

"Mr. Conger wishes Mrs. Jarvis would inform him whether she knows if Mr. Franchot had any relatives in this country."

"She will suspect nothing from the form of this question. Here, Francois, take this to Mrs. Jarvis, and bring back an answer."

In a few minutes Francois returned with these words written on the back of Conger's note—
"Mrs. Jarvis don't know nothing at all about the matter whatever. I think she had not." 

Conger smiled as he looked at the writing. 

"Exactly the same hand. So you are in it, too, Mr. Tressler-" he continued, carefully putting the papers into his pocket-book. "Oh, a very pretty case, if I worked up it. Yes. Very pretty and very neat."

CHAPTER XII

TENNYSON AND LOVE.

The most expert medical attendance, assiduous attention, careful nursing, and a firm constitution pulled Edwin Moore through, and he began slowly to improve. But for three days and nights he raved with brain-fever. At one time he imagined himself to be passing a college examination, and would ask himself and answer all manner of questions in natural philosophy and chemistry, displaying such extensive information on the abstractest topics, that Dr. Parkes was amazed. But on the fourth morning after the murder his delirium departed, and his consciousness returned. He at once asked to see Jessie. The poor girl went in, and the lovers were, for a short time, left alone together. The interview appeared to have a very beneficial effect on the patient, for he improved from that hour.

"O Edwin!" cried Jessie, "when I saw you lying there, as I thought, dead, with your head all blood, I thought my heart would break. I never knew I loved you so deeply till that moment."

"And I," answered the youth, "should have been killed by that ruffian if it hadn't been for you."

"If it hadn't been for me! How do you mean?"

"Why, when that fellow had me in his powerful grip, nothing but the determination to live and enjoy your love, sweet one, kept me from giving in, and if I had, he would have killed me in a moment. But tell me, Vint, is safe?"

"He was shot through the body, but-"

"Why, when that fellow had me in his powerful grip, nothing but the determination to live and enjoy your love, sweet one, kept me from giving in, and if I had, he would have killed me in a moment. But tell me, Vint, is safe?"

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"He was shot through the body, but-"
Baffled Schemes.

"Yes, it is, indeed," replied Vincent, without the vaguest notion of what she meant. "And did you ever hear anything more beautifully expressed?"

"No, never!" he answered, referring to her style of reading. "I love Tennyson! the dear good man," cried Ethel, enthusiastically. Vincent felt an absurd pang of jealousy, and hated the poet-immure in his son. "He is married, Miss Moors," said he. Her eye darted out a look of reproach. "I don't want to hear about it, turned resolutely to the book. "Tell me again, and don't interrupt me," and she said not a word more. Words are gross, clumsy, insufficient; but his eyes flashed forth an oration in a second. They told her in one swift, transient glance, the height and depth and length and breadth of a love sincere, pure, eternal; they demanded eloquently, pitifully, imploringly, hers in return. There probably never was a quicker declaration than his. Now, how did she know what he meant by the incomplete and irrelevant question, "Will you not?" But woman's heart is a good deal subtler than electricity or magnetism, or any other impalpable agency. She seemed to think the query pertinent and natural. She looked at Vincent, but her eyes were covetous; his gaze swept them both; she tried to draw away, but his grasp was firmer than steel, though softer than velvet. She was surprised, vanquished. Her face was suffused, burning with blushes; she could not hide it with her hands, nor could she bear his gaze upon it, so she did the only practicable thing there was to be done; she hid it on her breast. She was a prisoner now, indeed.

Vincent's arms swept around her neck and he held her in a close embrace. At this interesting moment the door opened, and Mrs. Fairfax walked in with a wailer and bowl in her hand. "Mr. Graham," she began, "I've brought—oh, goodness gracious me!"—and down went the savory broth with a crash. "Oh! I suppose I did not know—pray pardon my intrusion;" and the good lady made for the door. "Don't go, Mrs. Fairfax," said Vincent. "You are killing me with love, Ethel." "Yes, I am dying." "And did you ever hear anything more beautifully expressed?"

"Of its master, ready to fly at a hostile look. "A half-tamed fawn approaching the kind hand and walked timidly to his side—like a his lustrous eyes that seemed to beg her unutterable love, of tender supplication. "Spoke, turned, and looked at him.

"It's a touch of fire to a ready fuse. The fingers scarcely touched his forehead; but there was another voice that drowned all at once Vincent said in low tones, "Stop.' "Are you satisfied?" and the blushing girl pretended to examine the bauble. "Pardon me, I am something of a soothsayer. Let me read your fortune in these delicate lines."

"No. I am an infidel in such matters."

"Well, will you not brush the hair from your eyes? It pales me to lift my hand." Ethel's soft warm hand lightly pushed back the brown masses of hair, the tips of her fingers scarcely touched his forehead; but it was a touch of fire to a ready fuse. The hands that the hypnotist could hardly raise caught both of her, and held them in a firm, but gentle grasp.

"You are my prisoner."

"So I see—at this moment."

"And for life, for life," hecried, with sudden energy, and drew her towards him, "Oh! will you not, dear girl?"

Vincent was an eloquent fellow, but he said not a word more. Words are gross, clumsy, insufficient; but his eyes flashed forth an oration in a second. They told her in one swift, transient glance, the height and depth and length and breadth of a love sincere, pure, eternal; they demanded eloquently, pitifully, imploringly, hers in return. There probably never was a quicker declaration than his. Now, how did she know what he meant by the incomplete and irrelevant question, "Will you not?" But woman's heart is a good deal subtler than electricity or magnetism, or any other impalpable agency. She seemed to think the query pertinent and natural. She looked at Vincent, but her eyes were covetous; his gaze swept them both; she tried to draw away, but his grasp was firmer than steel, though softer than velvet. She was surprised, vanquished. Her face was suffused, burning with blushes; she could not hide it with her hands, nor could she bear his gaze upon it, so she did the only practicable thing there was to be done; she hid it on her breast. She was a prisoner now, indeed.

CHAPTER XIII.

ON THE TRACK.

A day or two before the scene described in the last chapter, Mr. Alexander Conger was sitting in an exceedingly neat office talking with two men, both of whom were remarkably quiet in their manner, and remarkably intelligent in their appearance. They made notes of what Mr. Conger said, and nodded in assent, but said nothing. "And now about this Mrs. Jarvis, she doesn't suspect she's spotted, Roberts?" "Not the least glimmering in the world, sir."

"Yes. Well, what have you done with her?"

"My wife has her as a sort of overseer of the servants, and if she outwits Polly Roberts, it's more than I could ever do."

"Very well. Now how about hunting up the costumer who furnished this hat's sisters?"

"I was at it all yesterday," said the man, who had not yet spoken, "and all this morning. Now there are a good many such places in the city, and I've not come across anything yet.

"Yes. Well I've an idea. Fellow, that this chap got that bear's skin at a sporting shop."

"Why so, sir?"

"Why see its much more in accordance with the habits of these fellows, and they could get it cheaper—they may not have been very fresh. You have a list of pawn-brokers, Fellow?"

"Yes," said Fellow, and he produced a very neatly written slip of paper.

"工作中, you heard her accept me."

"I didn't have the slightest idea of proposing; but somehow I couldn't help it."

"Oh! I dare say it was very natural to go; but some men find it a difficult thing to do. I remember when Mr. Conger offered himself to me, 'Jane,' said he, 'I— I—' and blushed and stammered, 'love me,' I suppose,' said I. 'Yes,' said he, 'that's what I mean, and will you—you—' marry me? says I. 'Yes,' says he, 'that's what I wanted you to say.' "Well," says I, 'I don't mind if I do,' and on that he up and juggled me.

"He didn't hesitate in that, at all, I suppose," said Vincent, laughing.
"I say, Mr. Wilkins, I'm going to tell you something."

"Well, out with it."

"I'm in a devil of a scrape. I've got the books 'on me."

"The deuce you have! what for?"

"Why, y'see I knocked a man down with a decanter the other night when I was pretty high, and they say he's in a bad way. I didn't walk up the street. You couldn't stow me away anywhere, till dark, could you?"

"I couldn't,"

"I suppose if you could, I'd pay you handsome."

"No, I've no place to hide any one."

"Let's look into that closet," and Conger opened it as he spoke. It held nothing but coal-hods and brooms. There was no other door in the room, except the one opening into the hall. Conger was puzzled. "I'm certain that fellow's here," he muttered, "perhaps under the bar."

"Let me get under that counter."

"It's all piled up with bottles and lemon-boxes."

"You see me, and Conger vanished nilly-boo over it."

"Where the devil could he have stowed himself?"

"The room was rather narrow and the space between the end of the table and the rack, not great. Conger stood there to make a shot and rammed the butt of his cue with his palm, and opened it as he spoke. It held nothing but some."

"No harm's done. But let me see behind that rack."

"There's nothing there, sir, on my soul."

"I prefer to believe my eyes. Open it or I'll have it broken down in two minutes."

Wilkins saw concealment was no longer possible. He touched a spring and pulled the rack open. A recess was disclosed about five feet deep, and the width of the rack. Conger looked in,—to his astonishment it was empty!

"There, I told you so, sir!"

"Cursed fool! Think you've got me, don't you?"

"You don't mean it!" said Gouger, carelessly.

"I mean—" he stammered.

"Well," said he, "I'll have it broken down in two minutes."

Instantly Conger's manner changed. He stood erect, with gleaming eyes, and uttered one or two words in a calm, resolute tone.

"The change in Wilkins' manner was ludicrous. His hostile air immediately gave way to an obsequious and fawning one."

"Oh, I beg pardon, sir. I didn't know you were in the police. I meant to harm, sir, I assure you."

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Instan...
BAFFLED SCHEMES.

"Well, there he is," said the keen-eyed doctor, "leaning against that pillar yonder." Conger looked. There was the man, certainly, with a flashy-looking girl, in a gaudy bonnet, with him.

"Don't let him see you looking," said Conger. "I say, Fellows, let me make you acquainted with Dr. Brown."

The doctor bowed gracefully, and Fellows keenly looked at him as he nodded his head.

"You'd better keep your eye on the corner," said Mr. Conger. "No fear, sir," said Fellows. "I am going to the door," said Conger, and he rose and went.

Ezra was sitting near the door, evidently ill at ease. He glanced furiously about him now and then, and paid not the slightest attention to the young woman at his side. But all at once he turned to her and said,—

"I say, Sal, let's get out of this."

"Oh! hold up till this act's over."

"You've got to come now, or go home alone," said Ezra; and the girl rose reluctantly and followed her companion. At the same moment Fellows and Dr. Brown (who had expressed his determination to assist in the capture) also left their seats.

This movement instantly attracted Ezra's attention. His wits, sharpened by apprehension, at once told him that he was watched.

"These men are after me, Sal," said he, indicating Fellows and the doctor, with a jerk of his thumb.

Now Sal was a quick-witted young woman. Probably the only feasible plan of escape there was, flashed upon her in a moment. She drew her companion into one of the dim recesses in the corridor of the old theatre. The gas-lamps near this spot had gone out. The gas in the theatre, formed by an arch and column. The gas-discharge near this spot had gone out, or had not been lit, and the place was really dark to those who came out from the glare of the theatre.

"I've got on two pair o' pantaloons," she said, hurriedly.

"Yes, of course I have; I always wear two pairs."

"Then off with one," said she, at the same time shaking herself out of her skirt. Ezra had his outer pantaloons off in a moment, and the girl quickly donned them.

"Hop into that dress," cried she, and Ezra did so in a twinkling. "Now let me have your coat and hat, and take my long shawl."

These changes were almost instantly effected. The girl piled her short curls on the top of her head, and put on Ezra's big felt hat. With his great-coat reaching to her knees, she certainly looked like a short and thick-set man. The hat almost entirely concealed her hair and face. Ezra, in the shawl, skirt, and bonnet, might certainly pass for a woman of great size.

All this had not taken a minute. Fellows and Dr. Brown had not reached the door of exit before Ezra and his companion emerged with their changed appearances from the shabby nook, and instantly separated.

Conger, however, had seen them enter the recess, and suspected their intention. When they came out he once detected the ruse, but he had not time to call his companions before the man, dressed as a woman, darted out into the Bowery. Conger followed without a moment's delay.

Fellows and Dr. Brown were surprised to see Conger rush out after the woman (as they thought), while the man was walking busily to another door. Without stopping, however, to comment on this, they overtook the supposed man, and Fellows chatted his hand on her shoulder. His ammunition may be imagined, when a shrill girl's voice cried,—

"Well, you are rude, I must say; and she took off her hat and showed her woman's curls."

"Well, may I be damned!" cried Fellows. "Oh, you will be — never fear!" said the girl.

"Forkum et mutabile stumper feminam," said the doctor.

"What's that lingo?" asked the woman.

"Outwitted by a girl," ground Fellows.

"Come with me, my woman."

"Where to, may I ask?"

"To this same house."

"What for? I should like to know what I've done," said Sal.

"Accomplice to a murderer, that's all," said Fellows; and he marched her off, followed by the doctor.

Conger kept his eye on Ezra as they left the theatre. Some instinct prompted the fellow to run, for he did not know he was pursued. So he pulled up his skirts in a very feminine manner, and ran swiftly up the Bowery. His appearance was certainly unique, and so the boys in the street thought. "Go it, old woman!" "I bet on you!" and other remarks, complimentary and otherwise, followed the rapid female as she splashed along.

BAFFLED SCHEMES.
"Stop that woman!" shouted Conger.

Hearing this, Sara looked behind and saw the detective fast overhauling him. To dart into a miserable little alley, that looked like a canal choked with filth, and strip himself of his woman's gear, was the act of a second.

The night was dark and dryly. Conger saw the man suddenly disappear, but where he went he could not tell. Whether he had taken refuge in some house or darted into some alley, he was, of course, unable to say.

Now, the operations of the detective's mind were swift. In an instant he had suggested the question, and decided that he had not entered any building. "It is not likely," thought he, "that he has any efts or pals so near the one he has in Grand Street. He has gone up that alley." Conger stood still near its mouth and made a peculiar whistle. At once, as if they had sprung from the ground, two men appeared, and he expected to see the detective fast overhauling him. To dart into a sewer. He did remember it, and advanced.

The gloom of the sad events passed over gradually, in a measure; and in the mean time love matters proceeded favorably. Never was there a happier party. They had not seen enough of Mr. Franchot to feel small, compact bundle, which lie stowed Never was there a happier party. They had not gone a yard, when they stumbled upon a man, and they expected to be followed.

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Morris? Morris? I never even heard the name.

“Well,” said Jessee, “let the mysterious stranger go. Perhaps he is a ghost—who knows? We ought to start for home, Edwin.”

Soon they were all gathering morbidly home together. Mr. Morris saw them go. He came out from his house, and threw himself on the grass.

“O my God! My God!” he groaned; “poor child! O my darling! Oh, the villain— the villain!”

Suddenly he sprang up erect, his fierce eyes gleaming.

“My revenge is nearly ripe, thank God! Nearly ripe, nearly ripe!”

CHAPTER XV.

THE PURSUIT AND CAPTURE.

“Now,” continued Mr. Conger, “what do you think of this?— Open the door and come in.”

“A small yard, sir, with high brick wall round it, and spikes to the top of it.”

“Very good. Now Dexter, do you go in and take the fellow out. We’ll wait outside.”

“I’ve seen him, and I want to get him quietly, without fuss, you see? or I’d nabbed him by now.”

Ezra was immediately on his guard, and fired. Poor Tim staggered, groaned, and fell.

“Get me!”

“Not far off.”

“I’ll get him. Well, I’ve no objections,” said Dexter.

“Where are you going?”

“Don’t you wish they may get me?”

“Where are you going?”

“Not into the street!”

“Why, man, they’ll nab you!”

“Never you fear. Perhaps they will, and then again, perhaps they won’t. I must get this fool’s pistol; and he took that from the still insensible man’s pocket, and examined it. “All right,— run.”

“Be quiet,” whispered Ezra.

“The fellow’s going to stand at bay with his pistol.”

“Timmie!” said Ezra, dashing off at great speed.

Ezra did not have more than five rods ahead. For an instant he hesitated, but then turned and ran as never before. For an instant he hesitated, but then turned and ran as never before. For an instant he hesitated, but then turned and ran as never before. For an instant he hesitated, but then turned and ran as never before. For an instant he hesitated, but then turned and ran as never before.

“Dexter!” cried Ezra, dashing off at great speed.

Ezra did not have more than five rods ahead. For an instant he hesitated, but then turned and ran as never before.

“Serves you right,” cried Ezra, dashing off at great speed.

“Here, Jiggs, quick!” cried Ezra; “this fool’s been trying to cheat me, but I have rather caught him.”

“Morgan.”

“Very good. Now Dexter, do you go in and take the fellow out. We’ll wait outside.”

“Why, man, you’ll nab him!”

“Never you fear. Perhaps they will, and then again, perhaps they won’t. I must get this fool’s pistol; and he took that from the still insensible man’s pocket, and examined it. “All right,— run.”

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“The fellow’s going to stand at bay with his pistol.”

“Timmie!” said Ezra, dashing off at great speed.

Ezra did not have more than five rods ahead. For an instant he hesitated, but then turned and ran as never before.
ground, he drew a small dark lantern from his pocket, with difficulty lit it, and carefully examined the ground. The soft mud showed no footprints but his own.

"Death and fury!" he exclaimed; "the fellow didn't get out after all!"

He hastily blew out the lantern, ran and vaulted over the low, rotten board-fence, and found himself in the yard of a neighboring house. He emerged from this in the same manner, and got into a yard with a high fence with a door in it. The door was fastened. Conger took a short steel bar from his pocket, and wrenched the padlock open. He passed through the door, and found himself in a narrow lane or alley running between the fence and the wall of the next house. Quickly running down this alley, he came into the street in which the gin-shop was situated, and in a moment was back to the place.

"The fellow's in there yet," was his thought. "Now, how to get him out?"

At this moment the officer who had started in the chase with him, and had been outrun, turned in a side street.

"Where have you been, sir? I got blown, and took care of Tim; he's badly hurt. Since then, I've been trying to find you."

"Yes. Well, the man we want's in that house."

"Is that so? Well, can't we go out?

"I guess so; but he's a tough customer. Do you go in, Joe, and see what's to be done?"

"I've lost sight of Joe, sir, for the last ten minutes. On coming out, he said, —"

"There's no one in there, sir, I do believe, but the Dutchman and his wife. I showed my authority and searched the house."

"But how could he have got out?"

"Don't know, I'm sure; but he's not there, Mr. Conger."

"But I think he is. Holler! Here comes that woman."

As he spoke, a large woman came up from the cellar. She had on an immense bonnet, and a shawl was wrapped around her neck and chin. A long cloak, reaching nearly to her heels, and a huge blue cotton umbrella afforded her protection from the rain. On seeing Mr. Conger and his companion, she

"My good woman," said Conger, "where are you going at this time of night?"

"None of your business, sir. You mind your business and I'll mind my business."

"Now don't be so cross, my good soul," said Conger. "I think you good soul," said the woman, gravely. "You go to de trill. I'm going to the station-house."

"What are you going to the station-house for?"

"None of your business," said the woman, moving off. Conger and Joe followed and overtook her.

"Go back, Joe," said the former, "and watch the place. I'll attend to this woman."

"Now vat you want?" asked the woman.

"Why I want to accompany you," said Conger. "It isn't safe for a woman to be out alone at this time of night."

"Well, I don't want you, I tell you."

"Oh! you'd better let me go," said Conger, persuasively;

"All let you go to the trill."

"You are very kind, I'd rather go with you."

"Well, I won't go at all," and she sat down on the steps of a house.

"Good, and pull near the curb and pulled out a piece of plug tobacco."

"Give me some tobacco," said the woman.

"Now it is not very unusual for a woman to smoke, especially a Dutch woman; but they rarely, if ever, chew tobacco. So walked rapidly up the Avenue. Conger, at some distance behind, followed. He detected the ruse instantly exposed the attempted cheat. Conger sprang forward. "Ah my man I have you, you fat fish."

"But I think he is. Hollo! Here comes that fellow."

"Oy, he said he was your bai."

"My pol be hanged! He's a policeman."

"Mein Gott!" repeated the Dutchman, whom these continued surprises were fast rendering idiotic.

"Well, well," said Ezra, laughing, "let's go down and have a drink."

As soon as Conger had reached the

"How much did he pay you?"

"Your ten dollar;"

"Well, I'll give you ten dollars if you'll show me his room."

"Yah!" cried the Dutchman; "ten dollars!"

"No, you never see de dollar.

"Ve'll, come on."

He took a lamp, and went up a crooked pair of stairs. Conger followed; then up stairs and another.

"There's his room," said the Dutchman, "see you de light."

As soon as Conger had reached the

"I don't!" cried the detective; "the fellow's got off."

The Dutchman stared stupidly at the sheets; his lips moved, as if to form the words, "Mein Gott!" but no sound issued from them.

Conger was boiling with rage, though apparently calm. "Thousand devils!" he muttered. "Shall I let this man outlive his luck?"

"Good-night, my friend," he cried; and

"There's his room," said the Dutchman, "see you de light."

"0h! you'd better let me go," said Conger, persuasively;

"All let you go to the trill."

"You are very kind, I'd rather go with you."

"Well, I won't go at all," and she sat down on the steps of a house.

"Good, and pull near the curb and pulled out a piece of plug tobacco."

"Give me some tobacco," said the woman.

Now when a man goes to catch anything in his lap, thrown at him, he always brings out his knife, and is dimly burning.

"Where did that woman go, who just came in?" asked the officer.

"Nobody has come in here, sir, for the last hour or more."

"I don't! I just saw her come in."

"She didn't come in here, sir; she came in by the hall.”

"Very well," said Conger, instead of pursuing him, shouted again to Joe and hurled into the lane. "He'll make for up-town, no doubt," was his thought. He ran up the alley into a side street and just as he emerged into Broadway he saw an omnibus, with a single occupant, going up. He had lost sight of Joe,—far that officer after coming out of the alley had gone in an opposite direction.

It was very late for a stage to be running, but this was the last one, and had been delayed by falling horses. Conger looked at the passenger; there could be no doubt it was Ezra, sitting on the hither seat with his back towards him. The detective ran up nimbly mounted to the driver's seat without stopping the vehicle, or being seen by Ezra. "Ah," thought he, with exultation, "I've got him now. There's a murderer inside," said he, to the driver,—"a man dressed as a woman."

"Well, that's none of my business," replied that stoical individual.

"Won't you help me catch him?"

"See you to the door, sir. How do I know but what you're a murderer?"

At this complimentary question, Conger was silent. He had no means of proving his official character.

The stage turned down Ninth Street into the Eighth Avenue. At Twenty-third Street Ezra got out. Conger jumped down and followed him without being seen. Ezra walked rapidly up the Avenue. Conger, at some distance behind, followed. The murderer at last entered a sort of hotel, on a corner. Conger, to avoid being seen, had stayed a half block or more behind. He followed Ezra quickly in. No one was in the office, save a sleepy porter. A gas-lamp was dimly burning.

"Where did that woman go, who just came in?" asked the officer.

"Nobody has come in here, sir, for the last hour or more."

"Don't! I just saw her come in."

"She didn't come in here, sir; she came in by the hall."
I was overjoyed at the opportunity of escorting towards Vincent's mother, and had been young Moore appeared equally attracted towards Graham, however, yielded to her husband's not get along without her just then. Mrs. York.

"Sie declared, laughingly, that she was jealous of that lady, and warned Edwin not to be too attentive to Mrs. Graham in the car. Young Moore appeared equally attracted towards Vincent's mother, and had been overjoyed at the opportunity of escorting her to the city. Arriving there, Mrs. Graham insisted upon Edwin's staying at her house during the few days that he was obliged to pass in New York.

Having some leisure one evening, Moore strolled down to Edward Temple's room. That young gentleman occupied lodgings in a private boarding-house, kept by a lady who rejoiced in the not common name of Jiggleswitch. As Moore went in he was surprised to see Mr. Conger, the detective, sitting there talking with Temple.

"Mr. Conger wants to know when Vint's coming home. Do you know, Ned?"

"Very soon, I think. Hasn't he written to you?"

Just as Temple was about to reply in the negative, Mrs. Jiggleswitch, the landlord, entered with a letter in her hand, which she gave to Temple without uttering a word.

Mrs. Jiggleswitch was a curious exception to her sex, for she never spoke unless it was absolutely necessary, and then in the fewest possible words. She seemed to hold conjunctions and other copulative expressions, might once have been quite pretty.

"Ah," said Temple, "this is from Vint, himself; and he writes that he is all right after what he calls his 'little shindy on the lawn.' He adds that he will be down here to-morrow."

"That is lucky," said Mr. Conger. "I must see Graham. It's the roughest thing my losing Branch's murderer."

"What do you mean?" said Moore; "how lost him?"

"Why, I found him alone, and he's got off. He's the strongest customer I ever had anything to do with. Bless you, it was like chasing a fox; and when caught, he slipped away like an eel. He nearly killed me."

"It's very strange," said he; "let me tell you about it, sir. I—"

"I can't stop here, my man," interrupted Conger; "walk along with me and I'll hear what you have to say."

"It fooled me to the top of my bent," said Edwin; "he blacked me up for all the world, like chasing a fox; and when caught, he slipped away like an eel. He nearly killed me."

"Your father's, sir?"

"Ellenzer Moore, my good woman. Why do you ask?"

"Jiggleswitch sat down in a chair, very pale and gasping for breath. The others said nothing, and presently she rose and left the room.

"That beats the devil," said Edwin; "what's the matter with the woman?"

"I haven't the slightest idea," said Temple; "she never asked that way before in her life."

"Come, Conger," said Moore, "ferret out this mystery."

"Hardly my line," replied the detective.

"I'm too busy, you see. These are very pleasant quarters of yours, Mr. Temple, but I mustn't stay here any longer."

And he pulled out a very neat memorandum book, and consulted it.

"What have you there?" asked Temple, carelessly.

A perfect barometer of the public morals, my dear sir. I have a habit of reading newspapers without uttering a word."

"Oh! there's no use in coming here," said Temple, "to you?"

"Oh! don't chase him any more to-night," said Temple, "to you?"

"I can't. I am going to search the sitting there talking with Temple.

"Oh! don't chase him any more to-night," said Temple, "to you?"

"Why not?"

"Oh! there's no use in coming here," said Temple, "to you?"

"No use! How the devil am I to get him if I don't chase him?"

"But I tell you there's no use."

"Why not?"

"Come here and I'll show you," said the doctor, and he opened the door of his room and pointed in. The detective looked in.

There was Ezra, with his hands and feet tied, sitting in a chair, and gnashing his teeth with rage. His woman's ailments were off.

"You're making a call," said the doctor, with his loud laugh.

**CHAPTER XVI.**

**DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.**

Edwin Moore, being now entirely well, and urged by his conscience to report for military duty, reluctantly bade farewell to Jessie and the others, and hurried down to New York. Dr. Parkes advised Vincent to wait a few days longer, and also impressed Mrs. Graham to remain, protesting that he could not be too attentive to her just then. Mrs. Graham, however, yielded to her husband's entreaties, and went down to the city with Moore. Vincent stood no longer in need of her care.

Mrs. Graham seemed to have taken a great fancy to Edwin Moore. In fact, Jessie declared, laughingly, that she was jealous of that lady, and warned Edwin not to be too attentive to Mrs. Graham in the car. Young Moore appeared equally attracted towards Vincent's mother, and had been overjoyed at the opportunity of escorting her to the city. Arriving there, Mrs. Graham insisted upon Edwin's staying at her house during the few days that he was obliged to pass in New York.

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Mrs. Jiggleswitch was a curious exception to her sex, for she never spoke unless it was absolutely necessary, and then in the fewest possible words. She seemed to hold conjunctions and other copulative parts of speech, auxiliary verbs and prepositions in contempt; for she rarely employed them. She was a middle-aged female; her face, though usually wore a severe expression, might once have been quite pretty.

"Ah," said Temple, "this is from Vint, himself; and he writes that he is all right after what he calls his 'little shindy on the lawn.' He adds that he will be down here to-morrow."

"That is lucky," said Mr. Conger. "I must see Graham. It's the roughest thing my losing Branch's murderer."

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A perfect barometer of the public morals, my dear sir. I have a habit of reading newspapers without uttering a word."

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"No use! How the devil am I to get him if I don't chase him?"

"But I tell you there's no use."

"Why not?"

"Come here and I'll show you," said the doctor, and he opened the door of his room and pointed in. The detective looked in.

There was Ezra, with his hands and feet tied, sitting in a chair, and gnashing his teeth with rage. His woman's ailments were off.

"You're making a call," said the doctor, with his loud laugh.
He went into Mr. Conger's office, but found no one there. He felt in the office and observed that he thought Mr. Conger would be in soon, and, asking Vincent to be seated, left the room.

A green, baize-covered table, a desk, one or two chairs, and a safe comprised all the furniture of the room. There were no pictures on the walls, but a number of maps of New York City. Several inksstands, quill-pens, sheets of blotting-paper, and waxen rolls were on the desk, but there was not a book to be seen, nor a newspaper. Vincent walked round and examined the maps and yawned. A small scrap of paper with some words written on it, caught his eye. He picked it up to examine, scarcely aware of what he was doing.

In an instant he turned deadly pale, and felt a sudden sickness. He saw these words in Mr. Conger's handwriting:

}'Circumstances of William Moore's death suspicious—very. McManus don't lie. Must warn more out of him. In this matter I here the paper was torn off.

The awful horror of his position rushed, overwhelmingly, upon Vincent's mind.

The suspicion of his father's guilt, that had flashed upon him during his conversation with Ethel, was now strengthened. It was, it appeared, no morbid fancy of his own. This shrewd detective also suspected foul play. And he well knew that the officer would never let the matter rest till he had satisfied himself. If his father was a murderer, — horrible thought! Vincent groaned as he mentally formed the words, — it would eventually be known. The young man instantly resolved to screen his father, guilty or not guilty, and to bend all the powers of his mind to the task of foiling the detective.

As he thought of the unendurable consequences of detection, Vincent grew calm.

He took his place, — his present wreath of looks and preoccupied mind. —

"No motive to urge G. Must I find out all he knows. —

Were G. and M. ever on bad terms? Was G. in need of the money?"

Vincent threw the paper back where he had found it, and sighed deeply. "How well he expresses my own thoughts! Good God! I will not listen to these damnable suggestions! Heaven help me to put him off the track."

For some minutes he sat in deep and gloomy thought. At length, hearing some one in the outer hall, he pulled a letter from his pocket, and Conger entered to find him leaning back in his chair, apparently absorbed in some campaign.

"Well, my Jupiter Tomson of detectives!" cried Vincent, gaily; "Thou hast come at last,—last thou? If it is your custom to keep visitors waiting in this style, allow me to suggest the propriety of having a list of illustrated newspapers on your table for their entertainment. 'Tis my word, this is the most uninteresting place I ever got into."

This latter is quite amusing, but the most poignant epistolary matter falls in time.

'The room is rather bare, I admit, but you see we don't want our attention distracted by external objects, Mr. Graham. —"
The doctor went back to his school in Massachusetts, the day after this adventure, first entreating me to let him know when this murderer's hanging took place, for he wanted to see it. It isn't my way, to boast much, Graham, but I'll make New York too hot to hold that fellow.

"Well," said Vincent, who had listened to Conger's narrative with much interest, "I think you detectives are to be envied. It must be a very exciting life. It seems to demand both mental and physical activity. The most interesting part to me would be working up a case, starting from mere hints and tracking a thing out through maze after maze. How is it with you?"

"I agree with you; searching after clues is the best fun; and I like to 'work up a case.' The poor fellow little thinks I'm 'working up a case now,'" said Conger, to himself.

"But I should think," pursued Vincent, "that your profession would tend to render you unemotional and pitiless. Of course it wouldn't do to let any sentiments of compassion interfere with your duties."

"Of course not," said Conger, "nor do we care to be regarded by any consideration of the unhappiness we may cause innocent parties. 'Justitia fat,' etc., is our motto, Mr. Graham."

"Quite right," said Vincent. "At least it is a carefree manner, with a radiant smile on his face, it was impossible for Conger to suspect the skilful apprehension that his last remark had excited in Vincent's breast. But the ruddy detective's mind was sharpened by long practice, and, in spite of appearances, a shadow—a mere shadow—of doubt occurred to him, as to whether Vincent was really so innocent, after all. Determined to find out, he asked very suddenly, and looking keenly at his companion—"Where's your father, sir?"

Vincent, much startled, did not betray the least sign of agitation; his face did not lose color; his manner, nor did he allow the least quiver of lip or eyelid; lie merely turned his head, and answered, "My father was murdered before his eyes. The first time I saw him was on the night of his death."

Vincent laughed, not loudly, and seemed much amused. Conger looked at him in surprise.

"You told me, Conger, this is rich. So you are taken in, too—of all men! ha! ha!"

"What do you mean?" asked Conger, rather disturbed.

"I know as I blame you much, though," said Vincent, "you knew nothing about the old man. So you really supposed he had some business with my father? I think my father would like to see him, however, to keep him out of mischief. The man's as crazy as a loon."

"I don't talk like a crazy man," said Conger, puzzled.

Vincent smiled satirically. "Don't you think so? I always thought he did; but I've seen more of him than you have."

"I agree with you;" said Conger, "but his mind must be filled with pleasant thoughts. Fancy the delight of continually bumping on such topics! I hope he will call at father's; he'll detest him and send word to Dr. Parkes. Dr. Parkes thinks he can cure him eventually, but I don't see much chance myself."

"I suppose they do. They say dyspepsics are much like monomaniacs, and I'm sure they have a rough time of it. Heaven defend me from insipid, 'parents of all blue-devils!' I've seen enough of that infernal madness at home."

"How so?"

"My father is a perfect martyr to it. He bears up well, but I see the torture he suffers. In the rare intervals when he is free from it, he is like his old self, as merry as a lark; even when it is at its worst he endeavors to be cheerful."

"What a fool I am!" thought Conger; "it isn't his conscience that troubles him, but his pancreas."

"Are you going to stay in the city all summer, Mr. Conger?"

"Yes, I suppose so. I don't have much time to myself, Graham. It is a pretty hard life."

"I'd like to take you on a yachting cruise. It is good to take some respite from the vigor of mind such a thing would impart to you. Illness might as well go hang themselves after you returned."

"I'm not half as smart as people think me, or as I thought myself," said Conger to himself.
BAFFLED SCHEMES

CHAPTER XVII.

Dr. Brown foiled.

Ezra Brown was considerably astonished, the morning after he returned to H----, to see Ezra Hoyt in the street.

"Shades of Hercules!" he cried, "the doctor's favorite invocation,--"I'll have that man or my name's not Euripides Brown! I'd like to get him myself by some trap. Now, how can I do it?" and the doctor fell into a "brown study." The explanation of Ezra's presence in this town is simple. It was the residence of a celebrated eye-doctor, whose specialty was strabismus. Cross-eyed people blessed him. Most wonderful cures had been effected by this man,--Dr. Heavyvale by name,--as countless certificates of the "most respectable citizens" amply proved. His fame and name, blazoned daily in all the newspapers in New York, had come to Ezra's ears, and induced that individual to make a personal trial of this oculist's skill.

They opened the door, and Ezra was sitting quietly at the table, with his back to the door. They all rushed downstairs. Ezra was a prisoner. They entered the bare play-ground of the house. There was no furniture in it, with the exception of a table and one chair.

"Ezra," said Miss Antigone, "empty those boxes and bring them down into the yard." She glanced at Ezra occasionally, and his face affected her strangely; for, in spite of his crooked eyes and red hair, he was very like his father, the deceas'd Dr. Richard Hoyt, whom, it will be remembered, Miss Antigone had loved and lost. Had the lady been aware of Ezra's parentage, it is probable that she would not have associated her father in the villain's capture with even more readiness than she did.

They entered the bare play-ground of the school, passed through it, and went into the house.

"Where is the gentleman?" asked Ezra.

"He is not well; but there is no need of your seeing him. I can show you what we want you to do. In the first place, you must bring down some boxes from the garret. Come with me." They went up the uncarpeted stairs, and entered a large, low room at the top of the house. There was no furniture in it, with the exception of a table and one chair. On pegs against the wall hung several suits of clothes, and one or two pine boxes containing clothes were in the room, while a great heap of straw, brush, or packing paper, quite filled one corner. A small oval-shaped window, not more than eight inches wide nor long, scarcely illuminated this apartment.

"There, James," said Miss Antigone; "empty those boxes and bring them down into the yard.

He began the work. Miss Antigone went quickly out, slammed the door behind her, instantly turned the key in the large, rusty lock, and Ezra was a prisoner.

"There!" cried the damsel, with exultation; "I think I've managed nicely; and she hurried downstairs to acquaint her father with her success.

Ezra, surprised and amazed, ran to the door, and shook it violently; but it was of tough oak, and resisted all his force. He went to the window,--he could not get even his head through the small hole. Grinding his teeth he swore horribly for some minutes. He was, and no wonder, unspeakably surprised at the turn affairs had taken.

"This beats the very devil!" he growled. "Now how to get out?"

The wily ruffian sat down and pondered over his situation gloomily. "I have it!" he cried, at length, and immediately sprang up, and began his operations for liberation.

"Miss Brown hastened to her father. "I've got him!" cried she; "I've locked him up in the attle chamber. I do believe he's that scamp's son; he looks like him. What are you going to do with him, father?"

"Send a boy with a notice to Justice King, and another to the sheriff. They can take him into custody, and I will write to Mr. Conger."

In about an hour the two officials arrived.

"Where is the rascal?" asked Squire King.

"I have him locked up all right."

"What charge do you bring against him?"

"Why, he's a murderer."

"Well, I can't have him arrested in this State, without authority. Can't you prefer some charge against the man, yourself?"

"Yes; I can charge him with false imprisonment; he locked me up in my own room."

"Well," said the justice, "make out your affidavit, and I'll issue a warrant."

The papers were soon drawn up, and, armed with the warrant, the sheriff went upstairs, followed by the magistrate and doctor.

"Will you surrender peaceably?" shouted the officer, through the keyhole. "I have a posse with me."

"Yes," said Ezra, within the room.

They opened the door. Ezra was sitting quietly at the table, with his back to the door. They all rushed in, and the sheriff grasped--a suit of clothes, stuffed with straw into the figure of a man, while at the same moment the murderer slipped out from behind the door and ran noiselessly down the stairs.

"Great Jove! Doctor Brown," cried the justice, in great wrath, "did you send for a posse to arrest a man of straw,--a hay figure?"

The doctor gasped with amazement.

"Shades of Hercules! Justice King, the man was here,--you heard him speak."

"Yes," said the sheriff; "and while we've been gaping like fools, he's slipped out!"

They all rushed downstairs. Ezra was out of the house and gone,—no one knew whither.

"Hang me!" cried the doctor; "he's the most ingenious dog I ever saw. It would take the devil to hold him!"

"I'll catch him before night," cried the sheriff, who had an exceedingly good opinion of his own ability.

"Do," said the doctor, "and I'll give you a barrel of cider."

"Ill catch him before night," cried the sheriff, who had an exceedingly good opinion of his own ability.
The sheriff seemed to be much overjoyed at this announcement, and to have the highest opinion of the doctor's beverage. The sheriff was a short man, with thick brown hair, and coarse yellow beard. He was very strong, apparently; his legs were thick and massive; his nose had a very abrupt upward tendency. He had a little of the "swaker in wads," probably, as any man in the county; his style was rather the "fortiter in re."

"I thought so. Well, I want you: you are charged with murder."

This announcement, which would certainly have amazed most innocent men, did not cause the man the alarm emotion. He merely replied, carelessly, —

"You've made some mistake, sir."

"Mistake be hanged! You're the man I want, so come along quietly or I'll call in assistance."

"Let me see your warrant," said the man, in the tone of one who asks, "What time is it?"

The sanguine Bangs, in his haste, had left this document at Parassus Hall. He felt in his pockets, and said, with a blank face,

"I haven't it with me."

"Then I believe I won't go with you," said Smith. "Hands off!"

The sheriff rushed at him. Smith poised himself sufficiently to deliver a very scientific blow with his left hand, and knocked the sheriff over the head. Smith had a stroke of the platform. At that moment the car came along, and nearly ran over the astounded Bangs; and almost before he had regained the platform Smith had taken his seat, and the train moved off. Smith put his head out of the window and nodded to the sheriff in mild and exasperated manner. If Bangs had not been so much engrossed with rage he would have seen Ezra, who certainly did look very much like John. He jumped up on the rear car and hastily entered.

The baffled officer returned to acquaint Dr. Brown with his failure, breathing vows of vengeance all the way.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SUSPICIONS CONFIRMED.

Since Vincent's avowal of love to Ethel, the latter had been greatly agitated and perplexed by various considerations. Her heart was fully given to young Graham and she felt perfect confidence in his love; but she was persuaded that he ought to acquaint him with the facts regarding her infancy. She was convinced that every sentiment of justice and honor demanded the revelation, and yet she shrank from it. She had no doubt in her own mind, after reading the note that her mother had written, that she was the illegitimate child of some unfortunate woman. She did not have a very clear conception of the strain and stigma that this cast upon herself, but she knew enough of the nature of her misfortune to fear that it might be a bar between Vincent and her, although she never entertained this thought without reproaching herself for it, as an injustice to Vincent. She felt utterly unable to communicate the facts to him herself, but she begged her father to write and acquaint Vincent with everything, immediately after her return to Boston.

Vincent had noticed a sort of sadness in Ethel's manner, now it was full of the tenderest love and expressing her unbounded confidence in their half-formed engagement. This letter affected Vincent very little, and the sad circumstances of her birth rather increased his love for her. He at once wrote back a fervent strain replying to her vows of love, and strongly expressing his utter disregard of any accidental circumstances of parentage. She cared nothing about Ethel's mother, he said; — it was Ethel herself whom he desired to win, and as for a name, she should henceforth have his own.

Ethel was greatly touched by her lover's magnanimity, and so Vincent was the delighted recipient of a zephyr full of the tenderest love and expressing her unabated confidence in their engagement. Thus was this momentous matter disposed of. Vincent acquainted his parents with his love for Ethel and their engagement, and the nature of his engagement delighted, but Vincent was paroled at his father's conduct. That gentleman rose and left the room abruptly without saying a word. The truth was, that Mr. Graham was horrified at the idea of his son marrying into the Moore family; he did not wish to be separated from his son marrying into the Moore family; he did not wish to be connected with an illegitimate woman. In spite of the elder Graham's horror of the name of Moore, when Mr. Ebenezer Moore, informing him of everything that he knew about Ethel's infancy, and containing a delicate allusion to Ethel's wish that he should consider himself at perfect liberty to annul their half-formed engagement.

This latter piece of intelligence was very agreeable to Mr. Graham. In spite of the large fortune he had so lately acquired, Mr. Graham lived far beyond his income. The reparations of his losses in speculation had consumed nearly the whole of his property, and Mr. Wychoff had sixty thousand dollars. His perquisites as executor of Mr. Moore's will would be very agreeable. He was also informed of a provision in that will, of which more anon.

Mr. Moore had scarcely returned to Boston when he took his sick leave, on account of his severe cold. Disregarding this, indulged of the lungs followed. His health, naturally delicate, gave way, and in ten days he was dead. Mr. Moore, at this time a confirmed invalid, did not survive the shock of his beloved Ethel's death a week. Thus, poor Ethel suddenly found herself an orphan indeed. We will not attempt to paint her grief at this her first great sorrow. A less elastic nature than that of Mr. Moore's might have been a very great blow. Mr. Graham hastened to the funeral, and, when the will was opened, he found himself executor of it and guardian of Ethel. He brought the somber young girl with him to New York, henceforth to live at his house. Mrs. Graham, who had a tender heart in spite of her sternness and reserve, set herself to the task of comforting Ethel, and in this she was so ably aided by Vincent, that the young lady soon recovered her cheerfulness of manner, and overcame her sorrow, in a measure.

Vincent, now in daily contact with his parent, felt less inclined to say, perfectly happy. His love for Ethel became the absorbing passion of his soul. Nothing disturbed the deep content he felt, but the dreadful suspicion of his father's guilt in

BAFFLED SCHEMES.

BAFFLED SCHEMES.

BAFFLED SCHEMES.
connection with the death of William Moore. He determined to satisfy himself of this at all hazards. He was not one of those who think that, "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise;" but invariably does his best to discover anything he ought to know, no matter how distressing the knowledge might prove. But he could not tell what steps to take in the present matter.

Two years or more thus passed quietly away. His marriage with Ethel was delayed by her parents' death.

One day he received a note from Dr. Parkes requesting him to come up to Wyckoff Hall. Surprised at this summons he took the first train thither. Dr. Parkes met him at the depot, and told him that he had discovered a very singular paper in a desk of the late M. Franchot, which he wished to show him. He led Vincent into the library, and produced the following lines, evidently written in great agitation,

"Grand God! How terrible! how horrible! Are my senses to be believed? M'die! Mon père et, William Moore, murdered! Would the aged Franchot lie? Heaven! is he not incapable of such? And Mr. William Moore?—Oh, what crime, what wickedness! Mon Dieu! to see this melancholy, fleeting man, in long black coat, and hoary Scotchman."  

Vincent read these words with blanched lips. "What do you think of that?" asked Dr. Parkes.

"It reads like the vapors of insanity. What can it mean? 'William Moore murdered!' Bah! was he not seen to fall overboard!"

"By whom?" "Why, by my father and the servants," replied Vincent, who heartily wished to show him. He led Vincent into the library, and produced the following lines, evidently written in great agitation,

"What do you think of that?" asked Dr. Parkes; "none but he would preserve the likeness of his successful rival." Vincent gazed at the painting. "May I see it you."

That afternoon Vincent mounted one of the horse's horses, and trotted swiftly along to the grove. The thought was torture. The sorrowful exclamations of poor Franchot had convinced him of his father's guilt. He a murderer's son, poor Franchot had convinced him, as innocent of the crime as yourself."

"Forgive me," said Vincent. "I am sure you are; but tell me all about it."

"Nay, I shall not; you said you knew," returned the other, suspiciously.

"I do know nearly all, but I want my knowledge confirmed. Mr. William Moore was walking on the river bank after Mr. Wyckoff's death with his father and was dashed against the pier by the current."

"Ay! by whom?"

"I think I know; but the thought is dreadful."

"You are right, young man,—more the pity. Twas your father shoved him in. I saw him."

Although Vincent expected this announcement and thought himself prepared for it, he could not repress a low cry of anguish at the old man's words.

"Nay, nay, my poor lad, do not grieve."

At this question the Scotchman wrinkled as if in pain.

"Ask me not, ask me not. I could not do it. I have been a wicked man. I have greatly wronged your father, and could not bear the thought of telling on him."

"What have you done to my father?" asked Vincent, surprised.

"I cannot tell ye. Ask me not."

"Isn't your name McManus?"

"Yes, I was gardener to Mr. Wyckoff."

"And you knew about it, did you? Why have you kept it secret all these years?"

At this question the Scotchman wrinkled as if in pain.

"Ask me not, ask me not. I could not do it. I have been a wicked man. I have greatly wronged your father, and could not bear the thought of telling on him."

"Well, sir, I was in the shadow of the thick bushes on the bank, and Mr. Graham did not see nor hear me. I was mortal afraid. I must confess. There was a bit o' moon, and your father's face as the dim light fell on it,—he looked like a devil," said McManus, in a low voice, shuddering at the recollection.

"Well, sir," he continued, "as I sat there
FATHER AND SON.

Mr. Graham deliberately unfolded a legal-looking document, and, glancing at his son, observed, "This is the will of the late Mr. Ebenezer Moore, which has just been admitted to probate."

Vincent bowed. "As you know," pursued his father, "it left a third of his estate to his wife. Since her death this portion reverts to his children. The will also leaves one half of his remaining fortune to his son, the other to his daughter. This you also know. But the condition on which the remaining moiety, was left to his daughter, you do not know. I will read it to you. "I give and bequeath my beloved daughter Ethel, the remaining half of my estate, real and personal, on condition that she does not marry without the full permission and consent of her guardian, herinundernamed. And this condition is imposed, not through any want of confidence in my beloved child, in whom I have, and always have had, the most complete trust, but that her beauty and fortune might cause her to fall a prey to some unprincipled adventurer." This provision is not drawn up in very lawyer-like style (I suppose the old gentleman wrote it himself), but is very full and clear, isn't it?"

"Very, sir."

"You are also aware that I am the guardian appointed by the will?"

"I am, sir."

"Very well. Then it only remains for me to observe that my consent shall never be given to my ward's marriage with you, for reasons which are all-sufficient, although I do not choose to tell them to you. I may also state that the portion of my estate which I have bequeathed by will to you, is forfeited if you marry without my consent, and that my consent to a marriage with Miss Moore, will, as I have said before, never be given. You thus perceive that if you still intend to 'act according to your own determination, you will marry a penniless bride, and be yourself without resources. Such a shreded fellow as yourself will not be long in making up your mind.'"

"I know it, sir."

"May I ask the reason of this very extraordinary act of yours? I intend to speak distinctly."

"I am not at liberty to tell you. Enough that nothing can alter my purpose in the least."

"Nothing, sir? Pardon me, I think you will alter your mind this morning,—in less than half an hour."

"What do you mean? cried Mr. Graham. "I think I am right," pursued Vincent. "You mentioned that you would not leave me the share of your fortune that you intended me, in case I married Miss Moore?"

"I did."

"May I ask whether by 'your fortune' you mean the three hundred thousand dollars Mr. Wyckoff left you, or the three hundred thousand in addition, that properly belonged to Mr. William W. Moore, now deceased?"

Mr. Graham started at these words, and changed颜色. "Why do you ask such a question? You know very well that by this man's death I came in possession of Mr. Wyckoff's entire fortune."

"I am aware of it. By 'this man' I presume you mean Mr. William Moore. Why do you hesitate to pronounce his name? He looked at his father keenly, with gleaming eyes. Mr. Graham dropped his own, and said to himself: "I have no reason to hesitate in pronouncing his name."

"Oh, you have not? I am very glad, yes, very glad, oh, excessively glad! The recollection of William Moore is very pleasant to you, sir, doubtless. You love to think about him, I imagine. You generally do think about him, do you not? Yes, yes, you haven't forgotten his form, his features? Wouldn't you like to see his portrait?" and he pulled Mr. Moore's miniature from his pocket and thrust it into his father's face. Mr. Graham drew back with an involuntary cry of horror; his face was the color of ashes, and he veiled his eyes with trembling fingers.

Vincent looked at him with a pallid scrutiny. "His horror at the deed his father had been guilty of was so great, that all sentiments of filial affection, of natural love, were overborne, annihilated. He felt a savage joy at his father's distress. In punishing tyrant or crin, he was an imman, an executioner utterly incapable of pity. As he had felt in thrashing Baxter in his school-days, so he felt now, as he confronted his father sinking under the burden of his guilt. "Why, the sight of his features disposes you, doesn't it? Strange! Why, he was your most intimate friend; you knew him when you were both young men; you had travelled with him, feasted with him, held business connections with him. He loved you as a brother; he thought you the embodiment of manly honor; he confided his griefs to you; he thought you a man incapable of baseness, of treachery, of guilt!"

At these words, each of which pierced the guilty man's breast like a barbed arrow, Mr. Graham was terribly agitated. His face was always colorless, but now it was the face of a corpse. He looked at his son with a strange alarm, but his self-command did not desert him. He composed his features, and, in an unconcerned voice, asked the meaning of all this rodomontade. "Are you crazy? You talk wildly, and are wandering from the subject of our conversation."

"Pardon me, I am not. Will you allow me the use of this pen a moment?"

"What do you want to write?"

"I will show you in a moment. In the mean time, sir, you can recover your composure, which seems to have been unaccountably disturbed."

Vincent wrote, and handed what he had written to his father. Mr. Graham read it, and smiled scornfully. "A written unconditional consent to Ethel's marriage with you. Have I not already told you that I will not give this consent?"

"Yes; but I said I thought you would. I know a little circumstance which perhaps you may not wish to have generally disclosed about."

Mr. Graham looked puzzled. No suspicion of his son's knowledge of the murder yet dawned upon him. "What is the little circumstance?"

"I shall tell you?"

"Yes?"

"They were sitting opposite each other at a narrow, massive, oak writing-table... VIN..."
cent stretched across, and bringing his face close to his father's, and, looking with an inexpressible gaze into his startled eyes, saki, with the clearest enunciation and in his hardest, crooked, most pitiless tones—tones which seemed to freeze the blood—

"Mercy, sir, that you are the murderer of William Moore!" He had risen as he spoke, and now stood towering above the object man, with eyes that glowed like coals, like an avenging fury.

We are utterly incapable of depicting the effect, upon the murderer, of this awful choker, so unexpected, so overwhelming.

He who sat there a moment before, proud and erect, was now a miserable, quivering wretch, his teeth chattering, his trembling hands raised above his head, as if to ward off an assassin's blow.

"Mercy, pity, pity!" he groaned, almost inaudibly.

"Mercy, pity to you! pity to you!" cried Vincent, in the same terrible tone.

"My son, my son, kill me not," moaned the almost lifeless man.

"Your son? O God, I am! Oh, unutterable woe!" and a groan of such despair as Dilys had heard in his life, burst from his lips. He gazed at his father with the same disgust one feels for a disfigured corpse,—utter loathing.

"I am your son, and I could curse you for it," blurted out the man's face fell over the table, and he groaned aloud. Vincent strode up and down the narrow room, with teeth hard-set, and hands fiercely clenched. His expression was difficult, so great was the excitement he harbored within. But he soon gained a sombre calmness,—calmness more forbidding than his late vehemence. He advanced to the table.

"Mr. Moore," said he, "for I will never call you 'father' again,—will you sign that paper?"

"Yes, yes," cried the other, raising his voice. "You were there at the time, I believe?"

"Yes. You were walking with him, were you not?"

"Yes. You were with him, were you not?"

"Yes, but,—" said the other, faintly.

"Very well; you have a month. You are aware I have a small fortune of twenty thousand dollars that you stole from William Moore. You will always be tortured by fear of the revelation that this man can make at any time. A fitting punishment.

"Does your mother know of it?"

"No, and pray God she never may! Sir, I wish you good-morning, and he turned and went out, leaving his father almost insensible, from agony and fear.

"I have for a long time had my suspicions. Yesterday they were confounded.

"Yes, you must. I give you a month to change the form of that paper. I can never spare me."

"I will reveal nothing; I do not wish to reside at this house with my mother, and that I have managed it since I came of age. On this property I shall live. I have for a long time had my suspicions.

"Pardon me for a moment. I knew Mr. Graham. He was drowned, was he not?"

"Yes."

"On the Hudson."

"Yes."

"No, I was at some distance."

"Yes, yes, I was, but I could not rescue him."

"How sad! You were quite near him when he fell."

"No, I was at some distance."

"Ah! You rushed to his assistance?"

"Certainly I did."

"Of course,—and did he not rise to the surface?"

"Mr. Graham's face showed the torture this examination caused him."

"No, he did not."

"Why, that was singular. A drowning man generally rises to the surface twice. So you did not see him after he sunk?"

"No! Why are you so particular in your inquiries?"

"These melancholy details interest me of eighteen years ago, it would have been impossible for Mr. Graham to suspect— even if he had not seen him drowned— that this man was (as the sagacious reader has, of course, supposed all along) none other than William Moore.

"Pray be seated, sir," said Graham; "I have the honor of addressing you."

"My name is Morris," said the other. Again Graham's blood congealed at a sound so unfamiliar and yet so strangely known.

"Can I do anything for you, Mr. Morris?"

"Yes, if you will be kind enough to give me your attention for a few moments," and, as he spoke, his eye caught the miniature of himself lying on the table. He picked it up in amazement.

"Is not this the likeness of the late William Moore?"

"Yes," faltered the other, "but your business?"

"Pardon me for a moment. I knew Mr. Graham. He was drowned, was he not?"

"Yes."

"On the Hudson."

"Yes."

"No, I was at some distance."

"Yes, yes, I was, but I could not rescue him."

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"Certainly I did."

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"Why, that was singular. A drowning man generally rises to the surface twice. So you did not see him after he sunk?"

"No! Why are you so particular in your inquiries?"

"These melancholy details interest me.
greatly. I know of an unfortunate affair very similar to this. Let me relate it.

"Truly, sir," cried Mr. Graham, "come at once to the business you have with me. My time is much occupied. I have not the honor of your acquaintance, sir. What do you want with me? Did you come here to tell me your story?"

"Yes, partly for that. I came here to talk of Mr. William Moore."

"Well, sir, the subject is very disagreeable to me."

"A disease! His death caused you much sorrow, did it not? He was your most intimate friend, I believe?"

"Yes; your questions are very singular."

"You will see their pertinacity soon, sir. Let me tell you the story I was about to tell. There were once two friends who loved each other as brothers. They went to the funeral of a mutual friend, an old gentleman, who had a residence on the bank of a river."

"They stayed to hear the old gentleman's story. Quite similar to your own experience, do you not think?"

"Very similar," gasped the frightened man. The names of those persons, — who were they?"

"I will tell you soon. Let me finish. By the way, you wish to know a fact. These two men were made co-heirs of the old gentleman's fortune. A fine example of friendship, wasn't it?"

"Yes.

"Really, Mr. Graham, you seem quite touched by the affair. It was very delicate. Now in your case, Mr. Wyckoff left you sole heir to his estate."

"No, he left half to this man."

"Mr. William Moore! Is it possible?"

"Yes; to Mr. William Moore."

"Why, upon my word, the two affairs are so very similar, I am at a loss for a word to designate this man — deliberately conspired to murder him at a cold death, deliberately stole the fortune from his wife and children, deliberately availed himself of the wealth thus acquired, and has ever since been living on the accrued income!"

"For God's sake, stop!" cried Mr. Graham; "I have heard enough."

"Mr. Graham, your susceptibility does you honor. I have almost done with the subject. But I think it would be better for you to know the truth. What in your opinion would be a fitting punishment for that man? Could anything be too severe?"

"No," came almost inaudibly from the other lips."

"Would the loss of all peace of mind; the daily, hourly, incessant presence of hideous remorse; sleepless nights, or nighs of despair, the continual haunting of the dead man's face; the sight of that river and the drifting corpse, wherever he looked; the death-cry of his victim forever ringing in his ears; eternal reproaches in the accusing looks of his wife, in the honest, manly gape of his son, — for he has a son, sir, about your son's age, — a never-absent awful dread of detection; a fearful looking-forward-to judgment, a feeling that there must be a final settlement of accounts? Would all this accumulacuted horror be too much?"

"He deserves it all," cried Graham, in agony."

"Well, sir, I think so, too. But there is another punishment he might have. It is this. Suppose that, occasionally, this murderer should see the murdered man, not in the spirit, but corporeally in human form, with the air of life, dogging his footsteps; suppose that he should meet him in society, sit beside him at banquets, encounter him in the streets and public conveyances, be, in short, continually running across the man whom eighteen years before — ah! sir, what is it? Mr. Graham, your sudden, violent start shows quite frighten me. What is your cause?"

"A nervous affection, sir."

"Ah! supernaturally affected! How is it?"

"If you have come here, a stranger, and told me all this, and excited what appears to you a piece of poetic justice?"

"I will tell you, sir, and instantly Morris's manner changed. He rose and looked at Graham with such an awful severity, that the unhappy wretch quailed before him."

"I have told you the story of the old gentleman leaving his property to his two friends, because that old gentleman was Mr. William Moore. He was a friend of yours?"

"Yes; your questions are very singular.""

"Ah!" cried Mr. Graham, rallying a little, "why have you come here, a stranger, and told me all this, and excited what appears to you a piece of poetic justice?"

"I have told you the story of the old gentleman leaving his property to his two friends, because that old gentleman was Mr. William Moore. He was a friend of yours?"

"Yes; your questions are very singular.""

"Ah!" cried Mr. Graham, rallying a little, "why have you come here, a stranger, and told me all this, and excited what appears to you a piece of poetic justice?"

"I have told you the story of the old gentleman leaving his property to his two friends, because that old gentleman was Mr. William Moore. He was a friend of yours?"

"Yes; your questions are very singular."
CHAPTER XXI.

A TEST OF LOVE.

Vincent left his father's presence in the deepest grief. He did not feel the slightest compunction at the severe punishment he had inflicted. As has been said, he no longer looked upon the man as his father. He was so constituted as to have the most intense horror for crime and the criminal; the most profound love for virtue and the virtuous. In Mr. Graham he did not see a father, but a murderer; all ties of blood were severed, all that love annihilated. He felt no pity for his father, no sorrow for the bitter words he had uttered; but as he went out his heart was placed with acute misery at his own situation. He did not for an instant waver in his determination to tell Ethel that a stain was upon his name,—an ineffaceable stain, one which rendered their union impossible. He had meant to have straightway sought her presence and impressed this dreadful intelligence; but man is mortal. He had not courage to deliberately sever the sweet ties between them, and encounter Ethel's unavailing grief. He, therefore, went out into the open air to walk the streets in agony all day.

After Mr. Moore had moved away from the library door, he hastily resumed his disguise. It was a very distressing revelation for me to let the man standing there, with mild regard in his eyes, the pulsations of his heart were checked, and he felt the unspeakable horror of Elliphaz. This was no optical delusion, no phantom born of darkness; he was not ten feet from the "spectre;" the day was now in the full glare of noon, and the sunlight flooded the room. He felt the fascination of horror; he could not draw away his gaze. He was as fully persuaded that he saw William Moore's ghost, as he had before disbelieved in its possibility; and the idea was awful. There stood the man in the reality of life, whom he had before seen in the impalpable vision of night. The appalled man, half-risen from his chair, gazed with startling eyes. The vision was "a goblin damned" bringing with it "blows from hell." Then burst upon him the full force of horror and horror's threats; then did he feel the complete significance of that "furrier torment," his visitor had mentioned. Moore did not speak; he merely kept that sad, unravelling look upon the unhappy man, and slowly moving backward, disappeared behind the door; and, at the same moment, Mr. Graham fell forward on his face, in a fit, felled by fright.

CHAPTER XXI.

BAFFLED SCHEMES.

Mr. Graham and I are engaged," said Ethel, blushing slightly. "Well, Miss Moore,—oh, how can I tell the dreadful truth!" Ethel sprang up with pallid face and caught Moore's arm in a tight grasp,—"Has anything happened to you?" she cried, in a strange voice,—a voice through which struggled the agony of apprehension she felt.

"Calm yourself, my dear Miss Moore. Mr. Graham is perfectly well." "Oh! then I don't care what it is you have to tell!" cried the ingenuous girl. "It is something which does not affect his life or health, but his name." "This name which I am about to declare, with scarcely perceptible sound in her calm voice. "His name is safe. I have no fear." "Well, the name of his family, then. Miss Moore, there is disgrace upon the name of Graham." "Of what nature, sir?" "A disgrace of the blackest kind. This is a very distressing revelation for me to make, but I have felt it my duty to acquaint you with certain circumstances before you take the name of Graham upon yourself." "Let me entreat you, sir, to relate those circumstances at once." "Miss Moore, would you marry a murderer?" asked Bay. "A very extraordinary question," replied Ethel. "Of course not." "Would you marry a murderer's son?" he pursued.

In a moment Ethel knew what he meant, and she instantly returned,—"If I loved him and believed him good, noble, and true, I would." "Well, Miss Moore, then you relieve my mind. If you have any pausing, quite embarrassed. There was something about this man that unaccountably agitated and fascinated her.

"You kindly invited me to call," continued Morris. "Pardon my remissness. I waited till I could communicate something important.

"Then you have something important to say this morning. Indeed, you sent up word that you had." "Very important, Mr. Graham; but something which will cause you much grief," replied Mr. Morris, gravely. "Then keep me no longer in suspense." "You are engaged to be married to Mr. Vincent Graham, are you not? Pardon the apparent rudeness of the question. I want to be sure of my facts before I proceed."

"Mr. Graham and I are engaged," said Ethel, blushing slightly. "Well, Miss Moore,—oh, how can I tell the dreadful truth!" Ethel sprang up with pallid face and caught Moore's arm in a tight grasp,—"Has anything happened to you?" she cried, in a strange voice,—a voice through which struggled the agony of apprehension she felt.

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"Unfortunately, it is not. I have talked with one who saw Mr. Graham shove poor Miss Moore into the river, and push him under again when he rose to the surface."

And he gained great wealth by it," said Ethel to herself; "and this is why he has been so wretched; yes, yes. How has his horrible murder been so long concealed? She asked aloud, calmly, although almost overcome by the revelation.

Those who knew it have concealed it for purposes of their own; but it will be known to every one eventually. Think, then, of the disgrace you will encounter if you marry Mr. Vincent Graham. I have discharge of that debt to my duty, Miss Moore, in acquainting you with this very matter. Let me close with one who saw Mr. Graham shove poorly the son of a man who had cruelly, but I assure you it will not make the least difference in the world as far as my actions are concerned. It has not changed my—my opinion of the younger Mr. Graham, in the least. Such fortuitous circumstances, however, could not have the slightest influence with me."

"Sir," said Ethel, in tears, "I think it kind in you to have told me this before I had committed myself by marriage, but I assure you it will not make the least difference in the world as far as my actions are concerned. It has not changed my—my opinion of the younger Mr. Graham, in the least. Such fortuitous circumstances, however, could not have the slightest influence with me."

"I am truly glad to hear of it, Miss Moore, for both your sakes. Let me close with one who saw Mr. Graham shove poorly the son of a man who had cruelly, but I assure you it will not make the least difference in the world as far as my actions are concerned. It has not changed my—my opinion of the younger Mr. Graham, in the least. Such fortuitous circumstances, however, could not have the slightest influence with me."

"Shall I give him up," said Ethel to herself, "now that this great sorrow is upon her, and the end of her love, but of a rich dark-brown hue. He had been hideously deformed, or an idiot, he could not have considered himself less fit to be the young girl's husband. But the greatly estranged from her husband; her love for him, the object of her purest love! — Vincent the son of a murderer! Vincent, the embodiment of all that was manly and honorable! — his hero, his ideal, the object of her purest love! — Vincent the son of a man who had cruelly murdered her uncle for money! She found difficulty in believing it, and yet Mr. Morris had been positive of the truth of what he said. Even the laziest stranger would have probably laughed in his face, or rang for a servant to show him the door; but Mr. Morris seemed like so morbid a character. He had not now the slightest "cast" in his eyes. Owing to the scientific applied to his medicine, and the doctor, with the honor of his profession, had carefully kept the secret. He attended Ezra two or three times a week, and, although the case was a very difficult one, held out hopes of ultimately eradicating the "cast" in his eyes. Through the legal assistance of Mr. Murragh (who had a full power of attorney from his patient), Ezra had had Mr. Francho's will "proved," and had entered into possession of the estate. He rented Wyckoff Hall to Dr. Parkes. That gentleman was informed of his patient's character and was not pleased with it. Ezra was invited to Canada, afterwards that he was dangerously ill and unable to travel, and finally that he had sailed to the Mediterranean to re-establish his health, leaving Mr. Murragh to attend to his own affairs. Thus had it come to pass that two years had elapsed since Francho's murder, without Ezra having been seen. Mr. Conger came to the conclusion that the man he sought so diligently was dead. As the date at which we have now arrived, however, Ezra was ready to make his debut as Harry Murragh. Certainly a wonderful transformation had taken place in the appearance of the young man. His hair was no longer cary-red, but of a rich dark-brown hue. He had a decided pair of gold spectacles (plain glass), to add to his altered appearance. In short, he seemed some highly respecta-
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"I never was in H— except for half an hour the day I met you, and never saw Dr. Heavyvale, to my knowledge, in my life."

"Now, really," said the sheriff. "I would advise you to tell me these important points, which can be easily proved. Plead 'not guilty,' of course, to the charge of murder, but don't deny going to H— seeing Dr. Heavyvale, going as porter to Dr. Brown, being locked up in his garret, getting out by a very neat dodge, and knocking me off the platform, for they can all be proved."

"I do deny everything except knocking you off the platform. Going as porter to Dr. Brown, indeed! Do I look like a porter, sir?"

Mr. Smith was well dressed, and seemed a little agitated. The sheriff admitted that he did not look like a porter.

"Come, now," said Smith, "this is some most singular mistake."

"Oh, undoubtedly!" said the sheriff, dryly.

"A case," pursued Smith, "of mistaken identity. Now tell me all about this murder which it appears I committed."

The sheriff thereupon related the particulars of the murder of Franchot, the killing of Dick Hoyt, the escape of the murderer, the pursuit by Conger, the ruse at the Bowery Theatre, the capture by Dr. Brown, the escape, the recapture by Miss Antigone Brown, and the second escape. Smith listened in profound astonishment.

"And," concluded Sheriff Bangs, "this wilychap was short and thick-built, like you, had very red hair, like you, was crossed-eyed, like you, had a scar across his neck, like you, and was named James Smith, like you."

"But nevertheless was not I. Very remarkable coincidence, I grant."

"Very remarkable," repeated the sheriff.

"Perhaps you will be kind enough to tell me where you were on the 5th of June, 18—, the day this Frenchman was killed?"

At this question Mr. Smith's face, turned deadly pale, and he uttered a low groan.

"The 5th of June!" he gasped. "Oh! God!"

"What's up now?" asked the sheriff.

"Oh! oh! oh!" groaned Smith, as if in great agony. "Oh! how horrible,—the 5th of June,—My God!"

The sheriff stared at him in amazement.

"Pardon my emotion," said Smith, in a broken voice; "I cannot explain the distress your words have caused me, neither can I tell you where I was on that horrible day."

"Won't you tell in court?"

Smith groaned. "No, I cannot tell in court either."

"Well," said the sheriff, "if you were not at Wyckoff Hall, I advise you to prove it."

"Ah! I cannot."

"Then I will go hard with you."

"So be it. If I am to fall a victim to a marvellous chain of coincidences, and to mistaken identity, so be it; but I shall never tell where I was, or what I did that day, although I can prove I was not at Wyckoff Hall."

The sheriff stared at him in blank wonder.

"Well," said he, "then you shall be a confounded fool, to speak plainly."

"Can't help it," said Smith. "I shall be in great distress where I was that day,—and he sunk into gloomy reverie.

His position was by no means pleasant or safe. Circumstances which will come to light in these pages utterly prevented him from proving an alibi. Again, by a most singular chance, he had been present at the Old Bowery Theatre on the night that Conger had tracked Ezra thither, having followed a crowd in, which was drawn by curious attraction that induced Dr. Brown to go, the appearance of some famous "star" tragedian. He was entirely without knowledge. He had a considerable property of his own on which he lived. He had not been in New York in the past two years; the greater part of his life had been spent in Europe. He had not a friend in the United States, scarcely an acquaintance.

He was a dissolute, unfortunate, unhappy man, who seemed to be a football for Fortune's hardest kicks.

As he revolved this present difficulty, he did not know how he could possibly prove that he was innocent. His lips were sealed. He could not prove his absence from Wyckoff Hall on the day of the fête champêtre, and this circumstance in itself would be highly prejudicial to him should he be brought to trial. His only hope seemed to be that the great American real murderer would perceive and testify that he was not the man they thought him. But how to get at these companions of the murderer?

"Do you know whether the fellow that killed that M. Franchot had any brothers or either parent living?"

The sheriff smiled. "I was going to say..."
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that you ought to know if any one, but you're so cool that, hang me if I don't begin to believe your innocence; you can never change it.

"I am innocent, believe me. But I don't see how I can prove it unless some of this man's relatives swear I'm not. Now, how can I find out whether he has any friends? I don't believe his name's James Smith."

"Well, Mr. Smith," said the sheriff, "I hope you'll get clear, for I've taken a shine to you. I only did my duty in arresting you."

"Oh! you're not to blame. Come! I'm at your service;" and they went out together.

But Smith was given over to the Boston police; an officer came on from New York, in response to a telegram, and took him to that city, where he was lodged in the "Touleos."

The same idea had occurred to Ezra as to Mr. Smith; viz., that his (Ezra's) intimate companions could prove that Smith was not the guilty man. Now his intimate companions were the Bishop's unorthodox habits and to the fact that at the time of the murder he had but recently arrived in New York,—and since then had been very sedentary,—were very few. In fact, two or three individuals knew him intimately.

Never in my life, I assure you. What was the name of the fellow you saw there?"

"Ezra Smith."

"Well, as I said before, I did assume the name of Smith, but it wasn't James Smith. The name I took was Frederick F. Smith. James Smith! Ah! I see how it is. That James Smith, doctor, is the bane of my existence. Wasn't he a man about my build, with black hair, and very cross-eyed?"

"Yes."

"Well, I've been taken for that man, confound him, and he for me, more than fifty times. That's the principal reason I was so anxious to get my eyes fixed all right, and have had my hair dyed. I know the chap. I mean I've seen him. He's no more me than you." The simple-minded doctor really believed on all this, and merely said, in transcendent surprise,—"Is that so?"

"Yes. How is it," asked Ezra, "that you never happened to mention it to me before?"

"Why, the fact is, I thought it might not be agreeable to you, as you never said a word about it. I must confess I was very curious to know why you left so suddenly. I certainly thought when you sent for me, at the time you lived in Cherry Street, that you was the same man I'd seen in H—— about a week before."

"Well, it's a queer mistake, although a natural one. I wrote you to go to Dr. Brown! By Jove! that's good one."

The worthy doctor thoroughly believed he had made some mistake, and was very earnest in his apologies.

"Capital!" thought Ezra, when his visitor had left. "I've fixed him all right. Now for Wilkins."

He rode down to Grand Street and went at once to the billiard-saloon, which was still kept up there.

The two years had scarcely changed Mr. Peter Wilkins. His black hair was curled and with more disgusting elaboration than ever, and his nose had a more prominent appearance. He did not recognize his grandson at all, but was rather impressed by his gentility and well-to-do appearance. Ezra sat down composedly and looked on at a game of billiards then in progress. Wilkins approached respectfully.

"Shall I get you a partner for a game, sir?" he asked.

"I'd like to play a game with you," retorted Ezra.

The fact that Ezra had several teeth which he had lost supplied by false ones, rendered his voice no longer recognizable.

Wilkins and he began the game. Ezra soon managed to put the marker at ease. Suddenly he asked,—

"Do you remember Ezra Hoyt?"

"No," said Wilkins, startled, "who's he, sir?"

"Why, used to see him around here. Don't you recollect a red-haired, cross-eyed man the police were chasing so hard?"

"Seems to me I do. What's become of him?" asked Wilkins, indifferently.

"Well, they nabbed him at last. He's in the Tombs now, charged with murder."

"Will they string him up?"

"Yes, I suppose so; and serve him right," Whereupon Wilkins, seeing that his visitor was hostile to Ezra, remarked that he hoped they would hang him.

"He's an infernal rascal," said Ezra, with more truth than was his wont.

"So I think," said Wilkins. "I don't want you to do it, sir; he's a friend of mine."

"Certainly not. You'd just as like see him hung up as not?"

"Yes, and a little rather;" Ezra smiled to himself at this touching description in the newspaper. "Lever more truth than was his wont.

"Well, perhaps you may assist in it," said he.

"How so, sir?"

"Why, I hear that this Ezra Hoyt swears he is Ezra Hoyt, but that his name is James Smith. He wants to make out that they've got hold of the wrong chap, you know."

"I see. Well, will that game work?"

"No, not if you can swear that he is Ezra Hoyt."

"Oh! I don't want to get mixed up in the business at all," said Wilkins.
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CHAPTER XXIII.

A SUCCESSFUL DECOY.

Toom Smith, without a friend in the city and imprisoned in the Tombs awaiting his trial for murder, felt, naturally, somewhat depressed. The more he thought of it, the more convinced he became that he ought to have a very close scrutiny of the detective's intimate friends or relations; but how to do this?

One day Mr. Conger called to see him. The detective was greatly chagrined that he had never had a very close scrutiny of Ezra's cleverness and called to have a good look at him. He was shown to the prisoner's cell. It was not a reflection on Mr. Conger's acute observation, but in a very solemn manner, "that I'm not the man you all think I am!"

"That can be easily done," said the detective. "I'll send a man for Mr. Wilkins at once," and he went out as he spoke.

Smith, with hope revived, hastily arranged his toilet. Unfortunately he brushed his long, red hair behind his ears, a fashion in which Ezra had been wont to wear his own.

After what seemed an interminable time, Mr. Conger reappeared followed by Mr. Peter Wilkins. The latter gentleman advanced at once to Smith and said, cordially, "Well, old fellow, how are you?" He did not have the slightest suspicion that the man before him was not Ezra Hoyt.

Smith groaned. "Merciful heavens!" he gasped, "do you take me for the murderer?"

"Pshaw!" said Wilkins, "you're not going to try that game, are you? Why, man, I'd know you anywhere. Let's see your neck. Yes. There's the blue scar around it. What nonsense! Own up you are Ezra Hoyt."

"Ezra Hoyt!" said Conger; "is that this man's name?"

"Heavens and earth!" cried Smith, gazed at madness, "my name's James Smith!"

"Well, James Smith, then," said Wilkins, "if you like that any better. Perhaps you will say you never saw me before."

"I never did."

"Well, you've got cheek! I suppose you never hid yourself behind a cow-rack in my billiard-room when this gentleman was so anxious to find you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well, you do come this innocent dodge well, but you may swear you're not Ezra Hoyt till you're black in the face, but I can swear you are."

Smith groaned. "It's all up with me, I see."

"Yes, I guess it is. Why the devil don't you own up you're Ezra Hoyt, like a man?"

Smith was silent. At length he asked, "What is your name, sir?"

Wilkins laughed loudly. "Come, I like that. You know my name as well as you do your own."

"I begin to doubt mine," said poor Smith.

"Well, they call me Peter Wilkins," said that gentleman. "Don't you remember, Ezra, standing up with me when I got married, just after you returned from San Francisco."

"San Francisco! I never was in San Francisco in my life."

Mr. Wilkins gave utterance to his incredulity in a prolonged whistle.

"Eh!" cried Smith, in anguish. "Are there any other people in town who know this Ezra Hoyt well?"

"I guess nos. You know you never were fond of making acquaintances."

"But where are my father and mother?"

"I swear you've got more brass! Your respectable father, you know, was killed in that little affair up the river. As for your mother, I never saw the lady, and I don't believe you ever did either."

"Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"Nary brother or sister."

"Can you tell me whether Mr. Simeon Rogers, a lawyer of this city, is alive? I've been trying to find him."

"He died about six months ago," replied Conger.

"Well then," said Smith, with a resigned air, "I don't see but what I shall be legally murdered."

Wilkins laughed, and followed Conger, who went out with a very thoughtful face.

Ezra Hoyt, after leaving the billiard-room in Grand Street, went into Broadway and walked up-town with an elated air.

"Heavens and earth!" cried Smith, bowing.

"Yes, they told me you came in here. Please read this, sir, at once," and he thrust the card into Vincent's hand. "I beg you to tell me that I am not the man you all think I am."

Vincent read it, in what seemed to be a woman's hand,--

"For the love of God, Mr. Graham, come to a poor woman at the point of death, who has got something of the greatest importance to tell you and you only. Come quick."

"No--Chryallo Street."

"What can this possibly mean?" said Vincent, greatly surprised.

"I know of no such woman, sir."

"I know nothing about her, sir, except..."
that I was called in to attend her day before yesterday. She is dying of consumption, and seems to be in great distress. I concluded to carry this message to you, allow me to introduce myself," said Dr. J. K. Brown.

"Happy to make your acquaintance, doctor. I don't think I have ever met you, although your face seems familiar," said Vincent, looking at him keenly. Ezra was not pleased by this intelligence.

"Curses this Graham!" said he to himself. "She's the first man who has seen the least of my old looks in me. He's got the eyes of a vulture."

"Well, sir, can you go with me now?" he asked.

"Yes," said Vincent, "let's start at once. I must see what this means," and he glanced at the card again, and then tore it up, throwing the pieces away. Little did he think that he would afterward have given the wealth of the world, did he own it, to repose himself of that piece of paste-board!

They entered a stage and rode downtown. Ezra felt a thrill of fiendish delight at his approaching triumph.

"What extremities of human condition," he reflected, "meet together in a city like this?"

"This is the place," said Ezra, turning into a small dark alley running between the brick walls of two dilapidated houses. The ground was paved with bricks, and pools of blackish water filled its sunken hollows. Emerging from this alley, he conducted his victim into a dreary court, flanked on both sides by the rear of two lofty tenement houses, and on the others by crumbling brick walls. He descended three low steps, and unlocked a huge rusty padlock in a door at the rear of the house opposite the entrance of the alley.

"I must lock the woman in when I go," explained Ezra.

He opened the door and went in, followed by Vincent, wonderingly. It was a low, dark room, sunk several feet below the ground, the rough, plastered ceiling, blackened by age and festooned with cobwebs. The atmosphere struck Vincent with a chill. The air was vitiated, and the tips of his fingers felt the same disgusting suffocating breath. He descended a few cubits of vitiated air, fast turning sides and ends of the roof his hands made through its mortar harder and harder, did not budge. He was bereft, many a time, the hapless victims of this roof, and, as he reached the roof's summit, he endeavored to recall his thoughts and recollect the revelation she wished to make him, Dr. Euripides Vincent, wonderingly. It was a low, dark, cell, his stepping out into the hall and being filled by some unknown and murderous hand. But what did it mean, his lying there, in the dark, unnoticed? Had the assassin left him for dead? He rose to a sitting posture and stretched out his arm; his hand struck a brick wall. He thrust out his other arm and touched another wall on that side. As he did so the cold sweat burst from all his pores, and his heart became so fierce that he was unable to resist, but that he was so terrified by the thought of his own body, that he struck violently against brick-work above, and he sank back almost stunned a second time. Then burst upon his mind all its horror, the awful truth that he was buried alive, and he groaned in the agony, that none but those who have felt torture could feel. He was too true. He was buried alive, bricked up in a narrow vault, in impenetrable darkness, solid masonry, above, around him, with but a few cubic feet of vitiated air, fast turning into poison, to breathe, his strength, then, to die. He laid his face on the cold, damp bricks in utter, unspeakable despair.

This was one of those moments so full of concentrated agony that none but those who have felt the same can possibly comprehend. With incredulous patience he persisted in his examination, and, as he reached the roof's summit, he discovered that he was enclosed in a brick vault or vault scarcely longer than his body and about four feet wide, with not enough air to allow him to take a breathing posture. When he sat up, his head nearly touched the slightly-arched brick roof above. He determined to feel for any opening, however slight, that there might be, and began his operations systematically. Every square inch of the floor did his fingers pass over; he felt nothing but the hard bricks, with not a crevice or fissure in them.

He felt along where the sides and ends joined the floor; any crack might have been there was filled with mortar hard as stone. Then over the walls did his patient fingers pass; there felt the same cranny or crevice or fissure. He explored the roof, passing his fingers over the mortar between each brick. Along the sides and ends of the roof's hands made their slow way, still nothing but brick and mortar harder than cement; and he called aloud in his anguish to the Deity, with heart-rending supplication. With incredible patience he persisted in his examination, and, as he reached the roof's summit, the tips of his fingers sunk suddenly in the soft, fresh mortar between bricks recently laid. A thrill of joy convulsed him as the mariner feels as, when about to drown, his feet strike against the bottom of the vessel beneath him. He pushed with all his might against the bricks. At last they did not yield at all. Almost frenzied, he called out all his strength against them, and struck against them; and the confined air was now hot and stifling. Vincent felt suffocation creeping upon him; he must liberate himself at once, if ever.

"Good God, help me!" groaned Vincent, in his wretchedness.

At that moment he heard heavy steps that
seemed to be walking on a floor above his head. They approached his grave and the noise roared like thunder through his hollow prison. They stopped as they feared him. Oh! my liberator is coming! and Vincent nearly fainted from the reaction. Alas! unhappy man, quick is the transition from hope to helplessness! A hoarse, deep voice, sounding affrighted to Vincent, but distinguishable very faintly—

"Hallo! down there!"

"Dr. Brown!" cried Vincent. "Oh! for the love of God get me out of this; I'm dying! Vincent, in his ignorance, had not, as yet, thought of this man as his murderer.

"Dr. Brown!" roared Earn, with a brutal laugh. "Oh! you poor guilt! I'm more Dr. Brown than you, you miserable dupe!"

Vincent did not know, it will be remembered, who Earn Hoyt was. He had never learned the name of Franchot's murderer.

"Yes, my dear young friend, I'm the man you thought you cooled to death that night up at the Frenchman's. I'm the man you met that detective Conger on; I'm the man you couldn't catch yet! I'm the man who's got you! You'll see me yet, if you live a month; but, alas! it's impossible for—no; never; for I'm going to let you lie and rot there! Ha! you fool; do you think you'll ever knock me down with sham rattans again? Death! do you think I'm a man to be fooled with?"

Vincent was silent with amazement and despair. Now the infernal trick was plain. Vincent had been decoyed to this horrible death and increased hope, but he was as much a prisoner as ever. The appalling prospect of Tantalus. The air he was dying for was too short to reach through to the blessed grassy meads. A terrible pain in his head was almost stifled. As soon as his attempts had stiffened on the outside, than a

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ing his body through, leaped nimbly out upon the cellar door, erect, free, resurrected from death.

Vincent was not a religious man, as the term is commonly understood, but in the rush of gratitude and joy that flooded his heart, he sank down upon the damp stone floor, and, leaning his head upon the roof of the case, a brick mound, above the ground, he poured forth a Te Deum to the Power that had snatched him from an awful death.

But when he rose and looked about him, he discovered that his imprisonment, although unspeakably ameliorated, was not ended. The cellar, which contained absolutely nothing, except some mortar spread on the head of a barrel and a mason's trowel, was barely lighted by two narrow slits in the wall high up. There was no outlet to the place except a large door at one end. This, to Vincent's dismay, was bolted and firmly locked on the other side. To effect an exit by its means he perceived at a glance was hopeless. He looked about him; nothing but unbroken stone walls on all four sides.

"Here's a pretty go," said Vincent. "It's plain, from the looks of this place, that it isn't used. Nobody is likely to come here. Will that infernal Hoyt come back? They say murderers are impelled by some mysterious fascination to revisit the scene of their victim's death; but this man, I fancy, is an exception to mankind. I wonder if he is still in the house. I'll attract his attention. If he comes, perhaps I shall make him a fit occupant for the grave he prepared for me." He picked up the trowel, and struck the iron door violently.

The mysterious vault in which Vincent had been incarcerated, was a rendezvous for thieves very much like a Parisian café. The front of the building was upon the Bowery. It was a sort of fifth-rate hotel, where board and lodging, on moderate terms, were held out to the hungry and homeless. The front-sub-basement was devoted entirely to the vilest liquors, and was also a restaurant, where oysters and pork-chops were served. Rather curiously, the house was divided in the middle, from roof to cellar, and thus while the front section was a tavern, dance-house, and rum-cellar, the rear part was an over-crowded tenement-house. The hotel opened into the Bowery, the tenement-house looked into the dingy vault in which Vincent and Ezra had entered. There were means of communication between the two segments of the building, on the lower floor, but none above. The cellar in which Vincent was confined was not the keeper of the drinking saloon and had been used by him as a place in which to store his barrels, and manufacture (by the simple process of mixing) his various kinds of liquors. The mysterious vault in which Vincent had been buried was nothing but a receptacle that had been made to hold and preserve ice. Ezra's father, Dick Hoyt, had hired this subterranean apartment, and there carried on a very brisk business in counterfeiting ice. He had used the ice-vault both as a furnace and as a hiding-place for the tools of his handicraft. Placed at the bottom of this receptacle, and covered by a stratum of ice, they had defied discovery when their proprietor had been absent in the prosecution of other schemes. Ezra, as a participant in the villanies of his father, knew of this place and retained its lease, and the lease of the room above, into which he had first ushered Vincent; but until the time that man had no use of either, though he kept the key.

The low tavern and rum-shop in the Bowery had fallen under the suspicion of the police. The proprietor, besides, was a recruit of sketchy morals, and the keeper of an unlicensed paperhanger's shop. He was "hand in glove" with the most desperate criminals in New York. He hid them from the pursuit of justice, furnished them with disguises and money (well secured and at enormous usury), and his "Shades" (fit name) was their rendezvous, the place for their infernal conclaves. The police had made several fine "hauls" here. In fact, it was darkly whispered that Baxter, the proprietor, had not scrupled to "blow," that is, inform on the malefactors, his customers; that he had betrayed more than one criminal into the hands of the law, to avert suspicion from his own misdeeds. It remained but to prove that he was a Judas Iscariot among thieves for he had more terrible vengeance wreaked upon him. Baxter was a large, sinewy man, with low, over-crowded legs," said the sergeant.

"Stop!" said the sergeant, contemptuously. "Show me round these premises. No, don't go up; you stay by me.

Three or four men were sitting around a table with their hats pulled over their eyes. The officer went up to them and requested them to uncover. They solemnly obeyed. The sergeant smiled grimly, and said, "I know you, my men; but I don't want you to-day. Have you seen this Weaver?"

"Don't know him," said the men together.

"Oh! of course not," said the officer, ironically. Followed by one or two of his squad, he searched the small adjoining rooms and the bar, without success. He ascended the stairs. The farther he ascended, the more confused, as of some one bounding on iron, was heard.

"What the devil's that?" exclaimed Parker.

"Don't know, I'm sure," said Baxter, much surprised.

"Well, we might as well find out. Follow me, boys. I'm going to search the place from top to bottom. Two of you stay here.

They went up a back staircase under Baxter's guidance. The search, though thorough, was speedy. On descending the stairs they again heard two faint raps against some iron body, and then all was still.

"Bless me!" cried Baxter, "there's some one rapping on the door into the Curiosity Street cellar."

"Oh! said Parker, "you have a Chrysie Street cellar, have you? Let's see it."

"I haven't the key, sir; the place's rented to other parties."

"Never mind the key! Can't you open any door, Bob?"

"I guess so," said Bob, confidentially.

Baxter conducted the party to the door of Vincent's room. Various steel levers were produced by Bob. Rip went the bolt, the lock was snapped, and Parker, descend-
"Delirious," said the surgeon. "Get some ice. Brain fever, I'm afraid."

Scurriedly had Vincent been found and removed,—in fact, not three minutes forwards,—a portion of the wall of the cellar, about four foot square, made of wood and painted in exact imitation of stone, opened outwards, and Ezra entered. This secret avenue of ingress, its existence to the ingenuity of Dick Hoyt, had, naturally enough, escaped Vincent's notice, in the obscurity. Parker had, indeed, saved Vincent's life. Had Ezra found him lying senseless on the ground he would have instantly dispatched him. As it was, he saw, with horrible complicity, that the brick vault had been to all appearance undiscovered.

"Ah!" said the villain, with a hideous laugh, "this fighting swell is dead and buried! Yes, dead and buried, and without any funeral expenses."

He stepped triumphantly upon the supposed grave, and, glancing at the iron-door, which was tightly closed, went out as he came in, and shut the secret entrance with a clang.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. ROGERS'S NARRATIVE.

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Mr. Moore turned into a quiet side street, and entered an unpretending hotel; or, rather, he attempted to enter (he had gone to the private entrance), and, in his carelessness, he had forgotten his key. He rang the bell, and, as he stood on the steps, Mrs. Jarvis approached.

"Mr. Moore!" she said; "is this really you?"

"Mr. Moore started as if he had been shot."

"Good God! who are you?"

"Mrs. Jarvis," sir," said that personage, courteously, "I lived with you and Mrs. Moore (God bless her!) for twenty years."

"Yes, yes, Mrs. Jarvis!" the servant opened the door. "Come in, my good press-gang! " So," concluded the captain of the ship, "this was all a scheme for a notable crew (one man and a boy) they laughed."

"I lived with you and Mrs. Moore," said Mr. Jarvis, "for twenty years." he turned away from the allurements of the shop-window, and walked leisurely with one eye, and almost as black as a negro, said 'he'd see me damned first,' and the crew (one man and a boy) they laughed. "I guess," said the one-eyed skipper, "Cap'n Silas would give twenty-five dollars for you; you're a pretty strong-looking man, and will make a good sailor." What do you mean to do with me?" I asked. "I'm going to make a sailor of you," said he; that's what I'm going to do. You must know," he went on, "that Cap'n Silas Tompkins is master of one of the biggest clippers out of New York; and he wants to sail to-morrow afternoon, I found myself lying in a nasty downstairs, followed by the excellent female. I believe that this villainous fellow was in revenge on Ezra. 'I guess,' said the one-eyed skipper, 'Cap'n Silas will give twenty-five dollars for you, and he'll give me twenty-five, for yer've got to go!'"

"Mr. Moore!" said Mr. Jarvis, "is this really you?"

"Yes," said Mr. Moore, with an effort; "I could hardly hear from my poor wife. I wrote letter after letter to her and waited in vain for a reply. One day, in repairing the lid of an old trunk, I found it threw me; and, as you may suppose, I cared nothing about the property that was bequeathed to me by Mr. Wyckoff. I resolved to wander over the face of the earth till I died. I was now strong and well, and stepped on board a vessel bound to San Francisco. I had but one desire to find out my poor boy Harry," and Mr. Moore's voice faltered.

Mrs. Jarvis' eyes glittered.

"I arrived in San Francisco. Then I learned in a very curious and entirely accidental manner that my son was dead, and had died in a—" but never mind that. I learned in my good progress, and I so proceed, in a word, that I have learned is true. But I am in great doubt. I have learned since I have been here that my son is alive and in this country. I have done my best to find him, but cannot. There is a fellow who calls himself Harry Moore, but he is an impostor. I have seen him. There is some mystery I cannot unravel."

"Your son is dead," said Mrs. Jarvis.

"Oh! how do you know?" asked Mr. Moore. Mrs. Jarvis took from her bosom a small bag, suspended from her neck by a steel chain, opened it and took from thence the letter from the San Francisco police, containing particulars of Harry Moore's death. Mr. Moore read it and sighed deeply. "I feared it was true," said he at last. "I had faint hope he was alive."

"I propose go on with your story Mr. Moore."

"Well, when I learned of my son's death, I was nearly crazy. I gave up all thought of going back to America. I got the position of second mate on a ship bound for Australia. When I arrived there, I threw up my situation and went to a station as a clerk. One day I awoke and found myself enormously rich. I had bought a
BAFFLED SCHEMES.

"Where is she? Where is my daughter? Tell me this instant, woman! where is she?" cried Mrs. Jarvis, with great vehemence.

"Lal! sir, how you hurt me! Let me go and I will tell you all about it. It's a sad story."

"Tell me all, my good woman, pass over nothing.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MRS. JARVIS' NARRATIVE.

"Well, you see, sir," began Mrs. Jarvis, "when my poor mistress, your wife, got that letter from Mr. Graham, telling about your being drowned, I was at your house, and I have always thought that she had written to you, and that you were to find your share of Mr. Wyckoff's money?"

"Mr. Moore's brow grew dark. "Have I missed you?" he asked, evasively.

Again Mrs. Jarvis was silent; but soon, with considerable agitation, she began—

"Mr. Moore, I have got something to tell you that will greatly surprise you and make you feel bad, but I ought to let you know it. I suppose. Me and another person only know it. I am almost afraid to tell you, sir, you will blame me, I know, but I couldn't help it, sir, I couldn't help it, I must tell you. Mr. Moore sat silent, buried in gloomy meditation. Again Mrs. Jarvis hesitated. "No, sir, I do not."

"Yes, sir," and Mrs. Jarvis started up with sudden interest. "What is it? Go on, go on!"

"Well, sir, before my poor mistress, your wife, Mrs. Moore, died, she had a baby born, did she not?"

"What?" cried Mr. Moore, reaching Mrs. Jarvis at a bound and clutching her tightly by the arm. "My good God! Is this possible! I have a child! It lived! I repeated those words, my child!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Jarvis, alarmed at his tremendous agitation. "The very night Mrs. Moore heard you were drowned her child was born. I didn't look for such a thing, sir; it was a seven months' child, but a sweet, pretty little creature—a girl. Ack! ack!"

Mrs. Moore's strength gave out, said Mrs. Jarvis, "as she finished this note, and she didn't sign her name."

"But what else did the paper say?"

"It ran this way, sir, I have never forgotten the words—"

"I commit this child into your hands with tears. It is born while I am in disgrace and grief; but in poor things, is innocence! Oh! protect and cherish it."

"Mrs. Moore's eyes filled with tears. "How did the paper get torn?" he asked.

"Why you see, sir," said Mrs. Jarvis, rather embarrassed, "I tore it accidentally, but I kept both parts, and meant to have given them to Mr. Moore."

"Well, go on."

"After the funeral, I started in the cars for Boston. I carried the baby with me. When we got to the place next Springfield, I left the child lying on the seat, and went out of the cars to get a drink of water. Well, sir, the cars they started off so quick, I couldn't get aboard of them again."

Mrs. Moore groaned.

"Well, sir, I was well-nigh frantic. The next train did not go on for some hours. I hastened on to Springfield. I saw the conductor of the car, but no one knew anything about the child, and I have never seen nor heard of it since."

"Oh, woman, what have you done! A poor babe cast away thus! God knows what has become of her."

Mrs. Jarvis's feelings were by no means pleasant as she saw the anguish in Moore's face. "Did you tell my brother all about it?"

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Jarvis, at once; since Mr. Ebenzer Moore was dead, she gave him this paper, too, and then she wrote him this letter, sir, and Mrs. Jarvis again opened her bag, and produced a torn sheet of paper hardly legible, but Mr. Moore managed to decipher these words, —

"My dear Brother,—William is dead and I am dying. I have no friends in the world but you. Will you not, my brother, take this poor child and rear her as your own? I know you will, and I send her to you with confidence. She is the last of your brother's family. My poor Harry is dead—has died a shameful death. My hand is growing feeble, I cannot write more, but I know you—"

"Here the paper was torn off."

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Jarvis, "as she finished this note, and she didn't sign her name."

"But what else did the paper say?"

"It ran this way, sir, I have never forgotten the words—"

"I commit this child into your hands with tears. It is born while I am in disgrace and grief; but in poor things, is innocence! Oh! protect and cherish it."

"This letter proves him to be a base impostor."

"Has he really got possession of—of Mr. Frankothe's property, sir?"

"Yes, through his attorney."

"Mr. Jarvis groaned."

"You will show him up, of course, sir?"

"What do you mean? expose him? Oh, certainly, but I am in no hurry. I must find my daughter, first of all."

"And are you going to let this fellow, sir, enjoy the money in the mean time?"

"Yes, if he can enjoy it, but not for very long, my good woman. It is the most infamous imposture I ever heard of, but he shall have his deserts, and others, too,"

"He will be delighted when he finds you're alive."

"Doubtless," returned Mr. Moore, dryly. "Were there any marks on the child, or did the impostor reveal these matters to Mr. Moore, Ezra?"

"No, the impostor."

"And you don't remember, sir?"

"Yes, yes, I would know them."

"Mrs. Jarvis went away, rejoicing in the thought that detection would ultimately overtake Ezra. Nothing but his recognition of her would have tempted her to reveal these matters to Mr. Moore. Ezra did not act with his customary showiness in making an enemy of Mrs. Jarvis."

"Mr. Moore sat for more than an hour in front of the fire, in deep thought. Again and again, did he review the wretched lies his dying wife had traced. Any one would have perceived a change in him now. His face was cold, certainly, but the look of hopeless misery had gone. He had now an object in life—to discover his child. He slumbered as though he thought what might have been his fate."

"Mr. Moore stood erect, an air of inflex-
“Give me time, my dear Miss Moore; I know, then, I am searching for my daughter!” ETHEL faltered. “I will do my best to hunt him up, sir! And you were not drowned! Oh, from home.”

She hurried downstairs and showed the paper to her guardian. Now Mr. Graham, it will be remembered, had not the slightest suspicion that Ethel’s father was William Moore, and his curiosity was greatly excited by the advertisement. He hastily wrote,—

“W. W. M. may derive the desired information by calling at the residence of Mr. James Graham, No. Fifth Avenue.”

About eight o’clock that evening the door-bell rang, and Mr. William Moore entered,—after first ascertaining that Mr. Graham was not in,—and asked to see Ethel. That young lady was surprised and cried, “My poor Ellen’s dying and she gave him Vincent’s note.”

Mr. Moore clasped the young girl in a warm embrace, Mr. Moore was rather staggered by this news and was driven from thought from your mind! It would not relieve your mind before, but I did not think the time had come. Perhaps I did wrong. I wanted to see too, whether you would reject the young lady. But Ethel went to her room a prey to the most harrowing thoughts. She would not, could not believe that Vincent had destroyed himself, but she felt persuaded that some mistake had befallen him. She could not endure his thoughts. She picked up the morning paper and glanced at it carelessly. Her eye fell and was riveted upon the advertisement,—

“CASTAWAY—Any one who can give any information in regard to a female child, who was lost in a railway car about eighteen years ago, will be liberally rewarded on calling or addressing W. W. M., Whitley House, New York.”

He was about to reveal the murder to Ethel, Mrs. Jarvis’s narrative was not in strict accord with the facts, yet it was sufficiently true to show Ethel that she was the child referred to. She gazed a moment with mingled astonishment and delight, and crying, “My father! my father!” threw herself into Mr. Moore’s arms.

“My child! Yes, my child! Oh, heaven! Is there such rapture for me? This repays to cover, with herself, every rent and fissure of the wall may be, the ivy which the loved one is innocent.

Imagine how breathlessly Ethel listened. Would, if you thought I could! Nothing kills a woman’s love, not even the unworthiness of its object, much less a crime of which the loved one is innocent. O my dear father! It matters not how crumbling, weak, and poor, the wall may be, the ivy will cling round it still! As we grow older, more infirm, the closer will the loving plant entwine herself! Thus will a true woman’s heart keep her lover, as twine, and seek to cover, with herself, every rent and fissure in her name of character!”

Mr. Moore was rather staggered by this rhetoric, but it did not sound like sly rapacity to him, for he saw the young girl was in earnest. On the contrary he looked with admiration at her, as she stood before him, eloquent and grand, if not sublime.

“Dearest one,” she said, “I am glad to see you true to the man you love. I approve heartily of your conduct and your choice. I have watched you, darling, —there can be no higher praise. Does he know about his father?”

“O girl! that is so dreadfully anxious about him! For two days and nights we’ve heard nothing from him, nor seen him. See, this is the last I have heard from him,” and she gave him Vincent’s note.

Mr. Moore read it hastily, and his brow contracted slightly.

“Ah!” said he, mournfully, “It is impossible that—”

“Speak on, sir!” cried Ethel. “I know what you would say. You think this letter hints at suicide. O sir, banish such a thought from your mind! It cannot be so! I know it is not so!” she said, with a noble faith.

“No, no,” said Mr. Moore. “Vincent Graham would never be a suicide. But what can this absence mean?”

“I fear something dreadful has happened,” said Ethel. “As it grows older, more infirm, the closer will the loving plant entwine herself! Thus will a true woman’s heart keep her lover, as twine, and seek to cover, with herself, every rent and fissure in her name of character!”

“I will do my best to hunt him up, up, up, O sir. God grant that now you have found a father, you may not lose a lover!”

Ethel grew pale at the thought.
CHAPTER XXVIII.

Ezra in love.

Dr. Parkes was sitting one evening upon the front piazza of Wyckoff Hall, quietly smoking his pipe and thinking about a "beautiful operation" he had, that afternoon, performed, when he saw a well-dressed man approaching from the road, over the lawn. The stranger came up to the house and, lifting his hat, observed that he presumed he was addressing Dr. Parkes. "You are, sir," said the doctor; "pray walk in, sir. Whom have I the pleasure of seeing?"

"Mr. Harry Moore," replied Ezra Hoyt. "Is it possible! Really, my dear sir, I'm delighted. I had begun to think you were a myth."

"Well, sir, I'm a myth that weighs a hundred and seventy odd," replied Ezra, quietly taking the proffered seat. "I got back from Palermo last week, and thought I would run up and see my property."

"Your sojourn in the Mediterranean has done you good," said the doctor, looking with envy at Ezra's robust frame.

"On the very back of a good doctor. Upon my word, this is a reposeful seat. I think my generous friend Mr. Franchoit must have been a gentleman of elegant taste."

"He was. A fine man in every respect. Thank God! They've caught the rascal who killed him."

Sweet and long was the intercourse between the new-found father and his daughter. Their happy reunion was not unattended by one momentary sense of disappointment. The man who had reigned a wretched wanderer over the face of the globe had regained his native land and found his child,—found her, not struggling with want, not a wretched outcast, but a young maiden tenderly and lovingly nurtured, elegant, accomplished, good. As for her, the mystery clouding her birth had been solved, and it was now plain to see that she had been a gentleman of elegant taste.

"Reveal yourself to him, dear Ethel."

"I'm in Canada at the time it took place," said Ezra, "and never learned all the particulars. I should be glad to hear from you yourself."

"Here was a man who rejoiced in the recital of his own crimes. He listened eagerly to the doctor's narrative."

"A most dreadful affair!" was his comment. "Do you think that Smith will swing for it?"

"The evidence against him seems to be conclusive," replied Dr. Parkes. "Oh! the infernal conscience! If I had him here, I'd pitch him into a river."

Ezra smiled to himself. "But what would you do, really, doctor, suppose he should appear and sit here on the piazza with you?"

"Sit on the piazza with me! Sir, if he should come disguised as the angel Gabriel I'd know him! Why man, this piazza would fall with him, should he be disposed to disgrace it with his presence! If I had him here sitting by my side, g'd, I'd have an autopsic dissection of his body!"

Ezra felt glad that he was not disguised as the astrophil angel."

"Well, doctor," said he, after a pause, "I came up here not only for the purpose of seeing my house, but to get you to introduce me a little in New York. You see I know very few people there. I was only here a short time after I arrived from San Francisco, and then went to Canada, and from there to St. Etienne. I want you to introduce me to Mr. James Graham and familia. Why, I forget, I need no introduction there, is it? Miss Ethel Moore is my cousin. On the whole, though, I'd rather be presented by you than introduce myself. Miss Moore is very beautiful. Our time was only here a short time after I arrived from San Francisco, and then went to Canada, and from there to St. Etienne. I want you to introduce me to Mr. James Graham and familia. Why, I forget, I need no introduction there, is it? Miss Ethel Moore is my cousin. On the whole, though, I'd rather be presented by you than introduce myself. Miss Moore is very beautiful. 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I don't like this. Jove! Why, how stupid of me! Ethel, this is the most important event of my life. I am afraid to love her; you might as well have just sett the cart before the horse. Ethel! sweet goddess! Nature's chef d'oeuvre! Ethel sat ostentatiously under the inquiries of Mr. Graham, whom suddenly Ethel entered, and the full effulgence of her beauty burst upon the doctor. She inspired him with a softened pink; large, lustrous eyes, the utmost kindness. Ethel entered, and he returned his salutation with the utmost respect.

The old Scotchman smiled querulously to himself. He bowed low, but did not see that Ezra's outstretched hand. "Ah!" said he to himself, "this is the impostor Mr. Moore was asking me about. I might have known he was a rascal; there's villainy in his eyes, spite of his speech."

"Why, sir, is it possible?" said he, aloud. "I heard you were dead in San Francisco."

"Glad to say I am not," said Ezra, with a repulsive laugh. "Did you know my father?"

"Yes, sir; and I knew master Harry, too, before he run off to sea."

"Do you think I've changed much?" asked Ezra, much affected.

"Very much indeed," said McManus, with emphasis. "I shouldn't have known you, sir."

"Ezra was glad that the arrival of the carriage at this moment, put an end to this conversation. He and Dr. Parkes went down to the city together."

Mr. Graham received Ezra with much courtesy. The doctor pleaded a professional engagement, and very soon left.

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No," said Ethel, "the letter was to me; it was dated at the La Farge House. But he may have written another. Did he, sir?"

"He only wrote one letter, and it seemed a short one. He then went immediately."

"Ah! fear he has gone," and there was misery in Ethel's voice as she uttered these words.

"But what can it mean?" cried Mr. Graham.

"Why should he leave the country?"

Ezra smiled querulously, shrugged his shoulders, and glanced at Mr. Graham. "He has, in some things," was her mental comment, "that he wants to tell my guardian. Oh! my forebodings! Some sorrow has occurred to him, and I am powerless to remove it, powerless to console!"

She presently made some excuse to leave the room, and Mr. Graham turned instantly to Ezra. "My dear Mr. Moore," said he, "do you know anything about this mystery? Have you any conjecture?"

Ezra paused. He purposed to ruin Vincent both with father and betrothed, but he hardly knew how to begin without offending Mr. Graham; supposing, naturally, that Vincent's patron is very dear, and so great. When, at last, he spoke, his words seemed strangely irrelevant.

"Your son is to be married to my cousin. It is, I presume, a match in which there is love. And if so, what can be more natural - more to be desired?"

"It is, I presume, a match in which there is such a disparity of intellect, of spirit, of position, of character, that it cannot be possible that your son is peculiarly embarrassed.

"But what can it mean? It seems to me impossible that Vincent should be guilty of such perfidy."

"So I would have said, sir, and I don't ask you to believe me without proofs. Those proofs I will furnish you to-morrow. Is it, in the meantime, necessary to say anything to Miss Ethel about this matter? Why destroy her happiness sooner than necessary?"

"Sir," said Mr. Graham, unperturbed.

"You have a good heart."

"I have at least a heart that can feel for others'," said Ezra, modestly. "Believe me," he continued, "I would not bring such charges against your son without the strongest grounds, had it not been in the truth of what I allege. I have seen Vincent's wife, and spoken to her as such."

"Is it possible?"

"There is another matter," said Ezra, movingly, "of even greater importance, in regard to which I cannot, unhappily, divest myself of suspicions. Were it not, sir, that it cannot be possible that your son is peculiarly embarrassed -"

"Ha!", interrupted Mr. Graham, "what do you say? Is it possible that Vincent may be in pecuniary embarrassment, now, more than probable; for since a - a misunderstanding between us that occurred some time ago, he has, with what he imagines, I suppose, proper pride, refused to receive any money from me, and has lived entirely on the income of his own property, which is not large to a man of his expensive habits. But what do you mean to intimate? You quite startle me."

Mr. Graham looked anything but startled.

"Ah!" thought the schemer, "they have had a quarrel, have they? So much the better for me."

"Why, sir," he answered in a voice of profound melancholy, "if your son were hand-up for money, pressed by creditors and unable to look to you for assistance, why then he might yield to the temptation - and - no! I cannot believe it! Your son would not be guilty of such baseness. Excuse me, sir, I cannot shock your feelings. Permit me to keep my suspicions to myself."

"Never unmask my feelings," said Mr. Graham, with a smile of a martyr, "if my son is unworthy of me - he nearly choked in uttering these words - I am anxious, by all means, to know it."

"Well, then," resumed Ezra, seeing that he might venture to say anything, "I have reason to believe, may, I am assured, that your son has sailed to Europe, with his wife, and taken with him an immense sum of money together with the<r> peripherals.

Mr. Graham was utterly astounded. Vincent a robber! Vincent seeking safety from the avenging law by flight! Much as he desired to believe in his son's villainy this staggered him. He leaned back in his chair with staring eyes and open mouth. Ezra watched him with anxiety.

"I do not ask you to believe all this merely on my word," said he; "I will bring you the proofs which will convince you."

Mr. Graham recovered from his amazement and felt only unmixed satisfaction at finding Vincent, who had so bitterly upbraided him, - Vincent, the possessor of his daughter's affection, - a villain and an outlaw. Ezra smiled quickly as he saw the glance of consternation in the other's eyes.

"I have not word of this to Miss Moore, my dear sir. To-morrow I shall prove my words. And," continued Ezra, seizing the favorable opportunity, and sinking his voice to a confidential whisper, "if it is all proved true, may I not aspire to the hand of your daughter? May I not hope to be your son-in-law? Vincent is devoted to my heart."

"You may," said the other, pressing his friend's hand warmly. "Prove your words, and - command me."
"Dear Jessie,—Come and spend the morning with me. I am lonely and unhappy. Do come—at once, dear sister.

"Lovelyly,

"Ethel."

"Ethel lonely and unhappy!" said Jessie to herself. "I will go at once. Juliette, tell the coachman I'll be right down, and she put Edwin's letter away with a sigh.

"O you dear girl," cried Ethel as her friend entered, "how good of you to come! You make me so happy!"—and to prove her words began to sob.

"That's right, darling, cry away," said Ethel, with flashing eyes. "No, no," cried Ethel, vehemently, starting up. "Oh! how can you! He false! XWho? Vincent?"

"Is he sick?"

"Alas! I do not know, Jessie; he has disappeared."

"Disappeared! what do you mean?"

"No one knows what's become of him."

"It's now ten days—ten days, and none of us have seen or heard from him."

"Don't be anxious, love," said Jessie, herself much frightened. "He has undoubtedly been called off somewhere, suddenly, looking for some misfortune. Perhaps your guardian has lost his property. Vincent, very likely, felt he ought to tell you, and yet dared not, and has gone off for a while to get up his courage; perhaps will write you.

"With like arguments Jessie endeavored to make her comfort, but with very little success; nor did she feel at all ease herself. At length Ethel said—"

"But this is not my only source of disagreeable. Mr. Graham, my guardian, made some very mysterious remarks, yesterday. He seemed very much embarrassed and was not clear in his meaning; but he gave me the impression that he thought he had discovered something dreadful about Vincent, and hinted—only think of it!—that he had been guilty of some crime!"

"Who? Vincent?"

"Yes, Vincent, my Vincent. I interrupted him in the midst of his obscure sentences and did not attempt to disguise my indignation. I left him, more angry myself than I like to remember."

"You should have stayed and heard what he had to say, to soothe your companion, but with very little success; nor did she feel at all ease herself."

"There, right, darling, cry away," said Ethel, with heightened color. "The insent—no, no, that is too ridiculous."

"Nothing seems ridiculous to self-love," said the fair philosopher.

"His manner towards me is certainly curious," said Ethel, mistaking. "He is very deferential and seeks to interest me, while I cannot avoid concealing the aversion he creates."

"Well, let me advise you," said the subtle Jessie, "not to make an enemy of the man. Treat him kindly; extinguish your matrimonial hopes at once, of course; but keep him friendly."

"What harm have I to fear from him?"

"If he deems Vincent a rival, and is as you think, a bad man—everything."

"Nothing will give expression to my own fear. If he has injured Vincent—she did not finish her threat, but one could read it in her eye and gesture."

"You," said Ethel, softly. "You," said Ethel, slyly. "What! listen to slanders on my affianced EDMORS."

"Yes, Ethel, aly."

"I wasn't going to say that," said Jessie, laughing; "but he certainly loves him better than me."

"In the mean time we must hope and pray," said Ethel, softly.

"We must leave these two pure young creatures in their loving interchange of confidences, and turn to another and less pleasing character."

"Ezra, on leaving Mr. Graham's house, walked to his hotel with an elated air. He felt great satisfaction at the result of his "Ezra," said Ethel, "He did not, indeed, disguise from himself the fact that Ethel viewed him with repugnance. But this gave him very little uneasiness. "I can soon come over her," thought he; "in the mean time I've banished the old man. Lucky for me he dislikes his son! He's all the more ready to swallow what I tell him. What can be the reason? Jealousy, perhaps; yes, that's it. He has an unpleasant conviction that Vincent is the smarter man of the two. Well, I see my game. Let me once convince him that his son has abounded, and he will communicate his belief to Ethel in time. By Jove! the girl's a stunner! How scornfully wonder did that old devil of a Scotchman wonder what sort of a chap the real, original Harry Moore was? Wonder if his shades look with complacency at him in his grave! Harry Moore (disregard in peace), and nobody a bit the wiser; and now I'm getting into society. Best of all," and Ezra stroked his mustache, complacently. "I've done that Vincent Graham, hand-litter as he is. That's the nearest I can"
As Ezra had been thus surveying his situation he had been walking rapidly along; but as he gave utterance to the last ejaculations he stopped suddenly, turned ghastly pale, uttered, and would have fallen had he not leaned against a lamp-post for support. For, as the name of Mr. Morris came into his mind, by some subtle association it would puzzle metaphysicians to account for, by some mysterious process of thought, the idea flashed upon him that Mr. Morris and Mr. William Moore were one and the same. There was no evident earthly reason for him to form this conjecture, no date whatever from which to deduce a probability out of such a simple something setting perhaps merely the resemblance in the names linked with MacNamara's strange words, revealed the truth. He did not doubt an instant; he felt persuaded on the spot that he was right. Thus had the sudden terror for a moment; he saw, in that brief instant; he said in a harshe whisper,—

"I'll hide it from Conger," muttered Vincent.

"Conger!" repeated Jim; "ah! I know Inspector Conger of the secret force. 'Gad! I hope Conger isn't after the poor fellow, or it's all up with him. I say," said he, addressing Vincent, "Conger's all right; he don't know anything about it." Vincent ceased muttering, and said in a low voice,—

"You will never be the same to me again,—never again, my father." At length he dozed, and the sergeant tenderly applied the cooling lotions to his head.

The surgeon came very early in the morning, and his face brightened as he looked at his patient.

"If this man's organization wasn't perfect he'd never get over that blow. I trust his mind is tranquil. Did he have much pain?"

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"I am afraid," said Ezra, with a deep sigh, "that it is not of late, only, that your misguided son has been engaged in this criminal business. He must have been at it for a long time, or how could he have amassed the stupendous sum of $675,000? Many months, if not years, I should say.

"That is true," said Mr. Graham, "and now the fellow has gone off to Europe with this foreign woman and his stolen wealth to enjoy himself. I don't wish to betray him; but by heart turned upon the man by the volubleness of her importunity. What her words were, she could never afterwards recall,—they rang in James Graham's ears for many a day.

"The day of Jessie's call, and soon after that young lady had returned home, Mr. Graham endeavored to renew the conversation. Ethel, who regretted her previous angry, listened to him with deference. Graham mumbled over various platitudes about his unwillingness, as a father, to say anything against his son, and et cetera, and immediately thrust the note signed "Beatrice" into Ethel's hand. She read it carefully, nor did she betray the least sign of agitation. The color did not forsake her cheek, but deepened slightly. She read the note through, and then threw it on the table, saying quietly,—"An evident forgery.

"Why evident?" asked her guardian.

"Internal evidence," said Ethel. "In the first place Vincent is incapable of being such a person as this note would prove him." To such an argument there was no reply. Ethel evidently begged the question. Ethel then, that constant heart was not in any account! No, no, that would spoil everything. We must wait till she has gotten over Vincent. And I will plead my own cause, sir."

"Oh! pshaw! Ethel will get over this easily. Sir," said Ethel, with the most distinct enunciation, "pardon me, but I am amazed at your words. I will believe nothing about the house, but did not show himself. He rode over the surrounding country. His artistic eye was pleased by its beauties, and he resolved to take up his residence in that neighborhood. He entered a thick grove and sat down from the city, now and then, for a few days. He was so much pleased with it that he soon came to an arrangement with the Scotchman by which he was to live there and ostensibly own the place. He took the trusty old man into his service and confidence. Mr. Moore did not spend much of his time in this retired spot, although he came up from the city, now and then, for a few days. He joyfully acquiesced McManus with the discovery of his daughter. McManus lived at the cottage, and passed his tranquil days mostly with his Bible and his garden. He had never told Moore of Vincent's visit and the revelation he had.

"Sir, I saw James Graham drown ye in the river."

"And you have never told?""They rang in James Graham's ears its beauties, and..."Mr. William Moore, shortly after his return from Australia, had gone up to Wyckoff Hill. He could scarcely have explained why it was he went there. He felt a sort of mysterious attraction towards the place, and went there. He wandered about the house, but did not show himself. He rode over the surrounding country. His artistic eye was pleased by its beauties, and he resolved to take up his residence in that neighborhood. He entered a thick grove and sat..."Mr. Moore did not spend much of his time in this retired spot, although he came up from..."
made him, fearing that his employer might regard it a breach of confidence. Now that his mind was at rest about the murder, he was comparatively happy and contented, though one secret still preyed upon him. He was at work one day in his garden, which was separated, by a slight fence, from a path, hardly meriting the name of road, that ran through the grove, when he perceived a very aged man approaching. His appearance was so venerable that McManus would have deemed it a straggling limb from him. His aged limbs seemed scarcely able to support the slight weight of his frail and bent body. A long, white beard reached nearly to his waist, and a trembling hand held a weathered cane which seemed to impede rather than to aid his pace. There was something pitiable in the appearance of this old man tottering on the verge of the grave, and McManus threw down his spade to invite him into the house. The octogenarian, however, paused before he reached the path leading to the doorway, and sat down on a rock beneath the bare branches of a maple, which intercepted very little of the sun's heat. McManus approached, but so stealthily that he did not attract the old man's attention. The latter sat with his chin resting on his hands, apparently in profound meditation. The Scotchman, unwilling to disturb his reverie, stood, silent, by.

"It must be herculean," soliloquized the aged stranger. "They told me it was five miles this morning. This must have been the wood. O William! I am going to see you again before I die! Poor William! poor Ellen!"

The Scotchman listened in great surprise. "Is it possible? about Mr. and Mrs. Moore?" thought he.

"Poor William!" continued the old man, in a feeble voice, "I have never thought to see you again. O William Moore, you are a man raised from the dead!

At these words, McManus exclaimed in great excitement, "Who are you that speaks of William Moore?"

The aged man turned hastily. He endeavored to rise, but his feeble limbs refused to support him. "Don't get up," said McManus; "hide there and rest ye. May I ask ye who ye are, sir, and who ye seeks?"

"I am trying to find William Moore," said McManus.

"William Moore? Why, he's dead!"

"Nay, I hear he's alive. He has written to me," and the old man fumbled for a letter. "He's alive," said McManus. "The old man's eyes sparkled. "Thank God! then it was not a trick on a poor, lone man. I feared it was a cruel hoax, sir."

"Who are ye, sir, if I may be so bold, that takes such interest in William Moore?"

"My name is Phineas Somers."

"What! Mr. Moore's grand-uncle?"

"Yes, or rather his wife's grand-uncle, but he's all the same. He thought I was dead, doubtless, and I thought he was deceived. How did he know I was alive?"

"There was a letter come to him from Salem a week ago," replied McManus.

"Ah! who could have sent it? Well I was amazed other day to get a letter signed William Moore, bidding me come on here. I haven't travelled twenty miles these twenty years, but I started right off to see the dear boy before I died. I haven't many days to live. I—here the old gentleman was interrupted by a harrowing cough that racked his weak frame.

"Well, Mr. Somers," said McManus, "will ye come up to the house? Mr. Moore will be here this afternoon, I think, sir. You must be tired. Have you walked far, sir?"

"About five miles this morning. I'm not as hearty as I once was." This information seemed superfluous, but McManus replied, —

"Are you not, sir? You are pretty well advanced in years, sir."

"I'm ninety-three, sir, come next Independence day."

"To say that McManus felt like a young man was not expressing half the truth. He helped the patriarch to rise, and leaned on his arm the venerable Somers tottered into the house, and sank into an armchair. Mr. Somers seemed greatly disappointed. He was not at all sure, sir, but he will punish him pretty hearty, you may be sure."

"I hope he will," said Mr. Somers; "it is outrageous!"

At this moment a little boy, whom McManus sometimes employed to do errands, appeared, with a letter which he had taken from a post-office in an adjoining town. It proved to be a few lines from Mr. Moore, saying that he could not come up that day. Mr. Somers seemed greatly disappointed. He rose with difficulty and announced that he should go to Boston, and take the cars for New York. McManus in vain urged him to stay at the cottage. "Let me go and get you a wagon, to drive you down, sir."

"No, thank you, I prefer to walk. I shall

"He thought you were dead, sir," said McManus; "in fact, he saw your death in a Boston paper."

"Yes, yes, it was another Phineas Somers; but he was quite young, he was only eighty."

"Now tell me," continued Somers, "how William escaped from drowning, where he has been these years, and what he is doing now?"

McManus hesitated. He did not know whether he ought to reveal anything, but then the reflection that this old gentleman was Mr. Moore's grand-uncle, and certainly entitled to the knowledge, decided him and he related the whole story. He did not say anything, however, about Mr. Graham's share in Mole's disappearance. His visitor listened with great apparent interest.

"And isn't he going to claim Mr. Wyckoff's fortune?"

"Yes, in time. He's no hurry. He has several people to pay up. You know his son is dead?"

"Is he? I heard he was alive and in this country."

"It is not so, sir. The fellow that pretends to be Harry Moore is a miserable impostor. In my opinion 'tis he that murdered Mr. Franchot.

"Mr. Somers seemed intensely interested."

"Yes," continued McManus, "and he's trying to palm himself off as Harry Moore, and has taken possession of the old Frenchman's property."

"The villain! Why don't William expose him?"

"Oh! he will, sir, never fear. He'll own him from his position. Mr. Franchot's property belongs to Mr. Moore, at least as trustee."

"Ah! how is that?"

"He feels, Mr. Franchot left it to Moore's child."

"Yes, I know.

"Well, there is an heir alive."

"Yes, pray explain."

"Don't get excited, sir. It may do you harm. Hadn't we better stop talking a spell?"

"No, no, go on! I want to hear everything. So greatly was the old gentleman interested, that he sat nearly bolt upright."

"Well, you must know, Mr. Somers, that Mr. Moore has a child really living."

"Mr. Somers here cried out, "It is a poor, lone man. I feared it was a cruel hoax."

"Mr. Somers seemed greatly affected by this narrative. He was evidently a kind-hearted man."

"Who told him about the child being abandoned in the cars?"

"An old servant of his, Mrs. Jarvis."

"Yes! Mrs. Jarvis! Yes, yes. What joy it must have been to poor William to claim his child to his arms,—a child he had never seen since!"

"He has been a new man ever since, sir. He looks ten years younger."

"What do you suppose he will do to the scoundrel who骗取s to be his son?"

"I don't know, sir, but he will punish him pretty hearty, you may be sure."

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take my time. I'll take another glass of brandy.

He drank the liquor and went out. He walked with such extreme solemnity that McManus ventured to expostulate with him, and again offered to procure a conveyance; but the old gentleman refused with some degree of acerbity, and shuffled off alone. He passed through the gate and down the shady path, followed by the Scotchman's pitying eye.

At about a hundred rods' distance from the house the path turned sharply around a cluster of poplars, and hid the old gentleman from view, and McManus went in to prepare his frugal dinner.

Mr. Somers walked on till he was completely hidden from the cottage, and then suddenly stopped, burst into a loud, harsh laugh, swung his cane away, pulled off his hat, and went on along, white, and resumed an erect and stately attitude. The venerable old patriarch disappeared, and in his place stood a stout, fresh man in the prime of life, with a laugh, flung his cane away, pulled off his hat, and went on along, white, and resumed an erect and stately attitude. The venerable old patriarch disappeared, and in his place stood a stout, fresh man in the prime of life, with a laugh.

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He passed through the gate and down the shady path, followed by the Scotchman's pitying eye.

Mr. Somers walked on rapidly. "Mrs. Jarvis was much against him. While Ezra was pursuing his plots and Vincent was battling with death, the court of Oyer and Terminer, and the People against Hoyt;" was the first case on the calendar. The jury was composed of the usual miscellaneous group of citizens. An impartial judge was there. The district attorney was indefatigable in the discharge of his unpleasant duties, and did his best to have justice secured.

Smith's counsel was, unhappily, no other than D. Murragh, Esq., a man, as has been said, of damaged character.

Smith, unfortunately, knew nothing about this man's bad name, but had heard only of his talents. He had gladly accepted, then, Mr. Murragh's offer of his services, an offer that had been prompted by Ezra. Ezra instructed the lawyer to make but a show of defence, and the tool obeyed to the letter, or at least intended to do so.

Sometimes, however, on the trial his professional zeal got the better of his discretion.

A day or two before the court opened, Mr. Conger, who had become more and more convinced of Smith's innocence, called on Murragh and proposed that Mrs. Jarvis should be asked upon to give her testimony, — not doubting that she would prove that they had been mistaken in the person's identity with Hoyt. Murragh approved of the proposal and gave Ezra the name of it. In accordance with the scheme concocted between these worthies, Mr. Conger was led to believe till the last moment that Mrs. Jarvis would be summoned as a witness, and only learned, after the testimony for the defence had closed, that he had been beguiled.

The trial lasted several days and caused considerable excitement. Ezra Hoyt sat on a buck-seat in the court-room, an interested spectator of the proceedings. Mr. Murragh's treacherous defence could not save the prisoner. The overwhelming circumstantial evidence against him, the testimony of Wilkins, and of Lewis Conger, the pawnbroker: his refusal to show where he was on the 5th of June, 15—, and the circumstance of Mr. Murragh's being his counsel, were more than sufficient to insure a conviction. The jury were not out fifteen minutes, and their verdict was, "Guilty, of murder in the first degree."

A black film shot before Smith's eyes, as he heard that sorrowful verdict, and he felt a deadly sickness. He seemed choking, and gasped for breath. No one spoke; Smith, partially recovering, rose hastily, and, turning to the jury, said distinctly, and in a voice of inexpressible misery, "Gentlemen, you have convicted an innocent man. God forgive you. I am a victim to circumstantial evidence."

Ezra left the court-room, with the excited throng, in addition. But he could not conceal. Not the slightest feeling of sorrow for the unfortunate Smith penetrated his marble heart,—all he felt was a delicious consciousness that he was safe now from the consequences of his misdeeds.

Mr. Murragh was accosted by a legal brother,—

"Your defence was very able, my dear sir, but you couldn't do anything, of course, with the evidence against your man."

"Of course not; his conviction was a foregone conclusion. I didn't know but what I might bamboozle the jury and get them to disagree. Of course I knew the fellow, but you needn't have proved an alibi." Mr. Murragh had not seen Mrs. Jarvis since he had played the role of old man for McManus's defence. He rode directly to Roberts's house. Mrs. Jarvis herself opened the door, and took him at once into the parlor.

Ezra carefully shut the door, and, catching the woman by the wrist, dragged her into the middle of the room.

"You remem-ber,—don't you?—that I went to the devil?—that I went to the cars? Come, speak!"

"Oh! you're astonished, are you? You see now the mischief you've done, I hope. Well, then, let me tell you that Miss Ethel Moore is his daughter."

"Miss Ethel Moore? It can't be so."

"He's still, you old fool! It is so, and all on account of your infernal nonsense."

"What do you mean?"

" Didn't you, when the brat was born, write me about it, and tell me the nice little scheme you had concocted, after you saw that old fool of a Frenchman, to have me pass off as Harry Moore?"

"Yes."

"Well, didn't I like the idea, and propose to another the young one? And you were too squeamish to do that, and wanted to abandon the thing, and have it turn up some day, just as it has?"

"Yes, I couldn't bear—"

"Oh! I know. You couldn't bear to kill the child, but you couldn't bear to have anything about murdering it with dirt. Well, didn't you say you'd come on to Boston and see me, and then I telegraphed you to meet me in Springfield with the brat? You remember, don't you?"

"Yes, I remember all about it. What's the use of going over all that?"

"I want to go over it; keep quiet. Well, then, I telegraphed you to meet me in Springfield as a sort of half-way place, and you started with the young one. I hadn't seen you, you know, for a long time, and you were to wear a blue veil bordered with white, so I'd know you in a moment. Well, I go on to Springfield, and you're not there. I go and get a horse and wagon and ride to the next station, and there I find you. And what do you say? Why, that you were afraid I'd take the child and kill it, as I would have done, and so you left it in the cars to be picked up and sent to a Foundling Asylum. Well, you have to hurry back to New York to get there before Mr. Ebenezer Moore and I, like a fool, go with you. Then I loaf around New York a week, and when I get back to Springfield, nobody knows or cares what has become of the brat. And now look at the luck. Mr. Ebenezer
Moore himself finds the child, adopts her, and after eighteen years, William Moore suddenly appears, advertises in the paper, finds his daughter in a jiffy, and where am I? Now have I told the story right, or not? "Yes, that's just as it happened."

"Well, then, do you see why I've been over it all? To show you what an informal fool you've been in the whole business—that's why. And finally you go and spoil everything by blabbing to this William Moore."

"Well, it would have been just as bad if his daughter hadn't turned up; he's here to own himself."

"I know it, but that doesn't help the matter. By heavens! you've informed on me, and shall suffer for it!"

"Do you threaten your own mother, Ezra?"

"Yes, I threaten my own mother. I don't care whether you're my own mother or not. I want you to know you shall be punished!"

"I'm not afraid."

"If! do you defy me, old woman, do you? Take that! and the cowardly brute struck his mother a fierce blow in the face. Mrs. Moore staggered, fell, and striking her head against the corner of the mantel-piece, sank to the floor, insensible, striking her head against the corner of the mantel-piece, sank to the floor, insensible.

"Instinct! I made no insinuation, sir; it was an unqualified assertion."

"Ezra gnawed his pale lip in rage."

"In what respect have my words or conduct displeased you, Miss Moore?"

"They have not displeased me, sir."

"Oh! then you approve of them?"

"Pardon, may you be happy in your conclusions. If I can be displeased, or approve of anything on which you have not bestowed a moment's regard?"

"There is no need, I presume, to speak ill of your predecessors."

"Oh! how you are lousy in your conclusions. How can I be displeased at, or approve of anything on which I have not bestowed a moment's regard?"

"I see no need, I presume, to speak ill of your predecessors."

"I am sorry; he is not at home."

"Yes, that's just as it happened."

"I confess that the strangeness of your question prompts me, rather curiously, to ask you why you infer anything of the sort?"

"Then you would insinuate, that, as a general thing, it is infidel in you to speak ill of my ancestors."

"Ezra raised her arched brows slightly, in intellectual superiority, and to cope with her, with the weapons of irony and sarcasm, was hopelessly, but he knew a theme on which he could distress her,—her absent lover."

"I am a beautiful night. I trust Mr. Vincent Graham is having fine weather on his voyage."

"I should be glad to think he was on his way to Europe," answered Ethel.

"Does it relate to Mr. Vincent Graham?"

"It is written by him."

"I confess that his opinions and writings do interest me," said Ethel.

"Here is the letter, Miss Moore," and he handed her the following production,

"I will not deny, my own Beatrice, that I have not thought of you late; but remember, darling, that I have a most difficult role to play. Being unhappily engaged to Ethel Moore, I am obligated, naturally, to be a good deal in her society. Now inspired I feel that society, after reveling in the vehement outpouring of your love, mops cartilaga, I need not say. It is like brackish water after champagne, if I may use so coarse an illustration. Ethel is a good enough girl, amiable, rather pretty, etc., but as for having her for a wife,—pardon! a day with you is better than ten thousand spent in her smiles. I may say, without vanity, that the poor creature is desperately in love with me. It's a shame to break her heart,—I am sorry enough that I committed myself. The truth is, that she attended me when I was wounded in that affair I told you of, and one day, while she was reading some of those .silly documents, as perhaps what she read, bewildered her, and I threw myself, metaphorically, at her feet. Since I met you the engagement has been hateful to me. I have thought the best plan for me to pursue is to write the poor thing some doleful message, intimate suicide, and then disappear suddenly. After she has cried a little at my death, she'll get over it, and marry some well-to-do old fogy. But enough about Ethel Moore; forgive me for lingering on the uninteresting theme. I wanted to define my position."

"Do not be angry with me, sweet Beatrice, for concealing our marriage. Is not what I have written a sufficient justification of my course? When we reach Europe you will be addressed as Mrs. Graham and shall never suffer disquietude again. Till then, aid me in carrying on the deception."

"Then you do not miss Mr. Vincent Graham?"
heart, every portion of my life, beats for you and you alone.

"Wholly yours,

"VINCENT GRAHAM.

NEW YORK, Sept. 3, 18—"

The first words of this letter fascinated Ethel, and she read it carefully through. Ezra watched her with a devil's joy.

Ethel, as she read, was seized by an overpowering fear. This was certainly Vincent's handwriting; this was certainly Vincent's style. She looked at the signature—there was the familiar abbreviation she always used. Was it possible? Was Vincent this villain? Every feeling, every sentiment in that true heart, rose up rebellion, against the idea; and yet her senses told her that this letter was no forgery. Every atom of color deserted her face; had Ezra been nearer he would have had the gratification of seeing her tremble violently. She read slowly to recover her composure, and, apparently suppressing its envelope, and, apparently suppressing—

"I am really rejoiced that you did not believe Mr. Graham was the author of this," said Ezra. "I was afraid he wrote it himself.

"Ezra laughed merrily. "That Mr. Graham wrote it! Pray pardon me, but the idea struck me as very funny. Why should he amuse himself by writing such an epistle? Have you seen Hackett as Falstaff, Mr. Moore?"

"Hackett be hanged!" muttered Ezra, inaudibly.

"Were we talking about the theatre, Miss Moore?"

"We were not, but it would be an agreeable change.

"Don't you want to see any more of what you call ingenious compositions, Miss Moore?"

"No, I confess I do not. I have read three specimens already. Cleverly done, I admit, but they grow tame.

"Well, we will change the subject. Have you seen my father?"

Ethel was really surprised this time, but she did not show it.

"Oh! you know then that he is alive? I congratulate you, sir. Pray how did you discover it? Yes, I have seen him frequently.

"I have not had that pleasure yet. Can you tell me where he lives?"

"At the Whitney House, I believe.

"Thank you," said Ezra, rising. "I will pay you my respects. Can you appreciate the feelings of one who has not seen his father for many years?

"I can," said Ethel, sadly, and Ezra bowed himself out, ill-concealing the circumstances of the interview had caused him.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A SURPRISE.

After the conversation just related, Ezra no longer wavered in his purpose of murdering Ethel and her father. It was absolutely necessary that they should be "put out of the way," as he expressed it, if he would prevent Franchot's property being taken from him, and his imposture becoming known. And now he felt an uncontrollable rage against Ethel—a rage which only her life could satiate.

He walked rapidly down-town till he reached Houston Street, and, passing down this towards the East River, he turned into Allen Street, and entered one of the wildest houses in the neighborhood. He did not ring, but, opening the door with a latch-key, went up a creaking pair of stairs in the midst of utter darkness, and stopped at a office, lawyer's clerk, and was now a rich attorney, rarely appearing in court but enjoying by a no means despicable practice. With wonderful assiduity he had educated himself, not only in English studies but in classics, and was an exceedingly well-informed man.

"What's up now, A. B.?" he asked.

"A rather ticklish job to be done, Donny," replied Ezra.

"Well, in the first place, I want—"

"Stop! If you please. Allow me. I don't want to know what you want to do or to be done. Say A. B. if it's all the same to you."

"Well, then, A. B. has two individuals in his mind's eye whom A. B. particularly desires to rid of the burden of existence."

"Yes. Go on."

"One of these individuals is a man named—"

"Excuse me,"—interrupted the other, "don't say his name is, say his name might be—"

"All right. A man whose name might be William W. Moore."

Mr. Murray nodded. The name seemed familiar to him.

"The other," continued Ezra, "is a young lady, who might be called Ethel Moore."

"Is it possible that she may be any relation of the first-mentioned party?"

"It is possible that she may be his daughter."

"Very good," said Murray, smiling.

"Go on."

"I—I would say A. B.—has, as you are aware—"

"Beg pardon, I am not aware; don't say I am aware; I know nothing about these circumstances."

"Excuse me. Well, A. B. has been representing himself to be the son of this, called William Moore, and has by means of such representations come into the possession of the fortune of a man named—I mean who might be called Auguste Franchot? D'ye understand?"

"Perfectly. Proceed."

"A. B. has been all the time under the supposition that the so-called, William,
Moore was dead. The fact that he is not dead is an ugly fact to A. B. Therefore A. B. desires that the so-called Ethel Moore—

"Don't bawl her name out that way, man."

"What an infernally cautious chap you are! Well, A. B. wants the young woman to die, also, because she is really the heiress Moore was dead. The fact that he is purchased it."

"They have that an infernal analysis, and ing chemists will find the millionth part of Murragh? Well, I won't quote any more.

"Not scar that whiter skin of hers than called Ethel. I feel like Othello—' I would out in that style? Happily these walls are safe. Well, does A. B. require any sugges-

"Depart this life?"

"Will A. B. intend to abide by his advice."

"Does A. B. intend to pursue?"

"It is easily done."

"Well, then, there's drowning."

"Poison is dangerous to use. These pry-

"Hard to be done without being seen."

"I like that better; leaves no trace, and is easily done."

"What do you say to starving to death?"

"That's not so good—takes a long time, and, besides—"

"Is too cruel?"

"Poo! I never thought of that. I meant it gives the party a chance to escape, unless, indeed, he's buried alive," added Ezra, thinking of Vincent."

"Starving's all out of the question, of course," said Murragh. "I only mentioned it to see what you'll say. Starving's absurd and impossible. Well, do you decide on smothering?"

"Yes, I think smothering's the best plan, after all. Now let's have your opinion as to how to manage the affair."

When Ethel informed her guardian that she had found her father and that his name was Morris, Mr. Graham was very much agitated. His horror and dread of Morris were unbreakable, — Morris, the sharer of his fatal secret, his denouncer, — the man whose word could consign him to the scaffold. So much agitated and confounded was he by the announcement that he was incapable of making any inquiries of Ethel, and that young lady was not obliged to re-

"Possibly not; but it is always well to take Domizetti Murragh's opinion."

"Aha! Good! Well, there are various modes,—the knife, noiseless, but brutal and inarticulate—"

"Bah! We've had enough of the knife, Murragh."

"The lawyer's face grew a shade paler."

"Tell me, what do you mean by calling out in that style? Happily these walls are non-conductors of sound; but do be more discreet."

"Ask your pardon—to return. No, the knife won't do—especially for the fair so-called Ethel. I feel like Othello,—' I would not fear that whiter skin of hers than snow, etc. You don't like poetry, do you, Murragh? Well, I won't quote any more."

"The knife's disposed of. What next?"

"Potion."

"Potion is dangerous to use. These phrenology chemists will find the millionth part of a grain with their infernal analyses, and detectives will always ferret out where you purchased it."

"Well, then, there's drowning."

"Hard to be done without being seen."

"True. Smothering?"

"I like that better; leaves no trace, and is easily done."

"Your father, miss—"
Ezra was disguised to look like an Irishman; he now pulled off red false whiskers, and burst out laughing in horrid glee.

"Donny, take off that beard; you are ugly enough any way. Now, Miss Moore, what's the matter? If so, it's premature. Bah! don't die in my arms," and he let her sink upon the floor.

"Now," continued Ezra, speaking very slowly, and in a very cheerful voice, "isn't this the complete surprise for you? You thought you'd find your father dying; he was never in better health in his life. How do you like this place? It's a good ways from the city,—all the better; nobody can hear your screams. It's dark and dismal,—all the better; a safer place to die in. It's never visited,—all the better; your body won't soon be found. This gentleman here,—my friend, Mr. Donny,—a poor name, ain't it?—and I, going to put you and your father to death,—shudder you, in fact. You didn't expect to be murdered when you went to bed last night, did you? Quite a surprise for you, isn't it? Donny and I think we'll smother you. How do you like the idea? Come, I'll be generous; you may choose the mode you prefer. What would you speak? Well, there's no wasting time. Smother it is, Donny. Get away till he had heard the whole story. It appeared that he had been summoned from his home, by a man who represented himself to be a servant of Mr. Graham's, to go at once to his daughter, who was dangerously ill; and on entering the carriage waiting for him had been attacked and overpowered by the fellows —Ezra Hoyt.

Ezra directed the policemen to take Murray and the still senseless Ezra into another room, and await further instructions.

Then Ethel, sitting with her arm around her father's neck and holding Ezra's hand, told the latter all in a few brief words, William Moore assisting her and supplementing her narrative.

"You must not feel, dear Ned," said she, "that you have lost a sister." "No, but I have an uncle," said Mr. Moore. "But come, I want to know how you happened to be murdered, and felled Ezra, raised her tenderly in his arms, and covered her face with impassioned kisses. Better,—don't slaver so,—it was only Vincent lying in bed, with his eyes considerably bigger than saucers, and his face pale as—well, your cheeks at this moment ain't a circumstance. When the old fellow saw me he smiled, —George! that ghastly smile of his nearly made me blither right out,—and stretched out a hand, —thin and white and shrivelled up, very much like the 'skinny hand' of that disagreeable old chap in the 'Antic Marinier,' —and said in a voice so weak that it was positively ridiculous, "Mr. Graham! Mr. Graham's throat. 'Ned, my boy, is that you?' At this up jumped a pleasant-looking man, dressed in the uniform of a sergeant of police, and roared out, "Hurrah! bully for you, stranger!' and gave me a crack in the back that tangles to this moment, "'Jerusalem crickets! I'm glad you've come.' Then suddenly dropping his voice, as if in apprehension that he made too much noise (and he certainly did), he added in a whisper, 'Cap'n (he noticed my bars, you see), are you a friend of his', say, are you?' and he jerked his thumb towards Vincent."

"'I ain't anything else," said I, and down I sat on the bed by Vint's side, and—but let that go, that's spotty.' "No, no," said Ethel, "what was it?" Well, I kissed him," said Edwin, blushing (an actual fact, captains in the army sometimes blush).

"I'll kiss you for that," said Ethel, professing her entrancing lips.

"Arent you ashamed of yourself?" said Edwin, giving her a hearty smack. "I'm no relation to you."

"Don't care, Edwin," said Ethel, ingeniously, "it's just as much pleasure to kiss you."

"Dear that!" ejacled Edwin. "Mr. Moore, you'd better look out for this daughter of yours. Well, Vint, was dreadfully weak, for he had fainted away already. Now don't cry, Ettie,—he's in no sort of danger. Here—upon this police sergeant—Parker's his name, and he's a trump, if there ever was one—to work to get him as skilfully as any hospital nurse I ever saw, and brought him to,—'Cap'n,' said Parker, 'them words he spoke when he saw you, were the first that have passed his lips these ten days, as I'm a living man. I was afraid the boy was dumb for life.' "How long since he recovered consciousness? I asked.

"Only last night. He couldn't speak and tried to write with a pencil, but dash me, if he had strength enough to scribble a word."

"Well, I managed to get Parker's story all out, although he imparted it in a rambling fashion; and Edwin, in a few clear and condensed sentences, told his interested listeners all that Parker knew about the matter.

"Well," continued Edwin, "while the sergeant was talking away, wandering a thousand miles and then suddenly getting back again, old Vint lay quiet with his skeleton hand in mine and looking as peaceful as an infant. When Parker finished, Vint, said, and his voice was so clear and firm that we were amazed. 'Well, Ned, I suppose you'd like to know how I got into that collar, and you, too, my friend,' he added, looking towards the police-officer. Well you may be sure we didn't tell him not to trouble himself.
"But first," said Vint, "tell me, how is Ethel?"

"Now the idea of his thinking about you then!"

"Nod," cried Ethel, with pretended severity, "we don't want to hear any of your tiresome recitations. Go on with your story."

"Well, I told him you were well, and says Vint, 'Thank God!' Now what are you crying about? I never did see anything like you girls! You cry when you positively ought to laugh."

"What does she think has become of me?" asked Vint.

"She hasn't the remotest idea. There's a story that you've run away to Europe.

"Does Ethel believe it?" cried he, looking very savage for a ghost.

"'Thank God!'" said Ethel, quietly, but very, very pale; "and Edwin graphically related, to the horror of his auditors, what the reader already knows, how Vincent had been decoyed to Chrystie Street, felled by a blow in the dark, buried alive, and how he had effected his liberation. The last thing he recollected was striking the iron door with the truncheon. Parker's narrative supplied the rest. "And," concluded Edwin, "that man I struck on the head just now, that man, that man, Mr. Moore, who decoyed you here, and was on the point of killing you, is the wretch who knocked Vincent senseless in that vile den, and then entombed him to die in the lingering agony of suffocation. Did you ever see anything more intolerable?"

"'Century, as you'll allow;' and Edwin graphically related, to the horror of his auditors, how Vincent himself. There are some communications that one does not care to commit to paper, to paper, to the wide world."

"Of course she don't," said Vint. "What is the idea of his thinking about you?"

"Now the idea of his thinking about you!" cried he, looking very savage for a ghost.

"A MISCONCEPTION.

"I'll go after the old man then, and you fetch Ethel home; the carriage is waiting round the corner."

"As if the thing required thanks!" said Edwin.

"Good-by, Donny, sorry you're in such a fix; spring gentleman, and Murragh sitting on some large pillows in there, intended for your use. So that's my report of the whole affair; no loss on our side and two of the enemy prisoners, one wounded."

"I can never thank you sufficiently, my dear fellow," said Mr. Moore.

"As it the thing required thanks!" said Ethel, scornfully. "But we'd better take Ethel home; the carriage is waiting round the corner."

"Can't I go and see Vincent?" asked Ethel, excitedly.

"Yes, and excite him into a brain fever again. Oh, of course."

"What has he had brain fever?"

"Father so," said Edwin; "he was a regular maniac for two or three days. But he's all right now; all he needs is quiet. The doctor was angry with me for talking to him last night. He came in as I was leaving, and said he was afraid the conversation would put him back; but I don't believe it will. Come, let's get off."

"They all went downstairs. They stopped for a moment below, and went into a miserable room on the ground floor, a room containing two large windows, each destined to sashes or glass. Here was Ethel still lying insensible and apparently badly hurt, on the policeman's knees."

"We can't bring this fellow to," said one of the men."

"Perhaps he's dead," said Edwin.

"No, sir, his heart beats."
She thus gave to her letters (otherwise loving enough, certainly), an appearance of reticence, and, to her lover's exciting eyes, of coldness. "Has Ethel grown estranged from me in this short absence?" was the half-formed thought that tortured him. At length, on a warm morning of that mild autumn, Vincent called forth,—his physician half consenting, half protesting. Sergeant Parker accompanied him. The delight to Vincent of breathing the free air was so great, that he would not consent to ride, but, leaning heavily on the arm of his escort, strode up-town. As they neared Mr. Graham's residence, Vincent could scarcely restrain his eagerness. He felt no fatigue; every step seemed to increase his strength. He longed for the meeting that should remove all his doubts with the proofs of love.

He parted with Parker at the steps of the house, insisting upon an early call from the servant. He sprang up the broad flight (for he felt now perfectly well), and was on the point of pulling the bell, when the door opened, and a servant appeared. "Be quiet," said he, "and do not announce me. Is Miss Moore in?"

"Yes, sir. Miss Moore is in the parlor to-day;" continued the servant, "but Vincent! I can't imagine what you are about so early in the morning."

"Ah!" said he, "well, go on." The man was about to utter an exclamation of surprise and delight, but Vincent stopped him. "Confirmation strong as proofs of holy matrimony," he said, "trifles light as air;" and to this observation, that seemed sacrilege to Vincent, a reply came in the liquid melody of Ethel's voice, accentuated by love, "And that hap-

If Vincent had, at this moment, been in possession of a title of his own usual self-command and powers of discrimination, he would not have been deluded.

Starting from the indisputable premise that such words could not be addressed by Ethel to any one save himself, or a near relative of hers, he would have at once apprehended that she was conversing with her brother, uncle, or, as was really the case, with her father. Vincent knew that the voice was not Edison's, and the probability that her father had appeared never occurred to him. He murmured to himself, "She is tired of me,—she has found another lover,—and leaned, broken-hearted, against the cold, hard wall.

"Good-by, darling," continued Mr. Moore, in the melodious tones that maddened Vincent, and the poor fellow standing there alone in his wretchedness, heard the unuttering sound of kisses,—so pleasant to participate in, so vacuous for an outsider to hear. So stood the exiled angels without the imperishable pearly gates, and listened to the distant sounds of the happiness that they themselves had felt and lost.

In that brief instant, however, away went all the weakness from Vincent's frame, and he stood up as erect and resolute as he had ever been in the fulness of health and strength. His face was pale, but his eyes shone with an incandescent flame, and his lips were firmly pressed together. Two rapid strides brought him to the parlor; he pulled the noiseless door open and looked in. There was Ethel, his betrothed, resting in the arms of a, by no means old, but handsome man, her arms about his neck, his lips pressed against a bronzed and maidenly cheek. A glace told him this was Morris, the mysterious stranger, the man in whose presence Ethel had always been

Baffled Schemes.
CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE CRYPTOGRAPH.

"You must know," began the young lawyer, "that when Ned Moore called and gave the note to me.

"He told you everything?" interrupted Vincent.

"Yes. He told me all about this Ezra Hoyt; he described the man exactly as he now appears; he told me all his villanies: how it was he who murdered Panchot; how he decoyed you to Chrystie Street and stowed premature obsequies upon you; and his last attempted murder, in which Ned stopped him so neatly. I've seen Ned Moore slightly riled once or twice, but I never saw him quite so mad as he was when he told me about the fellow's escape; he swore some at the policeman's carelessness. Now it seems that Marragh has escaped, also.

"Is it possible?"

"Yes. They locked him up in a statten-house that night in a room alone, and the next morning the bird had flown. I've no doubt this Hoyt helped him out. His room in Allen Street has been searched, but we found nothing of the slightest importance. Since then, Ned and I have been on so keen a search that we haven't had time to report progress to you. I want to go to Broome Street this morning, and be delighted to find you had gone out. I came up here as soon as I could. How do you feel? Are you getting better? You look very pale. Why under the sun do you begin to bother your head with mathematics?"

Vincent's voice was not quite so fast with your questions, Hal," cried Vincent, with a forced smile. "I feel very well; I am getting much better; I'm studying mathematics to drive away the blues."

"The blues?" with Ethel Moore downstairs. "What's the matter? I don't believe you're well, at all."

"I have a little headache; but it's nothing. Come, go on with your story. What have you found out?"

"Well, we watched the place in Allen Street continually, and last night we were repaid. As the boy came and stuck a note in a crack in the wall at the foot of the stairs, we nabbed the boy, but nothing could be made out of him. It was plain, on examination, that one of these rascals had merely meant to play a trick and hired him to stow the note there."

"Well, what did the note say?"

"That's just what I want you to find out. It is written in cipher. We made an exact copy of it and put the original back in the crack. Here's the copy. You are an ingenious fellow. Let's see what you make of it."

Vincent took the following note and laid it on the table in front of him—

"You'll have the brain fever for 'biennial?' You'll have the brain fever for high academic honors. Chance led out his books and began to study, as if read-

"The only two words of one letter that I think it will hurt you any more than Analytical Geometry; but perhaps you had better not bother your head with it, I'll make it out with Ned Moore."

"No, no," cried Vincent, hastily. "I'd like nothing better than to read the thing. Let me have it. It's undoubtedly important."

"I couldn't make head or tail of it last night," said Kavanagh; "but I was rather sleepy. I'll find the clue if I work a month."

"I don't think it will take as long as that," said Vincent; "it seems an easy sort of cipher, mere substitution of letters. Let's go systematically to work. Make an exact copy of it, and we can both work together. Now this is something I like," continued he, as Kavanagh copied the paper. "How Conger would enjoy this! I wish I was well enough to hunt this Hoyt. Do you know, he's the same fellow who assassinated me in Catharine Street."

"So Ned told me; but don't speak to me or I'll make some mistake," said Kavanagh, presently. "I'm a perfect copy of this mysterious epistle."

"Very well, keep it, and let me have the other," said Vincent. "We will assume that these are not arbitrary signs, but transposed letters, and try to discover the principle pursued. But first let's find out what letter stands for e."

"By finding what letter is used most often."

"Yes; that is the most frequent letter."

"Well, it itself occurs twenty-five times."

"And no other one so many? E, then, stands for e. The writer evidently did not hope to conceal that letter. Let's look for some word of three letters containing it; it will probably be 'the.' I see two words spelled 'eth.'"

"That undoubtedly means 'the,'" cried Kavanagh. "Why, Vint, the words are merely anagrams."

"No, that can't be," said Vincent, after a short pause. "You can't make anything out of any of the words in the first line, transpose the letters as you will. We're wrong. This was written by Ezra Hoyt, I suppose."

"I've no doubt of it," said Kavanagh.

"Well, he has probably signed his name to it, and the signature must be 'Ezar,' and not 'Hoyt,' for the first letter is E. We have found, then, what stands for e, a, and u."

"Good. What do you suppose that capital T, that occurs twice, means?"

"It's the only two words of one letter that I think of are a and I. As this is a capital, it probably stands for the personal pronoun."

"But that is a very curious word to close the note with."

"I think; but it must be I. The only arbitrary characters, in this thing, are this little dash or hyphen, which we have found means z, and that asterisk in the last line. I imagine the asterisk stands for z or y, for it occurs only once."

"But what word begins with z or y?"

"Hum!—Ah! Harry," cried Vincent, suddenly. "These words are written backways, I think, for you see u, which means z, a few words; and words as a general thing, don't end with a.
"Yes, yes, you must be right. Let's try it that way. Take the last word but one, me. We have discovered, stands for a. What word of two letters, beginning with a, is there? Why 'am', of course!" "Yes, 'am' is the word, undoubtedly."

"Then the last two words are 'an A!' The note ends with a question."

"Why do you hit on this?"

"Because I think he has turned the alphabet 'upside down', and, symbolizing a word, I'm going to get Moore, and nab the fellow, of course, 'and.'"

"No, I didn't believe it was. We've got those three letters, assuming that a stands for d, as we have in the word 'day', and a is in 'Ezra.' Then his little word must be red."

"I don't think that's it?"

"I've no doubt of it."

"Well, what word would be likely to go with red?—hair? Suppose we call rich, hair?"

"Now, don't let's go to work that way,—no guess-work. Besides, p stands for i, not l. The l, which occurs three times,—and begins and ends with d,—is, of course, 'and.' We've got, then, the symbol for a. Now I want to work the principle on which he's transposed these letters; a is represented by n. Now if we could only find the word, and I think we can, I am going to assume that v does, and it isn't guess-work, either."

"Why do you hit on this?"

"Because I think he has turned the alphabet 'upside down,' and, symbolizing a word, I am going to get Moore, and nab the fellow, of course, 'and.'"

"I'm going to get Moore, and nab the fellow."

"Won't you ask him if he has me? asked Vincent."

"Yes! Why, man, you're mad; you're not well enough. We may have a fight."

"Fine! not well enough! I could pitch you out of the window this moment. I believe the fellow pulled me down some, but I've picked up wonderfully within a day or two. I'm going, whether you want me or not."

"I'll pick you out of the population of New York, Vint. Do you think you can stand it?"

"Yes, yes. Are you determined to make the capture yourself, instead of employing the police, in a sensible, hum-drum way?"

"I am. No police for me; I want the lark. Well, since you're bent on it, I've no more to say; but how, he continued, laughing, 'can you desert Miss Moore so soon?'"
Smith alone in his cell, hearing the solemn steps of his approaching doom, was by no means frightened. For this man there were "everlasting wings" outspread, - a secure refuge; an unchangeable support. With the溶剂 partes of David, he uttered the exciting cry, - "I am going to write the terrible story fully out, to tell you all of the awful truth of June. In what I am about to relate you will recognize many facts with which you are already acquainted. I will not stop to discriminate between what you know and what you do not know. I will write down a complete narrative for your eye when I am dead."

"I was twenty-eight years ago this very month, Helen, when I first met you. Every event in my life I have always dated from that era. When my mind goes back to those days, sweet and terrible, the remembrance of your beauty comes upon me like the unlooked-of strains of some old loved melody. Do you remember the first sight I saw you? No, of course not, but I can never forget it! I was but twenty-three then, high-spirited, an eager student, haunted by the physical imperfection that has blighted my youth, and is now the cause of my dying on the scaffold. I was rich, talented, the leader of my fellow-students. I was not without the self-satisfaction of youth, and I did not envy the brilliant Gerard. Helen, I am able, through God's help, to write my address, I saw, "IHis accidental absence was prolonged, and in the meantime I grew calmer. I resolved never to let my feelings get the better of my reason. I removed myself from your vicinity; and I went away. I tried every device to banish the ever-present picture of your face, so lovely, so deceitful. I plunged into dissipation; but only weakened my body, and I began to fear no evil; for I had learned of Gerard's magnificence; I hear again the heavenly music of your voice; again my cherished wishes!...

"Amen!"

"God grant we may be in time!"

"I hoped, Helen, that you should see you before I died. My hours on earth will soon be over. How wretched they have been, you and I, in their wretchedness, cannot conceive. I do not write to reproach you now; God forbid! I die without one thought of bitterness towards you. But I did wish to see you; you might have come, Helen; it was but the wish that I could have written you; my ears still tingle with the mocking laugh with which you scornfully made me rise, and told me that my sorrow was no more than you could have expected, that you loved me, but that you were - and what a cold glaze of triumph lighted up your eyes as you made the announcement al ready alluded to my half-brother, Gerard Montgomery. With what levity you received the letter, I am as little plot to amuse yourselves and beguile me, - how Gerard's withdrawal from the suit was all pretended, and your encouragement to me fictitious! I did not rise and curse you, Helen. I wonder I did not. Perhaps you marveled at my calmness, and that I could jest about my own disgrace; but I went away from your presence grappled with despair. That night, what men call chance, alone saved me from being a murderer. I sought Gerard. I would have killed him. He had been called away, suddenly and unexpectedly, for some days' absence. I felt chiefly pity for the man, unalterable rage against my brother.

"His accidental absence was prolonged, and in the meantime I grew calmer. I resolved never to let my feelings get the better of my reason. I removed myself from your vicinity; and I went away. I tried every device to banish the ever-present picture of your face, so lovely, so deceitful. I plunged into dissipation; but only weakened my body, and I began to fear no evil; for I had learned of Gerard's magnificence; I hear again the heavenly music of your voice; again my cherished wishes!..."
father, and with such ingenuity and persistency, that he succeeded. He made it appear by forged letters, misrepresentations, and subtile suggestions, that I was a gambler and forger; that I had gone abroad less from a desire for novelty than with the hope to escape the consequences of my crimes. He produced a forged letter, in which I was made to say that I longed and prayed for the day when my father should die and leave me his wealth. The poor old man believed him. Picture his misery at the discovery of my whereabouts. He altered his will and disinherited me. I knew nothing about Gerard's cowardly and covert machinations. I wrote to my father frequently, and attributed his silence to the irregularities of the mails. I at length received a letter from Gerard telling me that my father was dead, and had died a bankrupt. Soon after, through some accidental channel, the news reached me of the birth and death of your son, and, almost immediately, I heard of Gerard's death. That I had never wavered in my love for you, that even scorn and treachery had not killed it, I told you all that at once trampled hope and ended in—Smile at my folly if you will; I resolved to return and win your hand.

But my pride forbade me to go to America. I could not apply the wealth to offer you. I had squandered all my means. I engaged myself to a travelling virtuoso, whose love for antique curiosities aged had not blunted, but whom it had rendered irritable. My duties were to accompany this old gentleman in his researches, carry his box, and lug him over rough places in the roads. I soon conceived a great respect and admiration for him, and, with all the vigour of eight or nine years, and had the satisfaction of obtaining through my efforts many rare additions to his collection. Dying very suddenly he left me the possessor of his entire fortune, five hundred thousand florins. At a banker's at Naples I bought a bill of exchange on New York. Conceived of my misery when they told me that they had no account with M. Lupardi, the Neapolitan banker, and that they had just received advice, by which I learned that I had arrived, that his house had failed! Here, then, was I, a pauper in my native land. Fool that I was! I was not waiting to find out anything about you, without seeing one of my old friends, without learning anything at all about what had occurred during my absence, I took passage, that very day, in a French vessel bound for Marseilles, and on the morrow sailed away, a second time ex-patriated by misfortunes. Not till I was far out on the desolate sea, did I realize myself for not obtaining that information which I would henceforth hold for, and long for in vain. For nearly six years I lived in Paris, and manifestly did I battle with adversity. I drudged, unceasingly, in the office of an agent at Lyons, I wrote poltroon-religious pamphlets, I opened a night-school for instruction in the English language, and devoted every spare interval to the study of medicine. But who can paint the weariness of my life, the dreary, unsweetened days, the restless nights, the unsatisfied yearnings? In short, my poverty had rendered me blind. I tried in vain to win you, to find pleasure in, but not one moment of satisfaction I had since then. See, sir, what remorse has done for me; it has strangled me on a dying bed in a hovel. It is but just

I paused, exclaimed, here, but after I had administered him a cordial, he went on.

"The mint has heard my prayers and brought you to me. I have spent the horrible days of the past five years in searching for you that I might restore your money. Do you see that dusty, travel-worn, battered pair of boots? In the legs are sewn your notes, your money. Draw them out; and there was a world of eager impatience in the command. I obeyed. He demanded my knife, and essayed to rip open the leather, but was too weak. I did it for him, and my gnawing eyes held the notches in which he had changed my fortune. I cannot describe the joy that clothed the old man's face as he bade me count the money, and watched me put it in my pocket. The weight of sin seemed to fade, and the restitutions and he smiled, content.

The next day he died; a few pence were all he left; he had supported a wretched existence on a pittance to preserve my property intact. He slept now in a quiet grave, and a chaste slab bears the name of the wrong-doer and the penitent."

"Imagine how soon I was again upon the sea, whose raging waves impelled the staggering craft fast homewards. A little more than two years ago, again rich, again hope-ful, I landed in this city. I tried in vain to find some old acquaintances; all had vanished or were inaccessible. I returned to my hotel, and took steps, after a long search far up-town.

And now comes a recital so dreadful, so environed with recollections of horror, that it is agony for me to write. But I must do; my momentspraak it; it vindicates me from the unfounded but proved charge under which I die.

"It is about one o'clock in the afternoon. I had nearly reached the hotel when I saw before me,—my father. He, whom I thought confined dust, walked the streets of living men, erect and noble. No superstitious terror thrilled me; I felt and knew Gerard's presence. For motives of his own, he had written me of my father's death. I did not stop to conjecture the reason of his lie, I darted forward and laid my hand upon my father's shoulder. Ead a熟悉的, he could not, in his hasty gesture, have expressed greater pain, greater disgust. I knew him at once; my distorted features are those that change with yours.

"'Wretch!' he cried; 'dog! will you pollute me with your father's touch? Go, revet in your accursed shams! Leave me, begone, and take your curse!'"

I staggered like a drunken man under the unexpected awfulness of this reception.

"'Father'—I gasped, and stopped, for my father's face was frightful to behold. Abhorrence, hate, rioted there in unveiled, hideous glare. Never, never shall I see you again. You, sir, how, how, how?—my dungeon walls cannot shut it out. I look up, down, around, I see it. I expected the paternal smile, the broken words of welcome; I evoked a gaze of horror. Had I been a felon with my bow, my father could not have shoulders with more affright and loathing at my presence. I stood silent, in agony.

"My father's emotion seemed to die away; his face grew pale, and there came a look of disgust. He knew me at once; my distorted features were changed into his eyes, that I noted even in my misery. In a strange voice, he said.

"Where did you come from?"

"From Europe, sir; said I, after a tone, honest struggle for fortune. Ah! sir, I thought you dead; I find you alive, indeed, but dead to me. Oh! what have I done? and I sought to take his hand; he drew it away, and shuddered. His face was deadly pale, his bloodless lips compressed, his black eyes shining with a strange alarming light,--"
alone with a musing. I did not know, of
course, till afterwards, that my father had had one or two periods of temporary alteration of intellect. I learned from his physi-
ician that his mind was supposed to be
falling, owing solely to his sorrow for my
reputed crime; but not even the physician
imagined that he would become a raving
madman with surely inevitable result. Indeed, it had not been for this sudden
meeting with me. Then the quick rush of
to the accumulated horror and anguish of
you over turned his reason; he saw in me a
false security, and the overmastering idea
in his disordered brain, that he was called
upon to execute justice upon me. I was
shocked and stupefied by his manner on the
street; but I had lost my stirps behind me,
and it was not until he had followed me
into my room and bolted the door behind
me, that I knew my father was crazy. Quick
as thought and with a fearful cry, his
eyes wildly glaring and his face distorted
with passion, he rushed at me and caught
me by the throat. In that narrow room,
fighting with a madman, battling for my
life, I—
Some minutes after, I awoke from un-
consciousness to find my father still lying
senseless where I had felled him. I soon
restored his animation. Alas! my medical
eye instantly saw what had occurred. He
was stricken with paralysis; his fluttering
heart scarce beat;—a forger, an exile, an assassin. I have
induced over the lines they filled with tears,
— tears that I interpreted to be signs of
love to me and repentance of his late belief
in my guilt. A great emotion seemed to
imbue his voice, though the only expression
of pain that I could discover was a
conscious of his great weight. All that the
lawyer read, in his monotonous tones,
was—

**My son, forgive me, I have wronged you. Gerard deceived me. See papers in my coat.**

With rupture I kissed his cold forehead,
and sealed my forgiveness there. I took
the papers from his coat-pocket. They
embraced almost every conceivable kind of
documents with written informality
by Gerard,—tending to trace my career as
a spindrift first, then a gambler, a drunkard,
a forger, an exile, an assassin. I have
made a budget of these papers; you shall
read them over, if you please, in the long
lines of law-books, the cold, unsympathetic walls, devoid of color, devoid of
sufficiency, rough, plastered, angular. It was then that I received the
dreadful warrant of my happiness, when I
saw that the atrocious tones, to
which twenty thousand dollars were left to
this young man,

**Who is he? I asked.**

**Why, said he, the son of Mr. Smith's
dughter—**

**What! cried I, almost inarticulate with
fear, the son of Helen —**

**Yes,' said the icicle, completing the
sentence, 'did you know she was married?**

And because I was at that theatre that night,
I have no reproach to make; accusations against
you are crushed by love ere they take form.
These pages, the record of my life and his-
tory of my love, the vindication of my name,
I am proved a murderer in court.
In the absurd attempt to rid myself of the
contemplation of the tragedy of my life, by
jumping at the mock tragedies of the

My father managed to make me under-
stand, that twenty thousand dollars were left to
your son. I read that will with my father's lawyer, Mr.
Simeon Rogers. I recollect the scene well;
the small, musty, parchment-littered room, the
cold, unsympathetic face of the law-
vending over the lines they filled with tears,
as well. You will read these lines alone,
and your thoughts rush back, in swift re-
treat, to those old, old days, to my God-
given love, to Gerard's deceptive passion.
You will search out my grave, that man will
do, I sat down by his
bedside. I watched keenly, but there was
nothing that I

As I busied myself with un-
flagging solicitude, I fancied that I saw
a softened light creep into his cold, gray eyes,
and his eyelids that moved in the vain at-
tempt to speak. When I had done every-
thing that I could do, I sat down by his
bedside. I watched keenly, but there was
no response in his look. I saw that the
line was not an entire blank to him; but
his refection of it was evidently
evange and distorted. I gave him a full ac-
count of it, and then did I calmly go over
to do, I awoke from un-
consciousness to find my father still lying
senseless where I had felled him. I soon
restored his animation. Alas! my medical
eye instantly saw what had occurred. He
was stricken with paralysis; his fluttering
heart scarce beat;—a forger, an exile, an assassin. I have
induced over the lines they filled with tears,
— tears that I interpreted to be signs of
love to me and repentance of his late belief
in my guilt. A great emotion seemed to
imbue his voice, though the only expression
of pain that I could discover was a
conscious of his great weight. All that the
lawyer read, in his monotonous tones,
was—

**My son, forgive me, I have wronged you. Gerard deceived me. See papers in my coat.**

With rupture I kissed his cold forehead,
and sealed my forgiveness there. I took
the papers from his coat-pocket. They
embraced almost every conceivable kind of
documents with written informality
by Gerard,—tending to trace my career as
a spindrift first, then a gambler, a drunkard,
a forger, an exile, an assassin. I have
made a budget of these papers; you shall
read them over, if you please, in the long
lines of law-books, the cold, unsympathetic walls, devoid of color, devoid of
sufficiency, rough, plastered, angular. It was then that I received the
dreadful warrant of my happiness, when I
saw that the atrocious tones, to
which twenty thousand dollars were left to
this young man,

**Who is he? I asked.**

**Why, said he, the son of Mr. Smith's
dughter—**

**What! cried I, almost inarticulate with
fear, the son of Helen —**

**Yes,' said the icicle, completing the
sentence, 'did you know she was married?**

And because I was at that theatre that night,
I have no reproach to make; accusations against
you are crushed by love ere they take form.
These pages, the record of my life and his-
tory of my love, the vindication of my name,
I am proved a murderer in court.
In the absurd attempt to rid myself of the
contemplation of the tragedy of my life, by
jumping at the mock tragedies of the

My father managed to make me under-
stand, that twenty thousand dollars were left to
your son. I read that will with my father's lawyer, Mr.
Simeon Rogers. I recollect the scene well;
the small, musty, parchment-littered room, the
cold, unsympathetic face of the law-
vending over the lines they filled with tears,
as well. You will read these lines alone,
and your thoughts rush back, in swift re-
treat, to those old, old days, to my God-
given love, to Gerard's deceptive passion.
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no response in his look. I saw that the
line was not an entire blank to him; but
his refection of it was evidently
evange and distorted. I gave him a full ac-
count of it, and then did I calmly go over

During the writing of this letter Smith
had passed many times,—often seemed un-
able to proceed, often hastily strode up and
down the narrow limits of his cell. As he
finished, the dying candles were thicketing in
their sockets, and the pale gray of dawn
struggled through the contracted window.
He rolled up the manuscript that his
diverse moments had made quite voluminous, tied
it securely, and traced the name of the
addressed person in bold handontade.
He bashed his haggard face, composed his at-
tire, and, with no thought of sleep till the
sun rose, he would so soon fall into
and slept down with the open look before him.
The faint sound of a light footfall in the
CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A TOO LATE CONFESSION.

"At last! God, I thank thee!" cried Smith, with the deepest emotion. "This is Helen Vincent,—no phantom,—she herself!" and he rushed forward as if he would have clasped her to his arms.

"Not Helen Vincent," said she, in a voice almost imperceptibly repellant, herself paler than snow, and with a conviction that had at that moment to deny this; her head sank upon her bosom.

"I will take you to your brother's scheme, for he hated you, perhaps you never knew how much he did hate you, and I repudiated you with folded scorn."

"Felted! oh, say it again! felted?"

"It was felted,—all felted, as I live! I do not know what demon possessed me. Many bitter tears, many wearisome months are the recollection of that interview caused me. And when Gerard poured into my ear stories of your guilt and crimes, I did not believe one word."

The lady's eyes quivered under the blaze of gratitude that shone from her companion's at these words. "Sometimes, during those long silent years, I thought you dead; again I thought you were laboriously preparing fame, with which to startle the world; again that you were sick, lovely, unhappy. But still I felt no love for you. I married Gerard. Is it wicked for me to tell you that I hated him? I did. His mild kindness nearly won my heart. But I stood in the wife's position at his bedside when he died, and langued in vain for recognition from his unconscious eyes. When he was gone, oh, how I craved to see you!"

Smith groaned. "I heard that you had landed in New York, and immediately disappeared. From that time, no tidings of you ever reached me. My widowhood was short. I married James Graham from purely ambitious motives. I thought you dead. As yet I had never loved you; but ten days ago your note reached me, telling me that you were a prisoner and condemned to die. Ah! then I knew I loved you; then I felt that I had destroyed my own happiness; then I longed, oh, how deeply to see you. Is it wicked for me to talk so now? I do not believe it is. Standing here, the wife of James Graham, I tell you that I love you, and you alone, and I am as true a wife as ever."

"And a better woman for the avowal!" cried Smith, and he kissed the hand upon his shoulder. "Ah! Helen, it would have been better had you not come here, for now I do not want to die. You love me! I am like a man who has starved so long that nothing can revive him,—the spring of vitality is broken, and now you come and offer me a feast."

"No, I do not," said the other, withdrawing her hand in spite of him. "If you loved, you would still starve. I am another's wife."

"No matter. The avowal, the knowledge, the fact of your love is reviving, all sufficing."

"When I received your note," continued Mrs. Graham, in calm, unpassioned accents, "let me tell you all. When you and—your your brother were young men, the one remarkable for beauty, the other for talent,—when you sought my society daily, and plied your suits with arder,—I loved neither of you. I had a wicked desire to humble you. I went myself to your brother's scheme, for he hated you,—perhaps you never knew how much he did hate you,—and I repudiated you with folded scorn."

"You have avowed yourself to be a murderer,—a murderer!—can I believe one word."

"Most assuredly; for then I would fight for the avowal."

"And in your life," continued Smith, "of any happiness, any enjoyment, any distinction which I regard him is unspeakable, and your wife."

"There is the complete history, Helen," said Smith, pointing to the packet. "Take it,—it will tell you everything."

"Is there no hope for you,—none at all?"

"Not the slightest; all efforts for even a reprieve have failed. But what matters my mode of death? I have no family to sink at the disgrace. I am shut out from all sympathy, all endurable. I feel like an accomplice to the involuntary, daily partner of his tortured life! Although I tell you it, the horror with which I regard him is unspeakable, and although I bear it, the agony I endure, my soul is an accomplice to the deed; but can I reveal it? Shall I denounce my husband?"

"No,—not the wife's part. It is your duty to conceal it. Soften his heart,—make him repent and confess."

"Yes, oh, yes! I have a son, and her rich voice swelled with the unfeigned pride that mothers only know. "I have a son, the prototype of human excellence, so good, so brave, so stainless, so pre-eminent, in him is the essence of honor, and all that is noble."

"Then call not yourself unfortunate, for you are blessed. Have you any other sorrow, Helen?"

"Yes, I have the ever-present realization of the fact that I owe everything to my husband. Without him I should be almost a pauper. I have no property of my own."

"No property of your own! Why, your father, Mr. Vincent, was said to be exceedingly rich."

"So everybody supposed, but his fortune was not half what it was conjectured to be. He will left twenty thousand dollars to one Richard Hoyt, his private secretary, and divided the rest between my brother and myself. Our shares were very small."

"I remember that Hoyt. A disagreeable
fellow, to whom I took an ineradicable dislike.

"And I. Well, the sun left him, large in itself, but suspended in comparison with the rest of the estate, the executors insisted upon paying joy. So our shares were diminished as majesty. I have never seen this Hoyt since. It seems strange for me to be so coolly discussing money matters with you in an hour like this, — doesn't it? But I assume that I have succeeded in causing me to slight sorrow and humiliation.

"I can easily understand that. Is Vin- cent your only son?" asked Smith, abruptly.

She seemed much agitated at this question. A strange expression swept across her face, — paler now than ever.

"I believe," she said, speaking very low, "that Gerard Montgomery's son still lives."

"What your son, — who died?"

"The same. Shall I tell you about it? I did not speak of this before, because I thought, foolishly perhaps, that you would hate to hear about it."

"No! you wrong me. I am interested in everything that relates to you." "Well, then, you heard that my first child was dead. I thought so, too. Only last evening did I receive the first intimation of my error. I have been at Newark for the past ten days. Last evening, a woman came and urgently asked to see me. She was a singular, taciturn person, with the strange name of Jiggleswitch. She had been at my house in this city, and then followed me to Newark. The sight she tells me, was so strange, yet plausible, — so wonderful, and yet so simple,— that I know not what to think.

At this moment, Smith's breakfast was brought in. The time was then swiftly away. Mrs. Graham, to his great joy, told him that she should stay till the very last. His execution had been fixed for half-past twelve. He expressed his determination to see no visitors. The clergyman had intimated that he would not intrude upon his last moments, — for there was no need, but would ascend the scaffold with him, and then the door closed and left the two again together.

Mrs. Graham then related all that she had learned from Mrs. Jiggleswitch. It appeared that very soon after she married Gerard Montgomery, Louise Murray, a young and pretty little woman, — since metamorphosed into Mrs. Jiggleswitch, — had been engaged by her as a waiting-maid. So changed was she, in name and appearance, that Mrs. Graham did not recognize her at first, but finally, with difficulty, recollected her. About a year after the marriage, Mr. Eleanor Moore and his wife (also newly married) came to New York, and in compliance with a very pressing invitation, settled at Montgomery's house for several weeks. Mr. Wyckoff at that time lived next door, in an elegant bachelor establishment. A staid Scotchman in his employ became desperately ensnared of and obsessed by the thought of the truth, and resolved to reveal her. Louise had suffered the tortures of unrequited love. Now Louise was as honest a little woman as ever lived, but endowed with a very unmanageable temper. It so happened that Mrs. Montgomery, through her own carelessness, lost a valuable diamond ring, and charged Louise with the theft. Louise's indignation was intense, and her desire for revenge great; and she did revenge herself, by an act deserving the name of crime. As it is often the case with shallow, impulsive natures, she lost sight of the enormity of the deed in the anger that possessed her, and she at least, at first, did what a more wicked person might have done.

A son was born to Mrs. Moore and to Mrs. Montgomery about the same time. Both infants were feeble enough, but one — Mrs. Montgomery's — was the child of living. Louise's commands were law to Cameron McManus, the Scotchman. She bade him get the physician out of the way. His native ingenuity enabled him to do this. The doctor received an unexpected summons from a distant patient to come to him. He went, and was, necessarily, gone a week. While he was away, Louise — too cowardly to do the deed herself — in a burst of passion, more especially as Mrs. Montgomery went over the death of Mr. McManus, felt; but her self-command, by degrees.

Smith did not once refer to Gerard Montgomery. Mrs. Graham understood his silence and did not speak of him herself. At their interview, Smith was close, however. He, with a few brief words, gave her the budget of Gerard's forgeries to read. He had thought to conceal them, but then concluded that she ought to know all.

It was ten minutes past twelve. They sat in a silence more eloquent than words. Her hand was upon his shoulder, her tearful eyes were looking up at him, — an attitude she had preserved all the morning, with but a short cessation. The cell door opened, and the sheriff's deputy courteously intimated that the time had come to clothe him in the attire for the scaffold. He begged ten minutes more, they were ready, and they were alone once again, for the last time. Helen hung, almost swooning, on his arm. He caught her in both arms and drew her to him in a close embrace, — so close that her heart against his, — her breath mingled with breath. Her beautiful arms swept round his neck, and her full, red lips — as full and red as Helen Vincent, — were pressed against his. It was their last kiss, and their last, and all their life-long passion was fused in that one burning caress. Sor- row, separation, impending death, all vanished in that one long kiss, — a kiss that was yet as pure as any that the Virgin Mother ever pressed upon the Holy Infant's brow. For this was nothing of unlicensed passion, — it was the chaste farewell of god- lines and virtue, — the parting salute to the dying, — the seal and knell of a love as pure as ever animated heart of man, or stirred the gentle breast of woman.

"Oh! let me mount the scaffold with you and die, more innocent than you!" cried Helen, in a voice full of pathos. "You have fought the good fight; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

"Helen, let not this be an eternal parting! Let us meet beyond the grave. Go to Him who so lovingly calls thee to his side.
CHAPTER XXXIX.

A CONFESSION IN TIME.

ERZA HOYT, after knocking his mother down in Robertson's parlor, would have gone out with less composure, had he known that his cowardly blow had killed her. Being missed some hours afterwards, she was looked for, and found lying there in a little crimson lake of blood, insensible. She was put to bed, and a doctor called, who seemed to think that the wound did not amount to much. She recovered consciousness, and was not delicious, but unnaturally quiet.

The title of life was fast closing out. As she lay that night sleepless and alone,—for she did not seem to require a watcher,—there passed before her mind's eye an awful panorama, painted by conscience. The advancing figures of Richard Hoyt, and the remorseless avalanche, crept towards her. In the morning, even, who entered her room started back,—the unpractised glance saw that death had claimed her. During the day she sank rapidly,—the physician, now, as if by instinct, allotted her but a few more hours of life. At this, seized with sudden energy, she started up in bed, and urgently, imperiously demanded that Mr. James Graham should be sent for. In less than half an hour he was there, and Mrs. Jarvis busied everybody else from the room. Mr. Graham was much surprised at the summons. He might have had years before he had seen her at Mr. William Moore's, but he did not remember her name nor herself at all.

"Thank yer honor for coming," said Mrs. Jarvis, with a strong Irish accent; for in this hour her old brogue came back. "It would have been better for me, faith, had I seen ye yore ago!"

"What have you to say to me, my good woman? Who are you? Where have you been seen?"

"It's many a time I see ye at Mr. William Moore's."

The guilty man shuddered. "Is this some recent occurrence?" thought he.

"And as a dying woman," continued Mrs. Jarvis, "I want to purdome the wong I've done ye and yours."

"Pray explain yourself."

"Oh, yer honor, who has always been a good, peaceable, Christian gentleman, little knows the torment that has got hold of me. It's what I've hewn called remorse, sir."

These words to be addressed to him? He knew nothing about remorse! It seemed to this wretched man that every chance word and casual remark touched his secret guilt.

"What have you done to me?" he stammered. "If you have anything to say to me, Mrs. Jarvis, say it," he added, in rather amorous tones. He was anxious to get out of the room; but, in spite of his anxiety, he was there for nearly two hours. Mrs. Jarvis could utter but a few sentences at a time; and when she did speak, it was with her native tautology and diffuseness. The substance of her confession was this:

She seemed to deem it necessary to the completeness of her narrative, to go back to her early life. She had lived in II— in Massachusetts, and lost her parents when quite a child. At a tender age she had been apprenticed to a milliner in the village. When about seventeen, she had made the acquaintance of Richard Hoyt, and he had been duped by his charms. Her Irish prudence had been proof against dishonorable proposals, and Hoyt had been again with merit to merit falsely and with Margaret Brady. Very little happiness did she derive from this marriage. Hoyt turned out to be a brute and a villain. He had obtained a considerable sum of money from his father, under the understanding that it was to be added to the capital employed in his father's business, and that he was to be a partner in the concern. On this the pair managed to live, in quite a flashy style, for some time, in New York, but their money soon melted under the recklessness of both. Hoyt was a gambler, and an unlucky one, a hard-drinker, and an intemperate one.

For many years they led a precarious, guilty existence in New York. Ezra, their son, inherited all the evil dispositions of both his parents, but he saw little of them; he was sent to boarding-school, and was seated, as he was seated, to his advantage in the concern. He was expelled from college after a career of the most desperate dissipation, but not till he had distinguished himself by the most extraordinary intellect achievement. The cause of his expulsion was his constructing a trap for one of his professors to fall into, which could not have failed to result in the man's death, had it not been accidentally discovered. After his premature graduation, Ezra obtained a clerkship in a store in Boston, where he amused himself by robbing his employer, and was never detected. Richard Hoyt, reduced at length to extremities, had one night attempted larceny, and, in fact, effected an entrance into Mr. Graham's house. He had been failed and captured through the tempestuality and coolness of young Vincent Graham. The boy's taunting words and menacingly accosted him; his aggravating sarcasm had always rankled in his breast, and he vowed revenge. Pending his commitment and trial, he had managed to escape, and before his real name had been discovered,—not had the police ever been able to recapture him. He went to Baltimore and stayed there a long time.

Like many literate men, his handwriting was beautiful and rapid. This circumstance enabled him to obtain the position of secretary,—a profitable sinecure,—to Mr. Peter Vincent, Mrs. Graham's father, then in his dotage. With this gentleman he had returned to New York. The scientific application of dyes and an altered tonsure secured him from detection. He managed to ingratiating himself deeply into Mr. Vincent's confidence and made himself entirely conversant with the state of the old gentleman's affairs. Mr. Vincent wrote a will, leaving the bulk of his fortune, that is, some four hundred and fifty thousand thousand dollars, in trust for the benefit of his grandson, Vincent Graham, when he should attain his majority. His handwriting was an almost illegible scrawl, but the document was, as usual, copied in Mr. Graham's clear characters. It consisted of several leaves merely pasted together, and not fastened by a ribbon and sealed, and Hoyt instantly conceived a feasible plan to enrich himself and wreak his vengeance on Vincent Graham. He detected the fact that made Vincent heir, and substituted another in the same handwriting, bequeathing the sum of twenty thousand dollars to Richard Hoyt, "in consideration of his faithful services as secretary." He was afraid to make the amount larger lest it should excite suspicion. Mr. Vincent's sudden and fatal illness occurred very soon afterwards. It followed after a day of unproductive work; a day in which, in consummation of previous plans and arrangements, he had converted his entire fortune, mortgages, bonds, deeds, and all into gold, anticipating a rise in the price of gold, and purposing to sell it at a premium that should insure an immense profit. Hoyt was the only person present when he counted out the mass of specie that he had thus accumulated; it filled two spacious ornamental boxes, and was conveyed to Baltimore and stayed there a long time. He had been failed and captured through the tempestuality and coolness of young Vincent Graham. The boy's taunting words and menacingly accosted him; his aggravating sarcasm had always rankled in his breast, and he vowed revenge. Pending his commitment and trial, he had managed to escape, and before his real name had been discovered,—not had the police ever been able to recapture him. He went to Baltimore and stayed there a long time.

The last angelic notes were uttered, and, who entered her room started back,—the unpractised glance saw that death had claimed her. The last angelic notes were uttered, and, who entered her room started back,—the unpractised glance saw that death had claimed her.
to obtain it, Richard Hoyt was the possessor of a vast hoard of stolen wealth, unused. During his interview with Ezra in Catherine Street, while urging the latter to try "gar- roting" as a means of revenue, at that very time the safe that had attracted Ezra's attention contained bank notes (into which he had converted the money in vain) to nearly three thousand dollars. Mrs. Jarvis had not been ignorant of her husband's robbery; she was aware that he had obtained this safe, but he had represented to her, and she had believed him, that he had lost all the gold in unluckily speculations. He had made her believe that the safe contained nothing but piles of papers and documents of great value to Mr. Vincent, but worthless to him. Thus the crimes of her husband and son, at all of which she had connived, had been utterly profitable to this wretched woman; she had been compelled to spend her days in poverty and drudgery. She had been a participant in the crimes of her family, but not a sharer of the wealth wickedly accumulated.

"Where is the safe and where are the papers of which you speak?" asked Mr. Graham, at length.

"The safe and all that's in it's buried in the cellar of No. — Catherine street." - "I thought Mr. Graham, "a good place.

"I don't know for what the old man buried it," resumed Mrs. Jarvis (as we shall still call her), "for there was nothing in it good for anything." "Nothing in it!"

"No, nothing but a lot of old documents and trash." "Very likely that he would bury trash," was Mr. Graham's mental comment. "Why, what has become of all the money?" he asked.

"Oh! it's all gone, sir. Dick lost it in speculation about a week after he got it." "Highly probable, also," Mr. Graham remarked. "That was unfortunate," he re- marked aloud. "Then your husband died poor?"

"Yes, sir. He didn't leave me a cent, nor did old Mr. Hoyt, either. All old Mr. Hoyt ever did was to send Ezra — that's my son, you know — to college. He took him for a fancy and wanted him to git some book learning. Small good it's done him, anyhow."

"Where is your son?"

"That's more I can tell, sir," said Mrs. Jarvis, who was greatly agitated. "Oh!" said Mr., suddenly, "I can't die, say I tell the police officer all I set Ezra up to; although it's Mr. William Moore I ought to tell it to, rather than you, if he was alive, poor man."

Again Mr. Graham started violently. "Graham," he thought he, "am I never to hear the last of this man?"

Mrs. Jarvis was growing weaker and weaker. Mr. Graham would have let her stop and husband her strength, but she insisted upon telling everything while there was yet time, saying that she knew she must die and a few hours sooner or later made no difference. With many pauses, then, and in a voice almost inaudible, from weakness, the confession expanded the conspiracy she had instigated and assisted; the concealment of Henry Moore's death; the false representations to Franchot; the abandonment of Mr. Moore's child. Remembering her promise to Mr. William Moore, she did not say anything about that gentleman's reappearance; nor did she tell Graham that Edith was the child she had made; nor did she even relate how, after Franchot had expressed his determination to make William Moore's son heir, he had been made persuaded that Ezra was that son; how Ezra had grown more and more impatient for the Frenchman's murder, which, although she did not advise, she did nothing to dissuade him from. In short, her confession embraced all the plots and performances whose inception and progress the reader has already seen.

With the conclusion of her confession, it seemed as if Mrs. Jarvis's life had also ended. She lay motionless and speechless; the pulsation of her heart was scarcely visible; the respiration was almost imperceptible; the eyes were closed. Voter was dead.

BAFFLED SCHEMES.

The speed of the express train seemed slow enough to Vincent and his companion as they rolled along the Hudson River Railroad. Kavanagh was very much depressed. For a long time he insisted that if Smith's execution was consummated, he would be as culpable as a murderer. Gradually, however, he acknowledged the force of Vincent's arguments, which were to the effect that in no event could Smith's death be attributed, justified, to Kavanagh, for his impending fate had not slipped from the latter's mind through culpable carelessness; but simply because he was occupied in the prosecution of what was certainly his duty, the capture of the real murderer;

and that another circumstance exonerated him, namely, the fact that he had been erroneously informed that the execution had been fixed for a much later date. Somewhat comforted by these representations, Kavanagh busied himself in preparing the draft of an affidavit for Vincent to swear to, and which should be filed before the Governor; the physician, who had just arrived, and others, hastened in, but it was too late. Mrs. Jarvis was dead.

BAD NEWS AND GOOD.
Baffled Schemes.

As he rode along an irresistible dizziness seized him; he reeled in the saddle, he sank upon his horse's neck, he fell himself slidding to the ground, and then all was blank. Not very long afterwards Vincent opened his eyes, gazed feebly about him for a moment, and, shutting them again, fell into a delicious, strengthening sleep. It was nearly morning when he awoke refreshed. He found himself lying on a green, leather-covered lounge, in an exceedingly neat room that seemed to be a library, crammed with books and maps. To his amazement, he beheld sitting at a table, reading by the light of a shaded lamp, the massive form of no less a person than Dr. Euripides Brown.

"Eh!" cried Vincent. "Is this a place of that seat of learning?"

"Yes, Parnassus Hall is no longer a school, but have one or two boys with me whom I am fitting for college. But I am not idle."

"What are you doing, sir?"

"I am writing a book, said the doctor, blushing like a girl, "the opus magnum of my life. It is to be called 'History of Greek Literature,' to consist of twenty-five folio volumes."

"How much have you written, doctor?"

"I have written half a volume during the past two years. I will have the first volume finished in two more years."

At that rate, said Vincent, smiling, "it will be ninety-eight years before your work is finished."

"Bless me," cried the doctor, looking into his face, "I never thought of that. I must reduce the projected size."

"Yes, I would," said Vincent. "The work is to be embellished with steel engravings, and will be very costly, I suppose," added the doctor, with a sigh. "It is to be published by contribution. Perhaps you will consent to put your name down?"

"I think it very likely. How many boys have you?" said Vincent, hastily.

"Only three, sir, of whom two, more, very sociably, he has lain ever since without saying a word. What was the matter? Were you thrown from your beast?"

Vincent briefly explained matters. "Now tell me, sir, how came you here?"

"Yes, Parsonus Hall is no more," cried Vincent. "Carriage was." A Deaf and Dumb Asylum, as originally intended, now takes the place of that seat of learning?"

"What! Miss Antigone gone where is she?"

"Married," said the doctor, in a voice of sorrow. "That's what the best of women come to. She married the assistant Latin teacher."

"Little Thomas?"

"The same. She is old enough to be the mother of the konvoueius. She married him out of pity, I haven't the least doubt. He needed somebody to take care of him. He is tutor now in — college."

"Poor devil!" thought Vincent, "between the boys and his wife he'll lead a dog's life."

"Ask me," continued the doctor. "I have bought this little place. I don't keep a regular school, but have one or two boys

Baffled Schemes.

The doctor promised to send Vincent's horse to Albany that day, and his vision instantly warmed the hours of departure. All at once Tom Schuyler, who was puzzling over his letter, cried, —

"I do wish you'd write so a fellow could read. I can't make it out at all. You read that line for me, Mr. Gra- ham?"

Vincent took the letter, written in the namby-pamby style of chirography that young ladies generally affect, and read those words,

"...you remember Ethel Moore, don't you; Tom; the young lady you said was a great deal prettier than I am."

"Yes. I don't know that," said Tom. "It's next to you. Please read on.

Vincent did not need to be urged."

"Well, she's very — very — what's that? happy, oh! I see, 'happy,' she is very happy; now, she has found her father."

Tom must have been surprised at the agitation that seized Vincent; his face alternated red and white, and his eyes glittered like coals. Without permission he read on.

"A room which has been known for some time — a Mr. Morris — turns out to be his father. Only think of it! I'm so glad!"

Vincent flung down the letter, and — as Tom afterwards said — "jumped four feet clear of the floor. He was crazy," cried Tom. In telling the story; "he danced around the room and slapped the doctor on the back a tremendous whack. What's the matter with you?" cried the doctor. "I'm another man," said he, "and good-by," and he snatched his hat, and kitted off to the railway station."

He was indeed another man. All weakness had now vanished from his frame. A than that guilty man should practise their crimes with impunity."

"Say rather," cried Vincent, much disgusted, "it is better that ninety-nine murderers should be free, than one innocent should be hung. The death penalty is barbarous enough any way, but when it is enforced so sweepingly as to include the innocent, I cry, away with it!"

"Yes. That is your opinion, is it?" said the Governor, slightly yawning, and carelessly picking a speck of dust off his coat-sleeve. "I am sorry to say that my time will not permit me to attend you any fur- ther," and he bowed his visitors out.

Much saddened by the result of their attempt to save poor Smith, Kavanagh and Vincent agreed to start at once on their expedition for the capture of Ezra. Vin-
Kavanagh, in English, that was not only broken, but mutilated.

"Who said I loved her?" cried Ezra somewhat startled.

"Monseigneur, the tavern-keeper," replied Kavanagh.

Era seemed relieved. He did not at all suspect what a less shrewd man than he was would probably at once have apprehended, that the two Frenchmen were detectives, or pursuers in disguise. He well knew that not a soul had followed him from New York to this place; that no one knew him in his disguise; that no one save Murray had been aware of his intention of going to this place of concealment, and that even Murray had only learned it through a letter, written in cipher, a letter that no one had seen. So, totally unsuspecting, he asked his caller's "what he could do for them."

"Why, who heard?" said Kavanagh, still preserving a foreign inflection, "that you would rent this house, and my friend and I will take it if it suits us."

"No, I don't want to rent it; I am going to live here."

"Sit down, gentlemen," said Ezra. "Take a glass of brandy, belonging to the range, leaned against the wall. Kavanagh sat near a corner of the table, and Vincent on the same side. Ezra and Kavanagh opposite. A half hour or more passed away very quickly. At length Kavanagh, pushing back his chair a little, said, --"Well, it's about time for us to go."

"Yes, I'm getting sleepy," said Vincent, yawning slightly, and stretched out his hand as if to snatch the candle, but instead of doing so snatched his pistol, and with inconceivable quickness struck Murray fiercely on the head with its handle. The lawyer, without a groan, fell on the floor, senseless.

At the same instant Kavanagh threw himself with violence upon Ezra, who was half risen from his chair; but he met more than his match. Ezra caught him around the waist with both arms, and, throwing him in his grasp, ran across the room and dashed him against the wall. Kavanagh was much hurt, and for a time was incapable of rising. But Vincent with blazing eyes springing forward, and blazing with passion rushed to the back door. Finding it fastened, he uttered a howl of mingled rage and fear, and stood, a brawny desperado, at bay. Vincent held his pistol levelled, and might have shot him, but he was determined to capture him alive. "Surrender," shouted he. "Never!" roared Ezra. The back door opened into a little kitchen. Vincent and Ezra were in that part of the house from which the table, belonging to the range, leaned against the ledge of the door. This Ezra instantly seized, after he had laboriously snatched up his pistol in Vincent's face, and dashed it down upon his hand with a horrible oath. Vincent paused, unerring in its aim, and dashed it down across the room, and "closed in," disregarding a blow from Vincent's fist that would have felled an ordinary man. The struggle that ensued, for a few moments was absolutely terrific. Ezra felt that he was fighting for his life, and Vincent was animated by an unresolvable resolution. He knew, too, that, if he was vanquished, he could expect no mercy from his antago-
BAFFLED SCHEMES.

They lit their cigar and added to (or spilled) the fragrance of the evening air. The travelling improved as they proceeded, and they soon struck a long, level stretch of plank road. Vincent turned behind to absent himself that the prisoner that had not vanished, so impressed had he become by Ezra's volatiles powers. But Ezra Hoyt had met his fate, at last, and the meshes of his doom had closed around him. He had a consciousness of this as he lay there muttering curses. He saw that he was utterly ruined. Even should he escape from his captors, the future was all blackness to him. He could no longer pass for a gentleman. Ezra, for had he not boasted to Vincent that he was Ezra Hoyt? He was now known to be an impostor; he must relinquish Franchot's property; he could never marry Ethel Moore. He was known to be Franchot's murderer; he would henceforth be hunted as such. All his schemes had failed—had ended in utter defeat. But what added the most bitterness to his wretchedness, was the most intolerable portion of his torture, was the fact that Vincent Graham was the cause of his ruin. Vincent Graham who had never met him but to sell him. Every time that Vincent turned to look at him in the room where he had stabbed the ill-fated man, he saw that he was thoroughly cowed. His horror of his captor, too, was intense; he regarded him as a sort of avenging spirit. He was interally unable to account for his appearance. He had certain thrust him into the vault, and with his own hands, bricked him up; had subsequently gone to see his grave and found it undisturbed. What supernatural powers, then, did Vincent possess, that he could stand alone and confront him in this remote retreat, a retreat that no one on earth knew of except Murragh? It was wonderful, inscrutable, horrifying.

Ezra was driven to the conclusion, in thinking about the capture, that Murragh had betrayed him. He smiled grimly to himself as he accepted this idea, for he had papers in his pocket—papers that he invadially carried with him—that proved Murragh's culpability in a murder that had startled St. Louis several years before—and these papers he determined to give to Vincent, fervently hoping that they would lead to Murragh's execution.

A late and winding moon had just begun to peer timidly, with pale face, over the eastern hills, as the low length of Wyckoff Hall came in sight, faintly pencilled against the lightening sky. They drove past the grove where the happy equestrian party had ridden so long ago, and Vincent was gladened by the joyous recollections that the spot inspired. Moore's cottage was shut up and dimly.

They found no one at Wyckoff Hall but the servants,—Mr. Kavanagh and his family having gone to New York. Ezra was unbound and searched, the papers his pockets contained removed, and he was then put into the small room on the ground floor, where Mr. Franchot had met his death. He was perfectly secure there, for it was impossible for him to break the bars of the window. The door was locked, a servant detailed to walk as sentry in the hall, and Ezra left to his meditations.

In a short time profound stillness reigned in the old house. Kavanagh sat down in the library to finish some law papers that the events of the past few days had obliged him to neglect. Vincent, thoroughly exhausted, threw himself upon a sofa and slept heavily, and the lanky, sitting down and leaning his back against the door of Ezra's room, resumed his interrupted slumber, reasonably presuming that the door could not be opened without awakening Vincent. Ezra, for the first time in his eventful career, made no attempt to effect an escape. His spirit, hitherto unflagging, failed; he was thoroughly cowed.

Ezra was alone in the room where he had stabbed the ill-fated Frenchman. But he felt no brutal excitement now, nor boasted of himself to the deed. He had not recovered from the experience, but had thrown himself into his room, and now he laughed no longer at supernatural fancies. There was no light in the room save the ghastly rays of the moon, and the murderer imagined that he saw on the wall, on his face, the ghastly face of Franchot, gazing at him in horror, with staring, sightless eyes, and he heard his voice. The murderer imagined that he saw, in the lightening sky. They dreve past the of the doomed man; he heard the dull
plunge of the knife; saw the life-blood bubble up, and watched the murderer, his face, steal away with satanic satisfaction on his face. His flesh crept with horror, as he sat a spectator of this bloody scene constantly repeated. At last he rose and flung himself on the bed, in agony. And presently another and a fearful hallucination possessed him. He thought that he was Franchot, conscious that he was to be murdered, unable to stir to help himself. He knew that the corpse was behind him — himself still — climb over the window-sill and cautiously draw near his bedside. He even felt the light pressure of the assassin's hand upon his breast, and, with utterly incalculable horror, was aware that the knife descended in a painless, but affrighting blow.

At each agonizing repetition, he suffered the very pang of dissolution. The form of his torture at length changed. It seemed to him that the corpse of Franchot was in the bed with him. So actual was this fantasy, that he could trace, beneath the counterpane, the stiffened form of the dead man, see, outside, his victim's ghastly face, with the unwavering awful stare upon the ceiling. He turned around — horror upon horror! — and there was another corpse on this side. There he lay, flanked by the horrid relics of his knife. The imaginary bodies were close beside him. If he moved at all, he felt the clammy, teary touch of the exanimate clay. But the frightfulness of his position did not end here. Peering above the footboard, in a horrible array, was ranged a row of faces, all dead men's, all Franchot's, all gazing at the ghastly face, with the unvarying awful stare. It seemed to him that the corpse of Franchot, conscious that he was to be murdered, unable to stir to help himself, was to be killed again.

It seemed to him that the corpse of Franchot, conscious that he was to be murdered, unable to stir to help himself, was to be killed again.

"May I be cursed if I do!" cried the detective, with much energy. On the happenings of such circumstances, he invoked eternal punishment upon himself, remains unknown; for at this moment a small boy, with considerable terror, came in and presented a note and packet to the redoubtable officer. Conger pursued the note, and then, changing the form of his prayer, exclaimed in a voice that made the boy jump, —

"May I be cursed if I don't!"

Having thus offered petitions, which, if they were both granted, would seem to ensure his future doom, the detective bade the boy depart (which he did, nothing loth), and then sat down, with his eyes lit up by the all their ancient fire.

"May I be cursed if I do!"

"May I be cursed if I don't!"

Having thus offered petitions, which, if they were both granted, would seem to ensure his future doom, the detective bade the boy depart (which he did, nothing loth), and then sat down, with his eyes lit up by all their ancient fire.

The note ran thus, —

"Dear Sir,—Ezra Hoyt has escaped hanging, and has burned to death instead. Mr. D. Murray, a scarcely inferior villain, is at large,—I don't know where. We caught him, but he escaped. He is disguised in a large, black side-whiskers; had on a greenish coat. Will you do me the favor to catch him and keep him?"

"Yours truly,"

"Inspector, Alex. Conger."

"P. S. I send herewith papers found on Hoyt's person."

"R——, N. Y., Oct. 29th, 18——."

Mr. Conger laid aside his pipe and lit a delicate "Havana." He sat down, glanced through the contents of the packet, and his agile mind soon worked out a plan of proceeding. He determined to head Murray alone, and capture him alone. He knew him well, having seen him often during Smith's trial, and he was more than a match for him in strength. He went into a room adjoining his office, and, after a considerable time, reappeared disguised in the following extraordinary dress.

He looked precisely like a mulatto. His face, hands, wrists, neck, and breast, were stained to exactly the proper hue; a wig of slightly curling hair was skilfully adjusted to his head, and so perfect was this wig that the minutest inspection would not have revealed the fact that it was a wig. He had
on no coater vest, but simply a coarse, blue cotton shirt, open at the throat, affording a glimpse of his brown breast. He had no whiskers to remove, —he never wore them. A dilapidated felt hat was stuck on his head, in a manner peculiarly African. His lips had —not glaring, but natural —redness, and his white teeth were more dazzling than ever. The metamorphosis was complete. No southerner would ever have dreamed that this intelligent-looking mulatto was Mr. Alexander Conger. He seated himself in an arm-chair, put his feet on the table, and took up a newspaper. A quick tap at the door. 

"Come in, dar!" he cried.

Enter Fellows.

"Thunder!" roared the astonished deputy. 

"You blasted nigger, what are you doing there? Take your feet off that table! Get out of that chair! Do you take this for Wendell Phillips's study? Where the devil did you come from?"

"Guess dis chile knows what he's about," said Conger.

"Well, I guess this child knows what he's about!" cried the infuriated Fellows, and he rushed forward, on direful deeds intent. Conger pulled up his shirt-sleeve, disclosing his white arm, and burst out laughing heartily.

"Well sold, Fellows! Come, own up! My disguise is good, I see.

"May he be everlastingly cursed if it ain't ask your pardon, sir. What's the lag, Mr. Conger?"

"The Allen Street cove."

"No? Isn't possible? Can't you edge me in, sir?"

"Can't do it, Fellows. I must go alone."

"I did want to be in that crack so, sir," —replied Conger, sorrowfully—"bitterly disappointed.

"Sorry I can't arrange it so, Fellows. You must go and help Roberts in that Jervis business."

"Very well, sir," said Fellows, resignedly. 

"Do you go empty-handed, sir?"

"No, I have this," replied Conger, and he pulled out a sheathed dirk from inside his coat. "Do you go empty-handed, sir?"

"Well, we sold twenty cents; here, take the bag."

Murragh walked along with Conger at his heels. He was too shrewd to go thoughtlessly, with signs of conscious guilt; he walked boldly, with head up and a firm, swift step. This raised him greatly in the detective's estimation.

They reached the steps of the hotel.

"Here, nign, said Murragh, "take your money, and I'll see Mr. Murragh off."

"You greed to give me twenty cents, sah."

"Whigger, you lie. I said I would say twenty cents. I did say twenty cents. I meant ten cents. Clear out."

"Good joke," said Conger, showing his cuffed, and a prisoner.

"Well, we say twenty cents, then, sah.""
Mr. Conger watched him keenly.

"What's he riddling with that for?" thought he.

Mr. Murragh's back was towards him, or he would have seen that gentleman very dextrously transfer a paper, containing a powder, from his hat-band to his vest-pocket.

"Isn't the secret police a very anxious service?" asked the lawyer.

"Rather so; but it's exciting.

"How long have you been in it?"

"Half a dozen years, I shan't stay in it long."

"Why not?"

"Oh, I'm disgusted with the whole business. I came to that conclusion this morning. I wouldn't have chased you, if it hadn't been to oblige a friend."

"What friend?"

"Vincent Graham."

Murragh ground his teeth.

"Mr. Conger," said he, after a pause, "I've got a considerable pile of money."

"I'm glad to hear it."

"More'n I can use, in fact. I shouldn't mind letting you have quite a part of it, if you'll let me go downstairs, and won't follow me for half an hour, I'll make out my accounts."

"And I'd pay well to get out of it."

"For how much?"

"You could almost name your sum, Mr. Conger."

"My sum for what?"

"You'll find matches on the mantelpiece," said Murragh.

Conger went to the mantel-piece, locking the door as he passed. He was back to his seat in ten seconds; but in that time, Murragh, with a slyness worthy of himself, and applied the paper of powder and strychnine upon the sugar at the bottom of one of the glasses. He was innocently cutting up a lemon as Conger returned.

During his subsequent operations, Conger watched him sharply, but saw nothing wrong. Two steaming glasses were soon ready. Murragh shoved the poisoned glass to Conger and sipped his own. "Quite a success," said he; "drink your punch, Conger."

"I will. Pshaw, my cigar's out. Hand me a match, will you, Mr. Conger? You're nearer."

Murragh turned around and stretched over to the mantel-piece, and, as quickly as thought, Conger noiselessly changed the position of the tumblers, and the glass containing sugar mixed with strychnine stood at Murragh's place. The lawyer handed a match to Conger, who was looking rather composedly, tasting the whisky.

"Do you find it good, Mr. Conger?"

"Excellent."

"I laid myself out on that glass," said Murragh, with a grin of devilish exultation.

"You don't drink yourself," observed Conger.

"Oh, yes; here goes!" and Murragh swallowed the poison at a draught.

"Let's have more smoke," said he; "more lemon would improve it."

He peeled a lemon and sliced it, then took another. As he pressed the knife-edge against it, his arm flew out to its full reach, as swift and straight as an arrow from the bow, and the knife whizzed across the room. He uttered an appalling howl, that Conger did not cease to hear for many days, and fell on the floor.

"What is it?" cried the officer.

"Oh! Christ, have mercy on me! Oh! Christ, have mercy on me!"

"Have you got a fire?"

"Strychnine!" gasped Murragh.

"You drank the glass you poured out for me.

"Yes, yes, poisoned! poisoned!"

The scene that ensued was absolutely frightful. Strychnine, that most horrible of all poisons, tormented the miserable wretch unspeakably, before it killed him. He gnawed a round of a chair in his agony; then lockjaw seized him, and his teeth sank into the wood in a grip that Conger could not free. The officer pulled the bell, and shouted for help in the hall; people came rushing in, and men were dispatched in all directions for physicians.

Naturally.

"And I'd pay well to get out of it."

"Would you now?" said Conger, with much apparent interest.

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"You'd rather, cried Conger, "break stones up for me."

"For how much?"

"Five thousand, Mr. Conger?"

"Not half enough."

"Oh! yes, do," said Murragh. "I ask your pardon for what I said; I can't do better than that.

"Hum! he seems eager for me to imbibe," said the detective to himself.

Scotch whisky, lemons, hot water, and a bowl of sugar were deposited on the table. Conger took a cigar, and Murragh proceeded to concoct a punch. The servant retired.

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had been there and gone again, no one knew whither. Mr. Graham was very anxious to see his son; he longed to exhibit the supposed proofs of his villainy that he had obtained from Ezra, and glut himself with triumph. He had been rather staggered on learning that Vincent had not departed to Europe, but refused to believe that he could be guilty of the story that he had been buried alive, and he bugged the conviction that he had been absent for purposes of crime.

This being the circumstances of Vincent's involuntary absence, had not mentioned them to his guardian; she could scarcely have told why not. Mrs. Graham, with a mother's anxiety, had hastened to Burwash, where his filings of his son's situation. She had told her husband, on returning, that Vincent was recovering from a severe illness; but Mr. Graham smiled to himself incredulously. He did not doubt the authenticity of the letters Ezra had shown him, for a moment, simply for the fact that he had seen his son was dead, is but expressing the mother's pride his son's guilt. To say that this man wished his guilt; and that was, to at once obtain possession of this property for your Mr. Graham recovered from the stupefaction which had fallen into. Seeing that his death had caused him to at once complete his operation, he returned to the Burton; and then their united strength, as they cleared the earth on all sides of the safe, so, about eleven o'clock in the night, Mr. Graham saluted forth, and was met on the side, entered an alley, and thence made their way around into the back yard. Mr. Graham had taken care to ascertain from Mrs. Jarvis the exact locality where the treasure was buried. The end of the yard was bounded by a low fence, shutting off a contracted court-yard, in the rear of a high tenement house. Graham and his companion began their operations at once. Exactly in the centre of the dingy grass-plot they commenced the excavation. There was but little frost in the ground, and the accumulated mould of years was soft and yielding; so, in a very short time, the spade struck the buried iron with a singling sound, sweeter than music to Graham. But it required an hour's hard work before they had cleared the earth on all sides of the safe, and then their united strength, as they might have foreseen, was called to raise it from the hole thus made. They were compelled to dig away a considerable space in front of the safe, and open it so that it might be placed as to be raised by the men. In fact, the embarrassments that would lead one to suppose that he had had no inconsiderable practice in opening safes. By a method well known to burglars, he compelled the safe's fastenings to give way, and its concealed contents were disclosed.

"Ah!" cried Mr. Graham, exultant; "we've rather got the best of the old gentleman at last, Robbins! Come, let's get the packages out.

"Perhaps we can help you!" cried a deep, harsh voice, and at that instant two men sprung suddenly in the yard, and strode forward, obscuring, before Graham. They were Messrs. Roberts and Parker, of the police force. Mrs. Graham, at the first sight of these unexpected confessors, was seized with panics, and ran away in haste, unperceived.

Mr. Graham, thunderstruck, stood motionless.

"You choose a strange hour, Mr. Graham, to take possession of this property for your son," said Roberts.

"But still, this is as good a time as any.
BAFFLED SCHEMES.

are you subject to these aberrations? asked Ethel, compassionate-ly.  

"No," cried Ethel, and I'm in my right mind now! "That's a comfort," said Ethel.  

"But why are you not angry with me? Do be angry with me!"  

"What for?"  

"If I may be able to talk with you, I might as well try now to get up a conversation with the Venus de Medici in stone."  

"Isn't pleasant to be angry even -- even to hear you talk?"  

"But you may never hear unless you are."  

"Well."  

"No more, not again, never," said Vincent, with unusual tamely asy.  

"No."  

"Yes."  

"Your crazy fit has returned," said Ethel, half laughing, half crying.  

"On the contrary, I have recovered my senses, never again to lose them! Ah sit down, Ethel, and let me tell you all. Do and forgive me, and don't look like Juno again; I like you better as Psyche. Shades of Cleopatra! Oh my word you looked so grand just now, you scared me. I was afraid you were going to bite me, and without the court regalia."  

"Ethel was the helpless one now; there was no resisting him; he had vanished her. She sat down beside him, and, in the delightful interview that followed, all was explained -- the fluttering cause of his behavior related -- and, in words that were pencilled with kisses, their one misunderstanding utterly vanished. In that happy hour Vincent learned with rapture that William Moore had not been drowned by his father; that no stain of blood rested on the name of Graham. He heard, too, with a delight scarcely less than hers, the recital of the circumstances that had led to the discovery of her father. Ethel shud-dered as he told her of the fate of Ezra, and Murray's horrible death ( particulars of which he had just learned), but they did not linger long on these themes, -- their talk was of pleasanter topics. The eager lover urged a speedy marriage, and Ethel did not have the heart to refuse him.

But lovers' conferences do not last forever. In the midst of one of his most tender sentences, the door opened and a servant appeared, respectfully saying to Vincent:  

"Mr. Graham would like to see you in his study, sir."  

CHAPTER XLIV.  

EXECUTIVE COMING.  

Everybody's astonishment was great; when it became known that Edwin was Mrs. Graham's son. Jessie was rather pleased, because she thought Montgomery was a fine-looking, aristocratic name. Vincent was overjoyed to write to Ethel about Edwin being Jessie's brother. He said he had nothing to regret, inasmuch as he did not lose anything, but on the contrary gained a brother and a mother by the arrangement. His letter contained a piece of confidential intelligence to Jessie; it was to the effect that he was to be detailed from his regiment, and sent on detached duty to Governor's Island, in New York harbor, and he begged Jessie to be in readiness for an immediate mar-riage. Mrs. Jigglesworth's and McManus's statements were reduced to the form of affidavits and duly sworn to; many little circumstances corroborated them; there could be no doubt of their truth.  

Jessie and Captain Montgomery were married. On the birth of her first grandchild, who was named Ethel, Mrs. Fairfax re-marked to her husband that she could begin to expect to hear she was getting old, at any rate, older than she had been, -- on which Mr. Fairfax observed that he had been aware of it for some time, and advised her to dye, but admitted with a sigh that he expected her to be still alive. He published a letter, over his own signa-ture, in several newspapers, relating all the circumstances, only making the affair ac-
BAFFLED SCHEMES.

Vincent told his friends about the letters that Ezra had fabricated, suppressing all trace of the father's name. Vincent, as he rose to leave, "I think I'll follow suit."

On reaching home, he found his father had rallied somewhat. He went into the room, and started with a glad surprise, as if he saw his father's face. The restless, furtive look, the look of hidden wretchedness was gone, and gone forever. He pressed his son's hand, feebly.

"I have been a bad man, Vincent, but, through God's mercy, I am not a murderer."

"I know it, father, and I praise Heaven. Will you forgive my harshness, sir?"

No need for Ezra's minister. You may well starve. Fact, I assure you. He felt so bad about poor Seth, that he vowed he'd have nothing more to do with police or law. The sight of Murray's death didn't tend to make him like his profession any better. He came into some property lately, and has resigned his post, and is studying for orders.

"Well, wonder never cease! as some one, I think, has observed. Conger it make a good clergyman."

"He'll have a sharp eye for the faults of his flock, you may be confident. Yes, I think he'll do better as a minister than as a detective."

"Most decidedly," said Vincent. "Conger lacks some of the qualities of a good detective. He's the bravest man I ever saw, but his nose is a giant to his den, all alone. He is too bold, in fact. And then if you get him off the track once, you can lead him anywhere. I mistrusted him once, completely. Conger believed all I told him, just as fast as I could speak, simply for the reason that I had managed to make him believe beforehand, that I had no object in lying. Still, he has been very successful as a general thing."
misery has rolled away! I can die contented now." But he did not die. The physician's skill and a peaceful mind restored him, in spite of hemorrhage of the lungs. He recovered, and all that was good in James Graham's character came out. This man had bitterly expiated his intended crime in the ceaseless misery of eighteen years. His punishment began and ended on this earth. Hippier days were in store for him. It was reserved for him to see his son decorated with all the honors his countrymen could bestow, ornamenting public and private life, distinguished in statesmanship and letters; it was reserved for him to win at last, the love of his wife, and pass many happy years with her before they both sank simultaneously to peaceful graves. He would have repaid the three hundred thousand dollars, with all its accumulations to William Moore, but the latter would not receive it. He insisted that he had greatly erred in the scheme of revenge he had adopted, and compelled him to retain the money, as a proof that his (Moore's) patience was sincere.

The legislature of New York did justice to the memory of Smith. He sleeps in no "dishonored grave," but in Greenwood stands an unadulterated slab of marble, that bears his name, and, round its base, loving hands delight to plant the fairest and most fragrant flowers. Years afterwards Mrs. Graham told her husband — between whom and her was now perfect confidence, — all the sad story. He listened with compassion. Together they read the record of his life that he had written in his cell. As years rolled by, the remembrance of her youthful passion melted into a half-mournful, half-delightful recollection, and Helen Graham's first wild love was merged into this later perfect and enduring one.

William Moore, still in the prime of life, began to exert the talents he possessed, became a shining light in politics, and reached the highest honors of the State. After many vexatious delays of the law he secured to his daughter the fortune that was hers by Franchot's will. He lived to see his grandchildren and to build an elegant house near the ruins of Wyckoff Hall, — a house that was as pleasing and happy an object as Wyckoff Hall had been fatal.

Mrs. Jigglesworth, becoming a widow, consoled herself by marrying Cameron McMannus. The Scotchman's constancy was rewarded. He lived long and happily with his spouse, whose Spartan taciturnity, however, was not lessened one jot to the day of her death.

Robbins, at Vincent's request, was dismissed from Mr. Graham's service. Very soon afterwards, a nest of burglars, counterfeiters, and desperadoes was caught chiefly through the instrumentality of Detective Parker, who had been greatly aided in his operations by some papers found in the deceased Mr. Morrugi's carpet-bag. Some half-dozen of these rascals were sent to the State prison for a term of years, among them our old acquaintances Baxter, Robbins, and Peters Williams.

If heaven ever begins on earth, it certainly has begun for Ethel and Vincent. Every circumstance of happiness is theirs, — youth, health, wealth, love. Vincent entered the bar, as the surest road to distinction, — distinction that he reached beyond his wildest dreams. These two attained the happiness that the machinations of villany had in vain attempted to destroy, — machinations foiled by human skill, and terminated by the hand of God. Their first-born, Edwin, was, it is needless to say, a perfect prodigy, and while yet in his cradle was betrothed to Ethel Montgomery, a young lady but a month or two his junior. They lived amid a circle of tried friends in the midst of love and peace.

Occasionally Vincent received a letter from Dr. Enipides Brown, interlarded with classical quotations. These letters showed that the good doctor was enjoying those sunny days out of which he had been married seven years! "Morrill tariff," but he was not reading it, he was looking into Ethel's calm, true eyes. "You look better than Miss Moore ever did. Can you remember that ancient time? Do you know it will be seven years next week since you consented to become Mrs. Graham?" Ethel clasped her arms around his neck, and kissed him with pretty fervor. "Take that for the compliment!" said she.

THE END.